

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

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To Whom it May Concern

**RE: the EDUCATION (GENERAL PROVISIONS) AND OTHER LEGISLATION
AMENDMENT BILL 2024**

I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the recent education legislation changes that have been proposed in our state. As a constituent and a member of the community, I believe it is crucial to voice my objections to the potential impact of these changes on our education system.

I am a retired public servant of 20+ years having worked across all areas of Government local, state, and federal, including the Education Department in Mount Isa. I have been a childcare worker and have completed qualifications in education.

Additionally, I am a classically trained singer and music teacher of many years. I have worked extensively with children of all ages throughout my long career. Most importantly, I am a grandmother home educating three of my grandchildren aged 14, 12 and 10.

The proposed legislation raises several pressing concerns that I believe need to be addressed.

Firstly, a bit about our family and why we made a very considered decision to home educate the children. Master 10 is Neurodiverse with many learning disabilities. He went through to Grade 3 in traditional state school without learning how to read and write nor did he have any numeracy skills. This was NOT evident on his report cards. At our last parent/teacher interview the teacher asked ME did I have any ideas on how to teach him! Additionally, due to his naïve nature, he was being made a scapegoat by his peers and bullying ensued, seriously beginning to damage his delicate self-esteem.

Miss 12 suffers from severe anxiety and would have meltdowns and school refusal every day of the week. If we managed to get her through the school gates (after often over an hour of cajoling), she would spend most of her day with the Chappy, in the sick room or with a support teacher.

Master 14 was excited to start high school, he has a brilliant and inquisitive mind. After some time, it became evident that this toxic environment was not a healthy option for him. He would come home from school angry, disconnected and have very dark thoughts. This is NOT his personality, and we were seriously concerned for his mental health.

The children now are more relaxed, they have many friends in the homeschool community and are following their interests and are learning and thriving, which is evidenced from our regular annual reports sent to the Home Education Unit. Master 14 plans on attending TAFE next year to follow his interests in Engineering. Miss 11 is interested in becoming an Art teacher and we are encouraging this through experimentation in various art subjects and mediums. Master 10 is plodding along and learning at his own pace with the help of some professionals including physiotherapists, occupational therapists, speech therapists and one on one tutoring in literacy and numeracy. He has a great interest in STEM and has been thriving in this area. He just learns DIFFERENTLY.

I believe the extra pressure of having to follow the Australian Curriculum would put undue pressure on our children given their delicate dispositions, mental health and learning disabilities and would not suit our family's learning style at all.

I would question how can a single national curriculum address the needs of my diverse learners? Additionally, having to report on every subject in the curriculum will place a huge burden on our family and all home educated families taking away valuable and quality learning opportunities already existing in our home-schooling community.

How will this bill define "suitable educational environment" for OUR children? This could potentially limit our ability to tailor education to our children's unique learning needs and styles.

I am very happy to provide you with a copy of our children's learning plans and "approved" annual reports, so that you can see the quality of education we are providing the children.

Furthermore, I am worried about the lack of transparency and public consultation surrounding these changes. As a stakeholder in our education system, I believe it is imperative for the voices of educators, parents, students, and community members to be heard and considered in any decision-making process that impacts our ability to educate our children to the highest standard.

In light of these concerns, I urge you to carefully reconsider the proposed education legislation and to prioritize the best interests of our rapidly growing and proactive home educating community. I implore you to advocate for a more inclusive and collaborative approach to policymaking that values input from all stakeholders and ensures the integrity and quality of our education system.

Thank you for taking the time to read my letter and for considering my concerns. I look forward to your response on this important issue.

Yours sincerely,

