

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

Submission No: 1345
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Submitter Comments:

Dear committee members, I am writing to express my dissatisfaction with the proposed changes to the Education Act, particularly regarding the requirement to follow a specific curriculum. As a just recently graduated homeschool student, I am aware of how detrimental a number of the proposed changes would be. The most egregious of these changes is the requirement that parents follow an approved program or curriculum.

The proposed changes list four options for an approved program, and only the Australian Curriculum is an option for primary-aged students. I believe that restriction the education choices of homeschooling families is appalling and goes against the very reason most families choose to homeschool. Not only that, but the stated objective of the Education Act is to maximize the child's educational potential. To force homeschooling families to follow a specific program would go against this objective because education is not a one-size-fits-all. What is best for the child should be the focus and if parents are not allowed to tailor that education to their child this will not be possible. It is also of note that currently less than 1% of all registration applications are not renewed due to failure to demonstrate high-quality education. This proves that homeschoolers are already meeting the government-set requirements, without needing to be forced into a rigid curriculum. Families that choose homeschooling are dedicated to providing high-quality education, tailored to their child.

Another issue with this change is that it has made no allowance for individual education plans, the plans provided to students with disabilities. Because families often choose to homeschool due to the school system not adequately supporting their child's disabilities, 2 out of 3 homeschooling families report that their child has a disability, as shown by the Qld Department of Education's research in 2022. The lack of allowance for individual education plans is highly discriminatory against the large number of disabled students in the homeschool community.

My final issue is of particular relevance to me, and it is that there has been no allowance for the incorporation of university Headstart or ESP study. During my final years of homeschooling, I completed six different Headstart equivalent courses as a part of my education plan. It is what gave me a QTAC selection rank of 95 and allowed me to get into my preferred university degree. If this bill is passed, homeschooled students like me would quite likely not be able to get into university or their chosen careers despite being both driven and bright enough to thrive at university.

In conclusion, I believe these changes would cause severe problems for homeschooled students. I urge you to remove the requirement for a set program. It is not a great step forward and there is significantly more you could do to help homeschoolers, but by ensuring that this part of the legislation is not added to the Education Act you will be ensuring that all homeschool students can pursue academic excellence and unlock their potential as I was able to, not by forcing a stringent guideline upon students but by allowing parents to choose the curriculum.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

David Bryan

(Advocate and Former Homeschool Student)