

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

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Submitter Comments:

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. Dear EGPA Committee Members, Let me introduce myself, I am a Senior Technician (Electronic Programming) and published lecturer and researcher at Queensland University of Technology. Along with my wife, I have been integrating homeschooling into our family life for the past 2 years and will be homeschooling full-time once my eldest son turns six next month (April). The proposed legislation raises several pressing concerns that I believe need to be addressed. Having seen students enter university from all walks of life, the most important and defining factor in the success of higher learning is the possession of real-life skills. Without the integral drive for self-learning, engagement and focus is often lacking. Home-schooled children enter the university system with far greater exposure to this self-directed learning and will have identified a clear path of education that they passionately pursue. Should the bill become law, the suggested amendments would mean that families, including mine, would lose our right to choose how to educate and support our children. They would encroach upon our fundamental rights as parents to elect to educate our children from home. Who is it that would determine what is in the best interest of the child? What evidence do you have that demonstrates the ACARA curriculum is the gold standard for education material?

Following the ACARA curriculum certainly doesn't ensure the child is off to the best start in life and receives a quality education. We already have access to it should we wish to utilise the materials, along with many other sources of educational materials. Homeschooling empowers our children to take ownership of their education from an early age, encouraging independence, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills. They are learning how to learn, exploring diverse subjects, and developing a deep understanding of themselves and the world around them. Enforcing the Australian Curriculum will severely limit this opportunistic learning and stifle the ability for us to form multi-age groups as the topics they will be investigating would be dictated according to their year level. As well as rigidity, it will also add additional work and pressure to parents, for both reporting and record keeping. What supports are going to be offered to homeschooling parents? Will you help fund their legal choice? Will you provide training so that ACARA can be followed as it is intended? I came across the Government's 'Vision 2030', which, to me only highlights the mental health issues arising during schooling years. "In Australia, half of all adult mental health challenges emerge before the age of 14 and more than 50% of children experiencing mental health challenges are not receiving professional help." This is shocking but not surprising and I 100% agree with the statement that "Every child deserves the right to be supported and grow in a safe and healthy environment.", which is a massive 'why' we opt to homeschool. Homeschooling provides a supportive and nurturing environment that prioritises our children's mental and emotional well-being. Without the pressures and anxieties associated with traditional schooling, my children will be able to gain real life skills and develop a positive self-image that will serve them well throughout their lives. Only this week I attended the World Science Festival in Brisbane with my son; homeschoolers made up the majority of the attendance for the three programmed events we attended (Lighting Our Universe: Physical Sciences, Fossils! Queensland's Quirkiest Creatures & Maths, Music & Sum Songs). These sorts of hands-on, community-based learning opportunities should be embraced as they are invaluable in the desire for learning. We are already planning our submission for the robowars event next year. I want my children to think outside the box, push boundaries and discover new ways of thinking and interacting with the world. For our family, and many others, homeschooling in its current form enables just that. The main proposals are

ungovernable, impossible to implement and makes a mockery of what home ed parents already do for their children which is in their best interests. There is no one best way to learn, nor should we be restricted to a one-size-fits-all approach. Thank you for considering the issues raised and hearing the negative impacts the proposed bill will have. I oppose the proposed changes regarding home education as detailed above. Best Regards, Steven Bulmer