

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

Submission No: 1301
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Submitter Comments:

Subject: Concerns Regarding Proposed Changes to Homeschooling Legislation

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed changes in homeschooling legislation, particularly the requirement to follow a specific curriculum. As a homeschooling parent, I firmly believe that these changes would undermine the very reasons why many families, including mine, have chosen homeschooling as the preferred mode of education for our children.

I am also finding it very important to mention that this is only being potentially imposed in QLD and that the lack of representative consultation is disgraceful..

- Qld has NO official state homeschooling association.
- The two people representing the people directly, Amanda Bartle and Patricia Fitzgerald, were actively excluded.
- Amanda and Patricia were well known to the EGPA review team and directors, and were actively excluded, as was mentioned in the briefing.
- Due to this I feel that I and my children were not represented in the second round of consultation because of it. And because no one asked me who I wanted as a consultation representative in light of there being NO official association.
- None of the proposed changes are beneficial to the homeschooled children, homeschool parents and Home Education Unit. It seems that NONE of us- the actual people your bill will effect- have been adequately consulted, or if they had, then all of their concerns raised were just ignored.

The fundamental nature of homeschooling lies in the freedom it affords children to learn in a manner that aligns with their individual interests, abilities, and learning styles. By imposing a

mandated curriculum, these proposed changes would impede my children's autonomy and hinder their ability to pursue education in a way that best suits their needs.

One of the primary motivations for homeschooling is to provide our children with a personalized learning experience that fosters their intellectual curiosity and allows them to learn at their own pace. These new regulations threaten to restrict this flexibility and stifle their natural inclination to explore and discover the world around them. I personally home school as I have 2 neurodivergent highly intelligent children that the traditional school environment simply did not and would not cater for. Whilst being in School even at such a young age they were never supported, got bored and then their anxiety spiked, they were medicated just to be able to go to school. We've home schooled now for 3 years and have been off all medications, with our Paediatrician and Child Psychologist's full support. My children learn best away from a schedule, and desk, and whilst I do benchmark assess them each term with the Australian Curriculum to see where they are regarding their peers, they always test well ahead. These changes will not be in their best interest and will in effect see their learning go backwards- the exact opposite of what they need and one of the very reasons I removed them from mainstream school 3 years ago. At school my children were seen as having disabilities, at home they are seen as nothing but happy, well adjusted children.

Furthermore, enforcing a standardized curriculum fails to recognize the diverse interests and talents of homeschooling students. It overlooks the fact that every child is unique and may thrive in different subject areas or learning environments. By imposing rigid educational requirements, we risk depriving our children of the opportunity to pursue their passions and develop their full potential.

At the heart of this, these proposed changes would not only undermine the fundamental principles of homeschooling but also limit my children's ability to learn and grow in a way that honors their individuality and creativity. As a homeschooling parent deeply invested in my children's education, I urge the committee to reconsider these restrictive measures and instead focus on supporting families in providing a rich and diverse educational experience tailored to the needs of each child.

Please know that all of the families that homeschool are doing this for the best interest of our children, we are following their interests, giving them the support and diverse learning options needed and ensuring they continue their love of learning and inquisitiveness. We are able to spend one on one time with our children and tailor their learning to ensure they get the most out of their learning. I and many others spend hours working out what resources to use and what road trips or hands on environments we can go to so that my children learn in the best way and retain the most knowledge.

It took 4 months this year to get my report confirmed as the HEU was already backlogged- Reports are not something any of us find easy as we all put a lot of effort into showing the department that we are fulfilling our obligations. Upping the amount of reports and reports on more subjects is going to be near impossible for a lot of homeschool parents as we are already spending a lot of time following, supporting and creating resources for our children, most of us are also trying to work from home or run small businesses around our homeschooling- asking for more will take the time away from our children and even have financial repercussions on many families, while the HEU are already being swamped. It just doesn't make any sense upping the amount of paperwork being requested when what we are doing already contains more information than any School report I ever received and the HEU are already struggling.

Thank you for considering my concerns.

Sincerely,
Wendy Richards
Homeschooling Parent of 2 Neurodivergent Children

https://www.qhrc.qld.gov.au/.../QHRC_factsheet_HRA_s36.pdf

"...Section 36 of the Human Rights Act 2019 says that:

1. Every child has the right to have access to primary and secondary education appropriate to the child's needs.
2. Every person has the right to have access, based on the person's abilities, to further vocational education and training that is equally accessible to all..."