

## Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

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One of the conversations that my wife and I had once we began having children was about the type of schooling we would provide for them. At the time, conversations around the topic of same-sex marriage and gender fluidity were ramping up, and we believed that these pagan perspectives would soon be introduced into the school curriculum. Although we knew our consciences would eventually require us to homeschool as these ideologies became embedded in the curriculum, what was unexpected was the primary reason we withdrew our Children and began homeschooling. As a Baptist, one of our primary distinctions is ‘liberty of conscience’ on matters of Christian liberty. During the COVID years, we refused to allow our children to have a state-sanctioned lesson in coercion of conscience, particularly directed toward non-conformist teachers.

As it turns out, our experience was not unique. We are one of 6,637 families that shifted to homeschooling in Queensland during the COVID years.<sup>1</sup> This marks a massive 260% increase in Queensland Homeschooling, with thousands more believed to be unregistered.

This has naturally caught the attention of the Queensland State Labour government. Labour is not a party known to promote small government and self-governance, rather its socialist-leaning policies tend towards collectivism. Therefore, independent and home education stands in direct contrast to Labours *modus operandi*. Labour, through the Facebook page of Di Farmer, Minister for Education, has therefore introduced policy changes to bring homeschool education in Queensland in line with the Australian Curriculum.<sup>2</sup>

One would think that the reason for this proposal by the Labour Government is a result of statistical evidence that homeschooled children are falling behind their state and private school peers. This is however not the case. The reason has been explicitly stated as the result of a young person who was homeschooled and committed suicide. The report outlining this case states “The young person’s experiences led the Board to consider the regulatory oversight of, and support for, children registered for home education in Queensland.”<sup>3</sup>

Tragic? Absolutely. However, if the child was abused by the parents, the correct response for the state is not to intervene in the life of every homeschooling family, but rather to prosecute the parents.

Di Famers March 6th post that announced these proposed policy changes is heavily ratioed. It has nearly 1000 dislikes, which are reflected in the comments. Queensland Labour has stirred the hornet's nest of homeschoolers, and unsurprisingly so! Consider the diverse reasons why a family chooses to homeschool:

**First**, a concern that if a child is falling behind under the Australian Curriculum, they would have no option but to continue with the Australian curriculum. Each child is different, perhaps with learning difficulties, and families have decided to remove a child

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-01-22/homeschool-surges-queensland-post-pandemic-restrictions/102015880>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/diforbulimba/posts/pfbid0FCmaagaUPTCmqLDMFuEGMs4MCAamsv7nXFBmuB3r2NaH1w7sQHzeMQYP5YBpF251>

<sup>3</sup> <https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/tp/2024/5724T347-DB90.pdf>

and utilise different curricula and learning strategies suited to a child's needs. It's nonsensical to therefore require that child to once again come under the curriculum that was failing them in the first place.

**Second**, homeschoolers have access to a myriad of world-class curricula, that measure to a standard above the Australian curriculum. This is true for many of the curriculum modules that my wife uses to teach my children.

**Third**, a concern that aspects of the curriculum are politically motivated. For example, the intent of raising a student's critical conscience, of class, race, gender or other category (i.e., CRT) to shape a child's worldview toward socialist leanings. (i.e., ...[how the arrival of the First Fleet] was viewed by First Nations Australians as an invasion).<sup>4</sup>

**Fourth**, a concern of Christian parents is that the Australian Curriculum explicitly includes anti-Christian teaching. For example, the deeply held assumption of evolution in the sciences,<sup>5</sup> and a growing emphasis on pagan perspectives of marriage and gender (i.e., challenging gender assumptions).<sup>6 7</sup>

**Fifth**, an acknowledgment from the Christian worldview, that education of children is not a primary responsibility of the state. This may sound like a radical statement, but only because Australians have grown accustomed to government intervention in almost every aspect of life. Biblically, education is the responsibility of the family. Granted, families may choose to hand that responsibility over to a church or state-operated school. Under God, however, the State does not have the authority to dictate to a parent the particulars of how they are to educate their children.

The primary responsibility of the state (magistrate) under God is to be a terror to bad conduct (Romans 13:3). In Romans 13:8-14, Paul defines good and bad conduct in terms of God's moral law, especially those last six commands that relate to our conduct toward others. This is the chief end of government to uphold God's law.

The training of children, however, is a task primarily entrusted to parents (i.e., Deut. 6:4-8; Psalm 78:5; Proverbs 22:6; Ephesians 6:4). Parents may choose to delegate this task to others, but the state has not been entrusted under God with this area of responsibility.

In matters where the state has extended itself into areas outside of its God-ordained jurisdiction, Baptists have historically said, "...we don't acknowledge your authority in this area of life."

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<sup>4</sup> Indigenous studies are present in every year of the HASS curriculum. i.e., [https://v9.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/learning-areas/geography-7-10\\_history-7-10/year-7](https://v9.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/learning-areas/geography-7-10_history-7-10/year-7)

<sup>5</sup> <https://v9.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/learning-areas/science/year-10>

<sup>6</sup>

[https://v9.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/learning-areas/health-and-physical-education/year-9\\_year-10](https://v9.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/learning-areas/health-and-physical-education/year-9_year-10)

<sup>7</sup> <https://education.qld.gov.au/student/Documents/diversity-information-for-principals.pdf>

These changes to Homeschool education represent an incredible threat to civil and religious liberties. Should these policy changes be ratified, there will be nowhere for non-conformist families to flee. You will be required to teach your child according to the requirements of the secular state. This matter may not affect you now, you may be content with state or private education, which is your prerogative. But as the gathering storm grows, it will affect your children and your children's children, as they find they have no safe haven in which to educate their children.