

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

Submission No: 1222
Submitted by: [REDACTED]
Publication: Making the submission public but withholding your name
Attachments: No attachment

Submitter Comments:

Dear Committee Members, I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the Education (General Provisions) and other legislation Amendment Bill 2024. As a constituent and a member of the community, I believe it is crucial to voice my apprehensions about the potential impact of these changes on our education system. I am a home educator with one child. My child is Autistic, has ADHD and is gifted. We have been home educating since my child was school age, and home education has been very clearly a great choice for our family. Home education allows the flexibility to tailor learning to my child's unique needs and allows her to progress at a level suited to her abilities. This very often means that my child can be both above and below grade level in different subjects according to her asynchronous development, as is very common with children with both disabilities/learning differences and giftedness. I am wondering how the changes to this bill will reflect the unique learning situations that many home educated children, my own included, represent. The proposed legislation raises several pressing concerns that I believe need to be addressed. Firstly, I am most concerned about the senior syllabus and TAFE being the only two options for senior level study. I am interested to know how Education Queensland expects home education seniors to follow a QCAA curriculum. How closely will they want this followed, especially if a student is not looking to obtain the Queensland Certificate of Education, which is of little value? Additionally, will the proposed changes allow homeschool seniors to be eligible for an ATAR if home educators are to report progress aligned to the senior syllabus? The senior syllabus is designed very specifically for schools, with implementation relying on QCAA approval of study plans. It is a huge administrative burden to all parties; the QCAA, the Home Education Unit, and the home educator, to implement the senior syllabus in a home environment. Of most concern is that the senior syllabus is designed for senior students to work towards an ATAR, of which currently home educated young people are not eligible to obtain. I am also concerned that university courses are not listed as an acceptable alternative. Many home educated children choose to take university courses earlier than their schooled peers, as a way to enter their chosen tertiary education path and eventual profession. Taking away this option takes away a vital pathway to employment for home educated young people. In the public briefing it was made clear that there are three reasons for these changes to the education act in regards to home education. The reasons being, child welfare, continuity of education, and the general increase in home education numbers. Unfortunately, as there was very little public consultation, and current research in this area is limited, there is a lack of understanding of the home education community. Currently it is estimated that at least 50% of home educators are not registered with HEU, they are unregistered. If this bill passes it will drive many more families to go unregistered, and therefore is counterintuitive to the very reason the bill is proposed; that being child welfare. It also seems like a huge administrative burden to both the home educator and HEU to ensure continuity in education by defining a quality education as the Australian curriculum, when many families will never return to school. Furthermore there is no evidence to suggest that home educated children are behind their peers in the instances where they re-enroll into the public or private education system. Home educators are currently able to access the Australian curriculum if needed, especially if their goal is to reintegrate into the public system.

As already mentioned, I am worried about the lack of transparency and public consultation surrounding these changes. As a stakeholder in our education system, I believe it is imperative for the voices of educators, parents, students, and community members to be heard and considered in

any decision-making process'. To summarise I would like to outline my concerns, That the senior syllabus and TAFE are the only senior education options given. The senior syllabus is not designed for home education implementation. That senior home education students are expected to follow the senior syllabus without being granted an ATAR, as their schooled peers get when following the senior syllabus. That university study is excluded from the definition of a quality education, and excluded as an option for home education students. That the bill will alienate the very children that it's proposing to protect, by pushing home educators underground by going unregistered, and making it even harder to ensure child welfare. That adequate consultation was not undertaken in the process of drafting this legislation. In light of these concerns, I urge you to carefully reconsider the proposed education. 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 look forward to your response and to further dialogue on this important issue. Sincerely, A home educating parent