

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

Submission No: 1415
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Submitter Comments:

Dear Committee, I object to these proposed changes to the Educational Bill 2024. I am a grandparent of two home educated children. Both started in public school but were removed after some time due to severe school trauma. Both children are neurodiverse and have learning difficulties, of which the school offered no help with, even after their Mother tried to work with the school for 3 years. The principal refused to have any meetings with their Mother and the HOSES never offered any support. Both children fell through the cracks and left school with severe educational difficulties. Their Mother has worked incredibly hard, offering an enriched educational program, adapting it as they went to ensure the children have thrived. The benefit of home schooling is to provide a bespoke education for the individual child, where educating does not have to replicate school. This nurtured form of education is essential, particularly to those who have suffered school trauma due to school not being suitable for their specific needs. I have particular concerns about:

1. Home-school students not being able to use a personalised curriculum for their children. Forced compliance with the Australian Curriculum and Senior Syllabus fails to acknowledge the diversity of many homeschooling students who often have disabilities, neurodiversity and health concerns. Removal of university as a valid option of learning is a concern. QCAA (senior secondary) is not able to be taught in a home setting. Montessori is not identified as a 'recognised alternative' on ACARA's special site (see this link. <https://acara.edu.au/curriculum/alternative-curriculum-recognition/recognition-register>)
2. The removal of the provisional registration period, especially for those trauma-based students, who need to leave the school environment urgently to protect their physical and mental well-being.
3. 'Proving that home educating is in the best interest of the child'. Who will be deciding if it is in the best interest of the child and how will this be determined? Is this not a parental right to decide? The very definition of diversity necessitates that every child's access to a high-quality education may not look the same. To acknowledge the diversity of children, home educators must be able to design and implement individualised learning plans to enable access to a high-quality education. Currently home educators are required to write yearly reports with proof of learning plus the next years learning plan. This is then checked over by teachers with the Home Education Unit within Education qld.
4. Removal of gendered language. This should be up to the individual as to what they refer to.
5. The proposals in the Bill will also mean there will more admin and paperwork expected from parents in the form of reporting, meaning valuable time usually spent educating their children will be lost, leading to a negative impact on educational provision. The amount of stress that both parents and children will be under as they will be forced to fit in a system unsuitable for them will be palpable. There has clearly been no representation sought after from Queensland homeschooling families. It would, in fact, appear they have been actively excluded during this Bill's progression. Stakeholders need to have their say regardless as to whether there is an official body or organisation to represent them.

Kind Regards