

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

**Submission No:** 894  
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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [Education, Employment, Training and Skills Committee](#)  
**Subject:** Submission in response the Education General Provisions Act Review, the "Bill".  
**Date:** Saturday, 23 March 2024 5:11:44 PM

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Dear Esteemed Committee Members,

My name is Sarah Howard. I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the recent education legislation changes that have been proposed in our state. As a Home Educating parent and constituent, I believe it is crucial to voice my apprehensions about the potential impact of these changes on my family, the Home Education community of Queensland and our education system.

Should the Queensland Labor Government decide to pass this Bill without properly consulting with the Home Educating community to ensure that this Bill enhances rather than degrades the lives of the Home Education community, then please be assured that the Labor candidate for Ipswich West will receive the lowest preference possible on my ballot paper, when the Queensland State Election is held in October 2024.

As a Home Educating parent of a child with several disabilities, I am deeply disappointed by the proposed changes to Home Education legislation. For many children with disabilities and neurodivergences, Home Education is not just a choice but a necessity—an opportunity to create an environment where they can thrive at their own pace and in their own unique way.

It is disheartening to see a focus on making Home Education more rigid rather than addressing the systemic barriers that prevent many children with disabilities from accessing quality education in mainstream schools. Instead of imposing restrictive measures on Home Educating families, the committee's efforts would be better directed towards making mainstream schools more accessible and inclusive for all students, regardless of their abilities or differences.

Children with disabilities often face significant challenges in traditional school settings, where rigid structures and standardized approaches may not accommodate their diverse needs. Home Education provides a lifeline for these children, offering the flexibility and personalized support they require to learn and grow in a safe and nurturing environment.

Rather than limiting the options available to families, we should be working to ensure that all children have access to a range of educational opportunities that meet their individual needs and preferences. This includes advocating for greater resources and support for inclusive education practices within mainstream schools, as well as providing alternative options like Home Education for those who require a more tailored approach.

According to recent research collected by the Home Education Unit (2022), two of three Home Educating families have chosen to do so because of an underlying disability or health issue. For these children working the Australian Curriculum is not providing them a high-quality education or meeting their immediate needs. They have chosen this avenue because of the flexibility it affords. This enables families to educate and care for their children in a manner that suits their learning style.

Our Story :

I successfully graduated Year 12 and was later awarded a Diploma of Travel and Tourism which I studied at TAFE Queensland. I spent a large part of my working life, prior to and after giving birth to my daughter (now almost 9 years old) working at TAFE Queensland.

My daughter spent two years at a wonderful C&K Kindergarten in Ipswich after which we made the mutual decision to register with the Home Education Unit to commence Home Education in 2021. We have never regretted this decision and treasure the ability that this gives my daughter who has Autism - Level 2 and ADHD, as the beautiful Maori explanation of Autism says, to learn in her own space and time, not by the schedule of a curriculum written by a group of people who do not understand her unique needs and passions. Witnessing her flourish, learn new skills, socialise with people from all ages and walks of life, explore her interests, conquer challenges and experience pride in her achievements without being restricted in the way that she does this is a wonder and joy to behold for our entire extended family.

I very strongly DISAGREE with the proposed changes to the Bill for the following reasons :

1. We do not wish to use ACARA to inform [REDACTED] learning because it would require her to study some subjects which would be difficult given her disabilities. ACARA also requires that content be delivered at a relentless pace that she does not have the stamina to manage and it would mean that there would not be time left in the day for her to attend her essential NDIS-funded therapies.

Moreover, the requirement for reporting on all subjects would impose an onerous burden on Home Educating parents, consuming valuable time and resources without offering any tangible benefits to our children's educational development.

The freedom to Home Educate my daughter via interest-based learning has meant that we have been able to foster her love of creating original art works. The three art classes that she attends each week are the highlights of her week. The small group and one on one instruction she receives helped her to create works of art for which she won awards at the Ipswich, Rosewood and Dayboro Shows in 2023.

2. The ability to hold provisional registration prior to submitting my daughter's plan was essential for me because I was creating [REDACTED] first plan when I fell and badly broke my arm. I required two surgeries and almost three weeks in hospital. Provisional registration allowed me the time to start healing and complete my plan during the provisional registration period. Had this option not been available to me I would have suddenly had to enrol her into a school with none of the necessary preparation required to transition her into the school environment nor arrange supports for her additional needs.

I hold grave concerns for the safety and wellbeing of children who need to suddenly be removed from school due to bullying. If their parents/carers cannot apply for provisional registration while they create a Home Education plan they will be negligent in their duty of care to the child by having to send them back to the unsafe environment of the school while they write the plan and complete their application.

3. Successful Home Education looks incredibly different to classroom teaching. There are many factors that influence this such as multi-age teaching, concepts or projects that cross many different subject areas and children who have differing learning speeds and styles within the same family.

ACARA aligned resources, methods and expectations are written for qualified teachers, who teach a large number of children at a time. They mostly do not make sense in a 1:1 or a small group learning environment.

Many Home Educating families follow an interest or project lead learning style. This enables deep learning in an area of particular interest. This is particularly difficult to facilitate when ticking boxes off a curriculum.

Many Home Educated children do not attend school because they are neurodivergent (this includes my daughter) and do not learn best in a traditional way. We have already tried the Australian Curriculum and it has proven to be woefully inadequate for such a bright, curious and voracious learner as my daughter.

As parents of these children, the Home Educating community of Queensland have already sacrificed so much to try and work through the school system, now we are doing everything we can to ensure we are already providing a high quality education (that has already been approved by the HEU) that is adapted to suit the learning styles of our children.

ACARA, which is based on the US Common Core and UK Common Purpose curriculums, is claimed to offer a high quality education but, Charlotte Iserbyt, who helped implement US Common Core, has been quoted as denouncing this curriculum for deliberately dumbing down children. The children of Queensland deserve so much better than this.

I would like to draw your attention to the much more humane and flexible approach taken to Home Education legislation in Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory.

4. I object to the guiding principle of proving that Home Educating is in the best interest of my child because choosing to raise my daughter according to my values and beliefs is my human right.

I would be most grateful if Dianne Farmer MP would respond to the following questions :

a) how is the legislation that you are proposing in the best interest of the Home Educating community?

b) what evidence do you have that the current model of registration, reporting and legislation for Home

Education is inadequate?

c) please provide links to peer-reviewed research that shows that students who are taught using ACARA have better educational and lifestyle outcomes compared to those who are taught using other curricula

d) please discuss, in depth, the consultation you have had with the Home Education community to determine that the changes to the Bill are needed and are in the best interests of the Home Education community

In light of these concerns, I urge you to carefully reconsider the proposed changes to the education legislation and to prioritize the best interests of our students, teachers, and schools. 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 urge the committee to reconsider its approach to homeschooling legislation and to prioritize the needs of children with disabilities and neurodivergences.

I look forward to your response and to further dialogue on this important issue.

Yours sincerely,

Sarah Howard  
Home Educating Mother who is Tertiary Educated