

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

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From: [REDACTED]
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Good afternoon,

We are currently engaged in homeschooling in Queensland, and I am submitting this formal response regarding the proposed legislative change before Parliament. This change would require home educators to comply with ACARA (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority) and demonstrate academic progress across all subjects.

Our decision to transition from mainstream schooling was driven by various factors. We have three children, each with unique learning styles and tailor their schooling to their individual needs.

Student One: This student consistently excelled in school, always ahead of the curriculum, finding traditional schooling "boring" and disengaging. She is now thriving in an online-based high school (not affiliated with ACARA). After researching her options for high school, she independently applied, completed her pre-testing, and successfully earned a scholarship at this school. She is challenged, engaged, and inspired, beginning her day at 6 am to be online by 7am, eager for a day of learning. She is working well above the Australian Curriculum and remains focused, on task, and achieving remarkable results.

Student Two: Our sociable and enthusiastic learner faced significant challenges within the traditional system, despite our ongoing concerns and interventions being disregarded by the school. During the pandemic, when we transitioned to homeschooling, it became evident how far behind she was within the system. At the time, she was placed in a composite Prep/Grade 1/Grade 2 classroom, despite being in Grade 2. Recognizing her needs, we kept her out of the system until Term 4 of 2022. Through extensive dedication, hard work, tutoring, and support programs, she is now performing at or above grade level in all subjects. She is happily and confidently engaged in Distance Education, demonstrating remarkable dedication and progress.

Student Three: Our youngest faced challenges of bullying during Prep, with minimal intervention from the school. He was often labeled as the "naughty child," struggling to follow instructions and remain seated in a composite classroom. Recognizing his hands-on and active learning style, we chose not to medicate him to conform to traditional classroom expectations. As farmers, we are fortunate to provide a hands-on learning environment at home, delivering a high-quality education primarily through practical experiences.

I believe that the proposed bill places higher reporting burdens on home educators compared to schools. It is evident that the Home Education Unit (HEU) is significantly understaffed and unable to keep up with current reporting requirements, let alone the proposed changes.

These proposed changes are unacceptable and not in the best interest of home-educated children. Families choose homeschooling for various reasons, all centered on the best interests of their child/children. In our case, it was a response to the failures of the school system that impacted all three of our children differently. We, as parents, act in our children's best interests, meeting their educational, social and emotional needs. If we were confident that schools and the curriculum were effectively ensuring our children's safety, providing a "high-quality" education, and meeting the need of all students needs, we would not have chosen the individual paths of learning for each child. The significant increase of 195% in home education rates since 2019 underscores the growing need for diverse educational pathways to meet individual learning needs.

Every child deserves access to a high-quality education through a pathway that best suits their unique learning style, not all children fit your box. Thank you for considering our perspective on this important matter.

Sincerely,
Kristie Turney
[REDACTED]