

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

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As a Grandmother of three beautiful home educated children, I am opposed to a number of the proposed changes in the Education (General Provisions) and other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. It is clear that the people making these laws do not have an understanding of how home education is actually working and they did not consult with the home educating families that will be directly impacted by these changes.

This Bill should not be rushed through when it has been based on incorrect information and written by people with seemingly no knowledge of the reality of home education. At the very least, there needs to be proper consultation conducted that is inclusive of home educating families and not just with a few companies and associations that do not represent the home education community.

A really concerning omission from the Bill is not including university as an approved component of home education. Many home educated children (some as young as 13) enrol in university as part of their home education and they should not be denied this opportunity. This is a clear example of how little the people that wrote this bill understand the reality of home education.

I have seen my grandchildren flourish since leaving school. Their parents have provided them with a education at home that is tailored to their needs, not a one-size-fits all approach that the Australian Curriculum delivers. My grandchildren have been able to focus on their interests at a pace developmentally appropriate for them, while still gaining the necessary skills they will need throughout their lives. They do not need unnecessary content taught to them that they will not remember and will actually take time away from developing their literacy and numeracy skills, as well as participating in a variety of activities including dancing, drama, art and sport.

My grandchildren are gaining a well-rounded, high-quality education without the Australian Curriculum. They are well spoken, confident children that are enjoying their life and learning all the time. Forcing unnecessary learning on to these children will harm and not help these children.

Home educators should also not have to provide reporting that is onerous and over and above other state requirements. Queensland home educators already provide a yearly detailed plan and report on each child to maintain their registration. In many other states (including NSW), a moderator comes to the home and conducts the reporting. In these states, home educators are not expected to provide written reports and map the work to the curriculum. If you want to ensure families register, the system needs to be simple, personalised and not impose costs (financial or otherwise) otherwise it will not happen. By making it onerous, people are more likely to not comply and go underground.

As mentioned, my grandchildren attend a number of activities in the community and are interacting with many other adults and children. They are not locked away in a basement or living in a cult. Any welfare concerns can be put to rest by the knowledge that the teachers/coaches they interact with would be obliged to report any concerns. As with any child, welfare concerns are the responsibility of child safety and other agencies and nothing to do with education. These changes will have no impact on child safety issues as they are simply about educational choices.

Instead of making it more difficult for families, the government should be providing additional support so that home educated children have the same opportunities and resources provided to those attending school. Not even a tiny portion of the funding the home educated children would be entitled to if attending school is provided to their families to assist with their education. If the government actually wanted to support these families they would provide additional support and not just impose unnecessary onerous work. Examples of resources that could be provided to home educated children included an .edu email address as well as free access to a range of educational apps that school children have access to.

I ask you consider these points and do not endorse the Bill in its current form.