

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

Submission No: 1159
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Dear Committee,

I am writing to express my thoughts and concerns on the proposed Queensland Education Legislation Amendments, with specific reference to elements relating to Home Education. I am a senior academic at an Australian tertiary institution with more than 20 years of experience in higher education, and firmly believe in the right and value for all members of our country and communities to receive a high-quality education. I am also a father of two wonderful children who are currently home-schooled. My children, now 11 and 14 years of age, one neurodiverse, transitioned to home-schooling following a protracted period of difficulty in school. Both are now much, much happier individuals who are excelling in their studies. I have reviewed the proposed Amendments and have outlined my concerns below:

1. Constraining home-school curriculum to the Australian Curriculum. Whilst a standardised curriculum may confer benefits associated with “standardised” learning, it does not by any means serve everyone optimally. For many individuals, the flexibility afforded in a homeschooling environment will provide them with the best educational experience. It allows homeschool providers to develop and adapt from a vast range of available and high-quality curriculums to best suit their children. I have seen this with my children, who were either falling significantly behind or not engaged with their formal school studies; the progress that they are now making, particularly in math and literacy, outstrips what they have previously achieved in formal school. Home-school plans currently have to be submitted and formally approved for implementation; constraining these plans to a single curriculum will not serve these communities’ needs, nor will it provide for an optimal educational experience for affected children.
2. Constraining senior students to the QCAA syllabus. As above, but also this is not a reasonable, or even currently viable option, for home educators, who do not have access to: 1) submit study plans (as schools have to do 12-months in advance), 2) Access to sit the QCE.
3. Exclusion of tertiary education options for senior students in a home-school setting. The current Amendments make specific inclusion of VET courses in developing senior home-school curriculum, but no reference to other form of tertiary education (e.g., university) that are currently available and on offer. It is unclear why the educational options for home-schoolers are being constrained in this way.

In conclusion, I appreciate the intentions of curators of the Amendment are to better serve the educational needs of Queenslanders. However, I ask that you reconsider these proposed changes, remove the adherence to acara and instead support the individualised education that homeschooling provides. Let us continue to tailor our children's education to meet their unique needs, interests, and abilities.

Thank you for considering my perspective on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Dr Surendran Sabapathy