

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

Submission No: 842
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Dear Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission on the proposed changes outlined in the *Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024*.

A brief introduction: I am a homeschooling parent living in Queensland. My wife and I immigrated to Australia over 15 years ago from Africa and are naturalised citizens of this beautiful country. I have several degrees including a Masters degree from the University of Southern Queensland. On a professional level, I have managed teams of people in the technology space. My wife holds a university degree and was a business consultant in Brisbane for some time. My daughter was born on the Gold Coast in 2012 and has only known Queensland as home. Prior to homeschooling, she attended a private school that followed ACARA for several years but found that the curriculum seldom engaged her capabilities and left her dispassionate in her schooling.

I am deeply concerned with the proposals, particularly in regard to homeschooling. I believe that, should these proposals go through, it will have negative and long lasting ramifications to the education of our children and, specifically, my own child. There is no way that I can, in good conscience, support these changes and so I strongly oppose them: I do NOT consent with them in any way.

I would like to touch on a few points below

- Planning and Reporting Requirements
- Guiding Principles
- Learning Environment

Planning and Reporting

I was disappointed listening to the Department of Education spokespersons addressing home-schooling in Queensland. There appeared to be some concerning misrepresentations from them or a lack of understanding on how the process already works and also how it works in other states.

Every year, we are required to submit our plan to HEU for the upcoming year demonstrating how we will be delivering a high quality and appropriate education curriculum to our child as well as our goals for the year. We also include detail as to the study environment. A great deal of time is spent researching, comparing options and preparing this document, leaning on local and international sources to create an exceptional and engaging curriculum for our daughter which far outstrips what ACARA offers.

As part of this process, we also submit our annual report to HEU demonstrating progress throughout the year. The requirement is to provide a written report on English, Mathematics and a third subject which changes every year, as well as providing two samples per reported subject demonstrating her progress and high educational outcomes. In this report, we discuss challenges that we faced and how we overcame them as well as things that went exceptionally well in her academic progress. We also talked about the goals that were set for the year and how we went about achieving them.

HEU already has the ability to request more information and/or remove our registration if we are not providing, nor demonstrating, the high quality education our child requires. The Department of Education appears to be suggesting that we don't already have these structures in place.

The proposal feels draconian. We will be forced to use the Australian Curriculum in some formal way **and** report across all subjects on an annual basis. It is **not** a purpose fit curriculum for homeschooling families, it is far more suited to classroom settings. By their own information, ACARA was developed for teachers, to be implemented in a school classroom environment.

Furthermore, it doesn't provide the scope and flexibility that homeschooling families enjoy to explore fresh topics of interest, deep dive when required, pivot when something strikes our interest, or encourage a passion for learning that we are trying to foster. It is trying to be a cookie cutter approach to handling children in a large scale setting. The additional overhead in terms of preparation and reporting requirements will take precious learning time away from families all in the hopes that it ticks a box, not to mention that it will increase the workload of HEU officials who are already struggling with the current three subject reporting volumes.

Learning environment

We are able to provide a safe and nurturing environment due to homeschooling. No school is able to match what we can provide for our child. She is able to receive one on one tuition as required and, in subjects she is passionate about, the ability to let her imagination soar without interruption or being subjected to unwanted attention or interference. She is a bright and gifted child and we are able to nurture her natural talents while supporting her in all of her other subjects. We are able to equip her for lifelong learning, give her access to information, people, tools, equipment, and environments that school-bound children can only dream of.

Guiding Principles

This is the most concerning aspect of the proposals. The current legislation says that parents have the responsibility of choosing a suitable education environment for their children. The proposal takes parents almost completely out of the picture and essentially hands that authority to the State due to its wording.

As a parent, it is my right and obligation to choose and direct the best educational option for my child, the education that will meet her needs, provide for her safety and wellbeing, and align with our family values and faith. I know her better than anyone else. I am deeply concerned that the government wants to have an overriding right to dictate how and where my child receives her education. Government should never be in a position to be able to override the family structure because it doesn't suit them or they "feel" that it might be in the best interests of the child to do so. The Department's proposals are leading our state to a dark place.

Finally

I want to prepare my child for a successful life, one where she has a love for lifelong learning, an ability to think for herself, to create, to be passionate, to contribute to her society both locally and globally. The education we are able to provide at home far exceeds any that a formalised school structure or national curriculum like ACARA can provide. Since we have started homeschooling with our own high standard curriculum, her love for learning has blossomed, she is engaged and excited to learn!

We spend a great deal of time and effort to ensure that my daughter has an amazing education filled with new insights, new social networks, new ideas. Being forced to follow a **school classroom focused** curriculum will dampen her enthusiasm, wiping out all her advanced studies in a blink of an eye. The additional burden on us as parents to align and report on a curriculum like ACARA, will take valuable education time away from my daughter. It will add no value to her education and, worse, will negatively impact her as she is already exceeding in many areas.

I do NOT consent to the proposed changes to home schooling. Queensland is already considered to have one of the most onerous structures of all the states. Our daughter is thriving in ways that she could never have achieved in a school setting and it would appear that the Department is trying to undermine the positive educational outcomes that are evidence based in the homeschooling community.

I want the best for my daughter and the proposals will create a structure which will create far worse outcomes for her.

Please do not allow this bill to proceed in its current form. It will have a negative impact on both the homeschooling community as well as the broader student community.