

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

Submission No: 1281
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Dear Committee Members,

Following is my submission on objections to the proposed changes in the Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislations Amendment Bill 2024.

Who am I?

I am a veteran homeschooling parent of 15 years with 6 children. To-date, I have 2 successful homeschool graduates, 3 children still learning at home through a DE school and 6th child attending a democratic school. He is the first of my 6 children to ever attend any form of day school and started only this year.

I am a committed homeschooling single mum who juggles part-time work along with voluntarily helping facilitate a homeschool co-op and a homeschool dance school. My life is committed to providing a high quality education to my children. This is MY choice.

My oldest graduate (20yrs) owns and run her own business in her chosen career. My 18yr old graduate is undertaking further studies in her chosen career. My next graduate-to-be (16yrs) is entering the airforce next year. This is all achieved in the absence of an education dictated by a National Curriculum.

Why I chose home education?

My (then) husband & I decided to homeschool when our oldest (who is now 20) was just 3 years old. This decision was prompted when Prep was introduced to Queensland as we do not agree with formal education for such young children. My daughter would have been 4yrs old and forced to attend an establishment for 6hrs a day, away from the nurturing and supportive family environment, so we were pushed to find an alternative pathway of education. Our reasons to continue homeschooling changed and morphed throughout the years. Basically, our children were thriving so we thought why change!?

I freely homeschooled for 7 years, across 3 states of Australia without using a National Curriculum. A change in our family situation (divorce) forced me to enrol the children into a distance education environment so I could continue to still educate from our home

environment. After 7 years learning freely at home with no set curriculum, my children fitted into the distance education levels right beside their peers.

I chose a DE school that had a good reputation for their flexible learning requirements. We continued without a forced curriculum for another 4 years. They allowed children to learn how best suited them; allowed my children to engage and follow their passions and interests and then moulded their learning outcomes to fit reporting purposes. My children continued to learn and flourish in the absence of a National Curriculum.

Additional proof that a high quality education can be and is successful without the need for adherence to a National Curriculum is evidenced with one of my children entering “day school” this year. He has equally and immediately slotted into school alongside his peers in all aspects, particularly academically, although academics isn't the only area my children thrive in. They are strong, confident, innovative out-of-the-box thinkers - attributed to their freedom to learn how best suits them individually and the ability to follow their passions, thereby creating passionate self-led learners for life.

While some of my children may be in distance education at the moment, I stand against these changes because I want to ensure choice is always available to not only my family but any future possible new homeschool families.

Rejections of the Proposal

- *A 'suitable' educational environment as determined by the Government (instead of parents)*
 - This wording is a slippery slope and leads directly away from democracy straight into tyranny.
 - The government has no place in telling parents what is best for their children.
 - A democratic Government is to SERVE the people, not DICTATE.
- *Mandatory use of Australian Curriculum*
 - research states that individualised, interest led, tailored learning is the most beneficial for optimal learning. For mass educational purposes this is an impossible task to meet.

- Customised curriculum is by far the most beneficial aspect of home schooling and could also be counted as the best form of education.
- Home education = personalised education = private education
- I respectfully disagree and outright reject the notion that a high-quality education can ONLY be achieved if every child follows a single curriculum pathway. Certainly, from my experience, my family is proof this is NOT true. Adopting a single Curriculum will stifle, if not destroy passions, creativity and provides zero room for personal growth and exploration.
- *Removal of 60 day provisional registration*
 - This severely disadvantages and puts the wellbeing of children at risk for those children whose parents deem it necessary to remove them immediately from the day school system.
- *Removal of Certificate - replaced with a 'notice'?*
 - Home education is a legal and valid form of education and a certificate adds further legitimacy to that fact. Even the word 'notice' has negative connotations for example synonyms are warning, attention, heed.
 - What form does this 'notice' take?
 - What information will this 'notice' hold?
 - Consultation and examples must be tabled and discussed before such change can be voted and implemented.

Agreements of the Proposal

- We agree on the one topic - *the importance of ensuring access to a high-quality education for all children*. The issue is around "how" a high-quality education can be achieved.
- I agree the related age bracket for homeschooling needs to include 18 year olds. This is an overdue and much needed amendment. This mirrors what is already acknowledged in day schools.

Additional commentary on Consultation Process

- The 2 homeschooling people representing our collective position were EXCLUDED from consultations
- Amanda Bartle and Patricia Fitzgerald are well known to the EGPA review team and directors, yet were actively excluded, as was mentioned in the briefing.

- Queensland has no official state homeschooling association, so due to their exclusion, I feel I was not represented at all in the second round of consultations. No one asked me who I wanted as a consultation representative.

In conclusion, I state again, I reject any proposed changes to legislation that will force ANY child to ONLY learn via the confines of the National Curriculum. I support freedom, choice and simplification of Government restrictions and requirements. I respectfully disagree and outright reject the notion that a high-quality education can ONLY be achieved if every child follows a single curriculum pathway. Certainly, from my experience, my family is proof this is NOT true. Adopting a single Curriculum will stifle, if not destroy passions, creativity and provides zero room for personal growth and exploration.

Homeschooling provides an alternative way of education. If I agreed with the "day school" method and content, and their determination of what constitutes a "high-quality" education, then I wouldn't be a homeschooler.

Thank you for reading my submission.

Sincerely,

Deb Crompton