

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

Submission No: 887
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Submitter Comments:

I am a homeschooling mum to three children, aged 7, 9 and 12. I believe the proposed legislative changes regarding homeschooling in Queensland should not proceed, specifically, changing the definition of an approved education plan to the Australian Curriculum, the added requirement that home education should be in the 'best interests of the child' and the removal of the grace period when submitting a plan. Homeschoolers have a unique capacity to educate their children in a deep and meaningful way and should not be forced to teach to the Australian curriculum. Homeschoolers are self-funded and the majority hold their children's education to a high standard. Why should we be penalised, creating more paperwork and administrative burden to cater to bureaucrats? Our family has been homeschooling since 2019. Our eldest daughter attended one of the most 'well-regarded' state schools in Queensland for two years before we decided to pull her out and start homeschooling. She was achieving high marks and was fully engaged in the system. Was she healthy and happy? Sadly, she was not. Since this life-altering decision, our three children have absolutely thrived. They are now healthy, well-socialised, enthusiastic learners who are excelling in their academic, sporting and creative pursuits. Their future is bright. Our approach to homeschooling has evolved as the children have grown, however overall, we've adopted a 'classical style' of education. Our approach differs to the Australian curriculum. One example of this is our strong focus on early exposure to great literature. In practical terms, this means we start the day reading to (and with) the children for up to an hour from a curated list of books. In-depth discussions about these books often happen around the dinner table or later in the afternoon once 'desk work' is complete. It is a joy to witness their growth in understanding and maturity in these discussions. This flexible approach is suitable for a homeschooling family with children who have learnt to listen and attend carefully and would not be suitable for the school classroom. This is one illustration of how our approach differs to the Australian curriculum. Do I care to follow a program that limits this flexible, individualised, in-depth education, one that is created to help teachers educate a classroom of students? I do not. I could continue to expound on the vast differences between home schooling and classroom learning however I feel my point has been made. Whether it be maths, English, history or social studies, homeschooling should not be made to align with what state schools are teaching. In order to homeschool, our family made the decision to be a one-income family. We receive no funding or assistance to homeschool. We have purchased many thousands of dollars worth of curriculum and books. Our commitment to provide a high-quality education to our children is sincere and is not dependent on government box-ticking. Finally, I would like to add that the administrative requirements of applying for registration through the Home Education Unit is currently appropriate. We report on progress and provide an individualised plan for the next year. This allows the government to have oversight without placing unnecessary administrative burden on the homeschooling family. Additional administrative requirements merely take away from the time available for and investment into our children. Our children are thriving. We require no special funding. The administrative requirements are currently appropriate. Please reconsider this legislation.