

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

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Dear Minister Farmer,

I hope this letter finds you well. As a scholar and advocate for equitable education, I write to you with sincere concern regarding Clause 68 of Amendment s 217, particularly its implications for neurodivergent and gifted and talented children within Queensland's educational framework.

Clause 68 of Amendment s 217 stipulates that an "approved education and training program" primarily refers to the national school curriculum, colloquially known as the Australian Curriculum. While recognizing the potential benefits of standardised education, I urge you to consider the limitations and potential repercussions of adhering solely to a "one size fits all" curriculum approach, especially concerning neurodivergent children.

Neurodiversity encompasses a broad spectrum of neurological differences, including but not limited to autism, ADHD, dyslexia, and various learning disabilities. The rigidity of a standardised curriculum can present significant barriers for neurodivergent learners, as it often fails to accommodate their diverse learning styles, strengths, and challenges. By tethering educational provision exclusively to this standardised model, we risk overlooking the individualised needs and potential of neurodivergent students.

Research consistently demonstrates that neurodivergent children thrive in environments that embrace flexibility, personalised learning approaches, and accommodations tailored to their unique neurocognitive profiles, not to mention the deep love and belonging, nurturing space that home education provides. Limiting their educational opportunities to a homogeneous curriculum not only undermines their academic progress but also perpetuates a system that fails to recognise and celebrate neurodiversity as a valuable aspect of our society.

Therefore, I respectfully urge you to reconsider the current approach outlined in Clause 68 and advocate for greater flexibility and inclusivity within Queensland's education system. This necessitates meaningful consultation with a diverse range of stakeholders, including educators, home-educating parents, advocacy groups, and neurodivergent individuals themselves. By engaging in collaborative dialogue and incorporating diverse perspectives, we can develop a more responsive and inclusive educational framework that caters to the needs of *all* learners, including those who diverge from the neurotypical norm.

Moreover, I encourage the Queensland Government to explore avenues through which it can support and empower home educating families, particularly those with neurodivergent children. This may involve providing access to specialised resources, edu.au email addresses for each student, professional development opportunities for parents and caregivers, and establishing networks for peer support and knowledge exchange. By fostering a *supportive* environment for home educators, the government can enhance educational outcomes and promote the holistic development of neurodivergent and gifted learners within our communities, as well as reducing the pressures currently being experienced by those in the Education System.

In conclusion, I implore you to prioritise the well-being and educational equity of neurodivergent and other children by reconsidering the restrictive nature of Clause 68 and advocating for a more inclusive and flexible approach to education in Queensland. Together, we can work towards a future where every child, regardless of neurodiversity, has the opportunity to thrive and reach their full potential.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. I am confident that, with your leadership and commitment, we can effect positive change within Queensland's education system.

Thanks,