

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

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For the attention of The Committee

I am writing to express my deep concerns in regards to the proposed changes in the **Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislations Amendment Bill 2024**.

As a homeschooling parent, I have always understood my primary obligation as providing my children with an education that meets their individual needs and interests. For the past 8 years I have homeschooled in two states of Australia and have always had successful reporting and planning practices with the Government Departments. My husband's career in the Resource sector, is very transient and the flexibility of homeschooling has allowed us to move as a family, whilst providing our children with a safe and consistent environment where they can obtain a consistent high-quality education.

Our journey began 8 years ago when my husband was asked to oversee two sites, ten hours' drive apart. My son who was in Grade 1 at the time attended a remote small school and was given the opportunity for dual registration between the two schools. On the first day at the new school, it was astounding as a parent to see the stark difference in the learning environments. My son was nowhere near the level of the children in the new school, through no fault of his own. It was advised that unless I could raise his grades before he returned, they wouldn't be able to accommodate him. Discussions with the principal whom we trusted with our son's education for the past 3 years were tense as we had suddenly learnt how far our son was behind peers at larger schools. Upon initial enrolment we were led to believe that as the school was small with only 11 students, this was an advantage as it allowed more opportunity for more individualised learning. My husband and I discussed that due to his career, we needed to find an option that would offer our son a consistent education, and the decision to homeschool was made. It was a decision not made lightly and I am beyond grateful to be given the opportunity to homeschool my family as it has allowed me to understand my children on a much deeper level and accommodate their needs to the fullest extent possible.

I object to the proposal of Mandatory use of the Australian Curriculum. I feel that the curriculum is a base level for us and we learnt quite quickly in our journey that it was **more suited to teaching a large group of students**. It didn't allow me to explore subjects or topics on a deeper level as needed. I feel by forcing us back into the national curriculum it will **extinguish their current passion and curiosity to learn**. My son is a teenager keen to start his own business so with in depth research I have found a program that will allow me to explore all facets of a business with him in his current learning journey. If we were following the national curriculum this wouldn't be an option as subjects such as compound interest aren't taught for another 3 years.

It is of deep concern to me that if this bill passes, I will then be required to plan and report on all subjects consistent with the national curriculum and demonstrate academic progress across them all. I spend enough time on my reporting and planning already and I feel this would take even more valuable time away from my family which could be better spent educating them. As a family we have invested a decent sum of our family budget into resources and programs that provide our children with a high-quality education above and beyond the national curriculum.

I also strongly object to the proposal within this bill in regards to the "best interest of the child". I can't help but feel I am being discriminated against and portrayed that I am not safe to my children by this inclusion in the bill. As a family we make many sacrifices to provide an extremely safe and nurturing environment for our family. We travel in excess of an hour several times a week to ensure social interaction with peers at homeschooling events and activities. We also enrol them into sports

such as swimming, tennis, martial arts and allow them to try different activities. I enjoy being able to provide my children with the flexibility of homeschooling which isn't only focused on academic outcomes, but also allows me to ensure the mental health and physical needs of my children are being met as well.

My final point I am **strongly opposed to in this bill is the removal of provisional registration**. I have very recently been asked by two families struggling with bullying at their child's school to help educate them on their options once they remove their children from school as they fear for their child's mental health and safety. By having the current system in place, it has allowed these families to remove their child immediately from the situation into the safety of their own homes whilst they research the options that would best suit not only the child but the family unit. Writing an individualised learning plan for your child while you are in a state of high concern for your child's safety is no easy task. Parents need to have a grace period where they can have the time to research their options and resources available to them in order to provide a high-quality education for their child. By removing this safe guard, I think it will be **detrimental to many families** who will have to rush through a plan or sign up with the first available Distance Education provider just so they can safely remove their child in a timely manner.

I do not feel as a homeschooling parent that I was fairly represented in the second round of consultation. As Queensland has no official state homeschooling association, I feel my concerns weren't actively heard or voiced. I did not even receive the email from the HEU even though I have been registered with them for several years alerting me to these changes. It was only through social media that I was made aware by a post from the ladies Amanda Bartle and Patricia Fitzgerald who attended the first round and were very active in keeping the homeschooling community updated each step of the way.

Thank you for your time and I will sign off leaving you with this thought - it is essential to recognize and appreciate the value that homeschooling brings to education. **Rather than implying inadequacy, we should commend and support parents who choose this path for their children's education.**

Thank you for considering this perspective.