

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

Submission No: 1330
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Submitter Comments:

Good afternoon,

I am writing to express my concerns regarding recently proposed changes to legislation in Queensland, specifically governing education, and rights of parents to homeschool their children. As a homeschooling parent and a member of the community, I believe it is important for me to voice my apprehensions about the potential impact of these changes.

As a home educating parent, I know that the decision to homeschool one's child/children is one that no family takes lightly. There are many factors to consider. Homeschooling a child takes time, dedication, and many sacrifices, which is why it should be easy to see that anyone making this decision has done so because they have their child's best interests at heart. The fact that homeschooling parents would be questioned regarding their child's best interests is an insult.

Firstly, who decides if homeschooling is in my child's best interest and what evidence is necessary to prove such findings? Would you argue that there is someone who cares more for a child's welfare than their parent? The fact that this is being called into question raises concerns for myself and many other families that authority to decide what is best for our children will be given to those who have no right to do so, nor should they ever be given this right. I am concerned that homeschooling families are being targeted in this proposed legislation. Parents making the choice to send their children to a physical school are not required to provide evidence to support their decision nor would they be forced to homeschool if it would better meet the needs of their child. Why then are homeschooling families required to provide evidence defending their decision as though it were a crime?

Secondly The Queensland Government's existing process ensuring home educated students are provided with a high-quality education is already extensive. The expectations for homeschooling families are far higher than that of families attending a physical school and the success of the proposed bill will only increase this expectation. If all students in Queensland were to receive the same quality education as home-schooled children are, you would require that every student in Queensland were provided individual planning catering to their specific needs as opposed to a one size fits all approach. Our homeschool children hold the attention of a "personal teacher" who knows their strengths and weaknesses and can meet their individual needs daily. It would be impossible to provide this level of support in a class of 20 to 25 students. Homeschooling parents already devote so much time providing the best possible education. Putting more expectations on these families, would waste valuable time that could be better spent teaching and supporting their children. In the past year alone there has been a significant increase in families leaving mainstream school and turning to home education. Perhaps the Governments time and resources would be better spent investigating the weaknesses in conventional schooling and the strengths homeschooling has to offer.

Finally, the proposal to force homeschool families to strictly follow the Australian Curriculum is of great concern to me. As parents we are aware of the needs of our children and one curriculum cannot possibly cover the needs of every child. By using a range of different curriculum, we can provide our children with the extra resources they need to help them succeed in all areas of their learning.

Considering these concerns, I urge you to carefully reconsider the proposed legislation and take heed to the parents of these children who know what is best for them. I ask you to advocate for a fairer approach to the education system and instead of making it harder for homeschool families that you instead support us.

Thank you for your time.

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