

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

Submission No: 1214
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Publication: Making the submission and your name public
Attachments: See attachment
Submitter Comments:

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express the concerns regarding the changes proposed to home education. These concerns are:

- The implementation of Australian National Curriculum syllabuses, as being the only way to provide a high-quality education.
- The requirement for parents to prove that home education is in the best interest of the child.

While I understand the intent to ensure consistency and quality in education for all students, I firmly believe that enforcing a rigid curriculum on all students fails to recognise the diverse needs and preferences of learners. Education is not a one-size-fits-all endeavour. There are numerous effective schooling systems beyond the confines of the Australian National Curriculum. As a homeschooling parent, I have witnessed firsthand how individualized learning plans tailored to my children's unique needs and interests have resulted in their academic success.

I also feel there has been a big misunderstanding as to why parents have chosen the homeschooling path. For most of the homeschooling parents I know and have spoken to over the last 7 years homeschooling was not their first choice but rather something they felt they needed to try after they felt the education system had failed their children. I have witnessed the growth in home education since the pandemic and the stories I hear are all so similar, "I realised my child wasn't thriving in school they were behind and struggling due to bullying, or a medical diagnosis, having them home during lockdowns gave me confidence to try home education". Home education isn't growing due to a trend on social media, its growing as more and more parents are concerned about their child's education, and they are opting to lose an income to try and provide them with a high-quality education that fits their child.

My families story

My eldest daughter attended kindergarten at the age of 4, she loved learning and socialising with the other children. However, she was already displaying differences to the other children her age, this led to bullying. At age 4 the other children were segregating her (locking her in jail using the words of a 4-year-old) and refusing to let her join in with their games. The educators let this happen. The educators would also often forget she was there as she was so quiet, leading to them failing to give her direction during activities or transition times, so she often sat in a quiet space alone and unsure what to do. In the same kindergarten I witnessed the educators laughing and joking about one of the other children, he was diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder, fully grown women were laughing about a child due to his differences. My daughter was diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder this very same year.

Due to our experiences in kindergarten, I was determined to not have it continue into Primary school. I spent many hours researching and touring schools, I asked countless questions trying to find the right fit, trying to find a safe space my daughter would thrive. In the end I realised that my daughter would not thrive within the school system. So, I started looking for other options, this led to homeschooling. I faced the

same issues 3 years later when it was time for my youngest to start school, homeschooling was once again chosen as the best path.

I began our journey using the Australian National Curriculum, I spent many hours poring over the curriculum and standards, trying to ensure my children were meeting the standards and keeping up with their peers. As time went on it became increasingly obvious this approach was not working, my children became disinterested, they refused to engage in learning and my greatest fear happened, they began to hate learning and anything that resembled learning. This began the next stage of our homeschool journey. I spent hundreds of hours learning about other effective education systems, talking with various allied health experts and specialists to put together an education plan that works for my children. I overcame my own bias and expanded my understanding of how children learn to give my children the high quality of education they deserve. My children are now thriving.

There are many stories out there like mine, stories of children who do not fit the mould. This is why it is essential to acknowledge that homeschooling numbers are not merely a trend but a response to a system that does not work for all children. By recognizing and supporting the various education systems and approaches available, we can ensure that every child receives an education tailored to their individual needs and interests.

I urge you to carefully reconsider the proposed education legislation and to prioritize the best interests of our students, teachers, and schools.

Thank you for taking the time to listen to my concerns. It is my hope that, going forward, this legislation can suit the needs of all students across Queensland.

Sincerely,

A Concerned Home Educator