

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

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Submitted by: [REDACTED]
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Dear Sir/Madam

Please find following my submission in regards to the proposed homeschooling legislation that was tabled in the Queensland state Parliament.

I am very concerned with the proposed amendments. I am the mother of 5 children, 2 who are currently at university, one is in year 12 and the other 2 are homeschooled.

Our reasons for homeschooling our two youngest vary. We have noticed the general decline in the quality of education over the years and the general decline in the behaviour of children at school. My children have always been high achievers and classed as the “good kids” at school. In 2022 we decided to homeschool our youngest daughter (who was at the time going into year 3). There were several reasons for this. There was forecast at the time a shortage of teachers and much disruption for the coming year. There was also a lot of fear around Covid at the time. During the previous years, my daughter’s needs were not being met, in spite of the reassurance by the teacher’s that they would extend her in the classroom. She would often come home in tears, saying how bored she was at school and how much time she spent waiting around for the naughty kids and for other kids to finish their work. I also did not approve of some of the behaviours and attitudes that were developing in her. We decided to homeschool for a year and see how it went. My daughter absolutely thrived at home. We became part of a very active homeschooling community and support network. My daughter’s behaviour improved, she absolutely loved the classes she was attending and she was again a motivated and happy child.

My second daughter made the decision to homeschool as she was desperately unhappy at school and was withdrawing from life generally. We were so concerned about her as her stress levels were so high that she would barely cope getting to school and when she was home she would just withdraw from everyone. We were incredibly concerned for her and her health. Since homeschooling and getting her counselling and other support, we have watched her blossom. She goes to two groups a week where she gets exposed to a variety of different subjects as well as us running a general science group at our home for 10 students once a week. She also does maths and english subjects online. She is exposed to a rich and varied curriculum that caters for her interest and needs.

I am extremely concerned about the effect that the proposed changes to the legislation would likely have on my children. We

currently use the Australian curriculum as a guideline for our studies, in particular for maths, english and science. However, we do not follow it strictly. If my children are exposed to something that they really enjoy, we will delve into it much more deeply than the Australian curriculum allows.

Another point of concern is the wording in the proposed legislation that:

“(da)for chapter 9, part 5, home education of a child or young person should be provided in a way that —

(i)is in the best interests of the child or young person taking into account their safety and wellbeing; and

(ii)ensures the child or young person receives a high-quality education;”

Who decides what is in the best interest of our children? Is it a doctor or a government official? No-one knows my children’s needs that way I or my husband do. My children are now happy and thriving and receiving a diverse and complete education.

And what constitutes a high quality education? My daughter is now in year 10 and studying under several teachers, doing a university subject and attending a number of groups where she receives and wonderful education. But it does not tick all the boxes of the Australian Curriculum. This does not make it less of a high quality education.

This legislation, as it stands, takes the rights and decision away from the parents. Parents should be able to choose a curriculum that works for their child

The National Curriculum is designed for large classrooms of children, not for a personalised teaching environment.

As I see it, the current registration and reporting system are working well and is achievable for homeschooling families.

Instead of making things more prescriptive for homeschooling families, perhaps the Government should review the school system and find out why so many students are leaving it.

Thanks for your time.

Kind regards