


Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

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To the Education, Employment, Training and Skills Committee

I am writing in response to the **proposed Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024**.

I would like to express my concern regarding the proposed changes to homeschooling legislation.

Who am I?

I am a registered Special Education teacher, who made the change to home-education just over two years ago. My sister was also home-schooled for most of her school life. She studied with a non-Australian curriculum and went on to excel in her further education at university, and today is a permanent employee within the Queensland Government.

I made my decision to home-educate based on struggles my children were having in mainstream school, among other things. I have one child diagnosed with Autism, and two neuro-typical children. However, the pressures of school, combined with a busy family life meant that between my children, we saw meltdowns before and after school, as well as elevated levels of anxiety. This led to some behavioural problems with one of my children, as she began to self-sabotage in the classroom, so that she would be removed from it, as she began to feel (in her words): “stupid” and “embarrassed to ask questions.” I am still working hard to rebuild her mindset and help her gain confidence as a learner.

As a teacher myself, I am committed to high standards of education, however it became clear that individual wellbeing and learning in ways that are meaningful to each student extended beyond my Special School classroom, and I began to tailor my own children’s education at home.

What are my concerns?

- Overall, I feel that the proposed changes to the current operating method of home-education in Queensland are short-sighted. From changes to the *application process*, to implying that a government department somehow has the overall and only say on what a *‘high quality education’* looks like within a home context, to *reporting on educational progress*, I believe that these proposed changes have not taken into consideration the thousands of successfully homeschooling families, and the ways in which they educate their children to a high standard.
- I do not believe that there has been even marginally adequate consultation with home-educators to appropriately gather information to inform any proposed changes. The home-schooling community is large and is thriving, with countless positive success stories of children falling through the cracks in mainstream school and being transformed by the individualised and student-led, interest-based learning that is done via home-education,

whether using some or all the ACARA resources, or whether using one of the many excellent non-ACARA curriculums available. With multi-aged children, as most home-educating families are, the expectation for parents to teach the entirety of the ACARA curriculum is unrealistic.

- Please carefully consider your overreach from State into the home. Please do not continue to assume that parents are not the best advocates and the best teachers for their own children if they choose that path, as I have done.
- I find the proposal to do away with the *Certificate of Registration* concerning, as the 'official' certificate is a mark of importance and acceptance. The presence of a certificate is powerful. It says that we are official, and we have the backing of the Education Department. The certificate is also a form of validation used for Centrelink and other departments, as proof of home-education. In addition, I believe removing the Provisional Registration would be a mistake as it is an important step for so many just starting out in home education. It allows a buffer between leaving a school and beginning learning at home and allows time for parents to explore and understand what is required of them regarding planning and reporting.

I implore you to consider that there is another option rather than making quick and uninformed decisions that negatively impact many people. Talk to homeschooling families, talk to home-educated adults, young adults, teens, and children. Find out what worked and is currently working and then look at *why* it worked, and I hope that you will realise that home-educated adults are out there in the world and are adding to it in countless positive and impactful ways, thanks to the hard work, dedication and uniquely delivered education their families and home-schooling communities provided for them. You will find that home-educating families are happy, thriving, living life to the fullest, and they are *always* learning, because that is what home-schooling is all about. Learning to love learning and becoming a life-long learner without the pressure of performance, measurement against one's peers, and having to fit into the same mould as everyone else.

Yours sincerely,

