

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

Submission No: 1321
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Submitter Comments:

I am writing to voice my strong opposition to the proposed educational legislation changes in Queensland. I believe the proposed changes will severely disadvantage our right to how our children are educated. My name is Catherine Daniels. I am a mother to four children ranging in age from 9 to 2. I am a physiotherapist by profession and my husband is a farmer/grazier in the Central Highlands region of Queensland. He holds a Bachelor of Agronomy. We have chosen to homeschool our children as we strongly feel that it is in their best interests, educationally, emotionally and physically. The decision to home educate our children was not taken lightly and MANY hours of research was conducted before making the decision. It was not an uneducated or spur of the decision. I have a number of concerns surrounding the proposed legislative changes. Firstly, the requirement to follow the Australian Curriculum is my greatest concern. One of the main reasons we originally embarked on homeschooling was to avoid having to follow the curriculum. Our eldest daughter is very bright and was performing across the board at a level far greater than the Australian Curriculum outlined. Our fear was that she would be bored at school and lose her zest for learning. Registering her with HEU allowed us to tailor her education to the level she was/is at and she has thrived as a result. Similarly, our second child (boy) is Grade 1 age and performs above this age for maths, however is doing Prep level english. Our son is a doer and spends a large proportion of his day building/creating/planning and he simply would not have that opportunity if his day was spent forcing him to tick boxes following a curriculum. The flexibility of developing their educational programmes to their strengths, abilities and readiness is absolutely brilliant and such a gift to give our children. Secondly, I feel that many, and certainly all homeschooled children I am in contact with, receive an incredibly high level of education. They are fortunate to be in an almost one on one learning setting with their parent who wants the absolute best for them. All children in our homeschool group have enormously involved parents who are highly attuned to the needs of their child/children and as such, plan their child's academic schedule accordingly. Forcing these children and parents to follow the Australian Curriculum is totally counterproductive to the learning of these children. Not all children learn the same thing at the same rate and it is preposterous to suggest that they do and should. The rapid growth in homeschooling numbers over recent years should be an indication that more and more people are feeling the same and feeling like the schooling system's need to meet the ACARA standard is detrimental to their child's educational and mental health. Thirdly, changing the reporting requirements for children registered with HEU will result in the parent having less time for teaching as this time will be taken preparing reports for all areas of learning. This again is counterintuitive and counterproductive. The lack of consultation with the homeschooling community on this issue is incredibly concerning. As a voter and an active stakeholder in my children's education, my voice should be heard on this matter, as should the voices of all stakeholders. These are just a few of the concerns that I have around the proposed changes. I urge you to reconsider the proposed changes to the education legislation and recognise the rapid growth and proactivity of the homeschooling community. The right to choose how our children are educated is a crucial one and one that I strongly hope will not be taken away from us with this Bill.