

## Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

**Submission No:** 1418  
**Submitted by:** Micarle Callea  
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**Submitter Comments:**

Dear Committee,

I am writing to you as a demonstration of my objections to the proposals in the Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. Although I have a plethora of concerns regarding the bill below are three of my main concerns.

Before doing so I would like to also note that lack of representative consultation, throughout the legislation writing process is extremely concerning. Qld has no official state homeschooling association. The two people representing the people directly are Amanda Bartle and Patricia Fitzgerald. Amanda and Patricia were well known to the EGPA review team and directors, and were actively excluded, as was mentioned in the briefing. Therefore, the greater homeschooling community were not represented in the second round of consultation because of this.

This sadly suggests a legislation that is not representative of the people it is to serve.

## **Objections to Proposals in the Education Bill 2024**

### **Objection One**

**The extreme overreach of government requiring parents to justify why homeschooling their own child, is in the best interest of their child.**

As a teacher of 15 years, and parent of two children, the choice to homeschool after a toxic school experience for my daughter was not a decision we took lightly. We knew the choice to homeschool came with a greater parenting responsibility and financial strain. Much greater than if we were to force our daughter to continue to attend school. But for our family the mental, physical and educational wellbeing of our daughter came first.

Homeschooling your child is by no means the easy choice for any family. For most families and parents, the choice to homeschool requires continued research, personal development, learning, effort and patience and personal and financial sacrifice on a parent's behalf. Much more than handing over the education/parenting responsibility of our children to a school for 6 to sometimes 9 hours a day.

There are many reasons as to why families choose to homeschool their own children. Some are;

- family connection
- supporting self directed learning
- life balance
- creating a love of learning
- flexibility to travel as a family and learn
- the school system failing their child/children:
  - not cater to a child's learning needs
    - gifted
    - special needs
  - not able to cater to a child's health needs
    - mental health
    - physical health
  - harassment
  - incompatibility with educators

I would suggest, that the majority of parents who choose to homeschool have agonised over the decision whilst researching various educational philosophies that will allow them as a family to meet the needs of their child. In most cases, in much more depth than their counterparts who have chosen to enrol their child in the local state school. And yet in the proposed legislation there is no justification required as to why you choose to send you child to a certain school, why you keep your child in that said school when learning is not occurring at an "appropriate" rate or when harassment that impacts mental wellbeing occurs.

Furthermore, we are a family that choose to eat extremely clean and ensure our children exercise daily. We have also chosen to educate our children as to why. As a family who does so, we could ask why the government doesn't feel the need to create legislation requiring parents to justify the food in which their child ingests and sedentary life their children live. Why? Because this would be seen as overreach of an individual family's choice.

There are many reasons that lead families to homeschool and decide it is the best education pathway for their child. I object to the government overreach supported by the legislation proposals, that would allow a body of people elected to serve the community, to enforce a community that is choosing to take a deeper responsibility for their child's education to justify their choice, ESPECIALLY when the same is not being asked of their mainstream schooling counterparts.

## Objection Two

### **Defining high-quality education as the National School Curriculum.**

As a teacher the use of the ACARA tool in the mainstream school system is at least understandable. Once a child enters the mainstream school system, government has the obligation to provide each child within that system an education. To have a benchmark in which they can JUSTIFY the education being provided TO the child's PARENT, can be useful.

As it has been created with this reason in mind, ACARA is a standardised and rigid tool. As I have conceded the use of a tool such as ACARA in the mass production that is the school system, is the easiest way to ensure the government employees (principals and teachers) can report, to parents. The use of ACARA tool and the repetitive nature in which it provides content and education, allows a teacher to ensure they have seen the child present their knowledge via evidence on numerous occasions. It provides schools and teachers with a tool to ensure their students have been exposed and can regurgitate content. But to suggest that this tool defines 'high quality' education is another matter entirely.

If there is a need to define high quality education, a much more appropriate definition could be, 'An education that ensures each child's individual and DIFFERING educational needs are considered and met'. High quality education, at its core, must take into consideration emotional and cognitive development, executive function, skill acquisition and self directed learning best practices. Whilst always adjusting or catering for the individual needs of each child.

Learning how to learn must be at the core of any high quality education. This skill set and understanding of learning is much more important than an education where content is thrust upon you whether you are interested, ready or capable to absorb what you are presented with.

"What makes a child gifted and talented may not always be good grades in school, but a different way of looking at the world and learning."

Chuck Grassley

When a family takes responsibility for providing a high quality education via homeschooling, most do so by creating an individualised and supported learning environment. They endeavour to create an education based on their intimate knowledge of their child/children. Many homeschooling parents will gather

differing perspectives and philosophies using pieces of many to create a high quality education that works best for their child.

The proposed legislation suggest that one tool, the ACARA, can replace many differing educational tools and/or philosophies such as Steiner, Montessori, Charlotte Mason, Applied Learning and Life Learning, to name a few. And so, I strongly object and suggest much more research is required, on behalf of the government, before the definition of high quality education is ready to be passed into legislation, if ever. As the definition stands, it shows a lack of respect to the years of research and what is known to be best practice.

### **Objection Three**

#### **The increased reporting expectation to demonstrate educational growth.**

As previously stated, I taught within the secondary school system for 15 years, during this time I completed a Graduate Diploma in Careers Counselling. I held various leadership roles including Director of Pathways, Year Level Leader, Numeracy Mentor, VET and Work Placement Leader. Many of my friends are dedicated and passionate educators still working in the schooling system. Yet they are tired and frustrated with a system that is less strenuous, than the reporting framework outlined in the tabled legislation for homeschooling families.

At monthly catch ups with these passionate teachers, inevitably, the discussions turn to the unachievable expectations surrounding evidence acquisition, testing, reporting and the need to link student learning to the standards of an overcrowded curriculum. This of course being the ACARA tool, created by bureaucrats. These deeply knowledgeable teachers are frustrated. They are frustrated that they are not given the time or trust to provide, the innovative, engaging and meaningful high quality education they could.

As an educational consultant, I guide schools to grow teacher understanding executive function development. This includes finding ways in which schools can implement MEANINGFUL practice of these skills for students. Over and over again teachers discuss their frustration surrounding their inability to allow time for the deep and experiential learning required for students to truly build their executive function skillset. What is stopping them? Having to ensure they have ticked all the boxes and can report on a rigid ACARA curriculum. By moving to place similar but more strenuous evidence acquisition and reporting connected to the ACARA tool, you are now moving to tie the hands of homeschooling parents. Just as you have already to teachers. Their thoughts will move to reporting and ticking boxes,

instead of remaining on providing an engaging and individualised learning experience for their child.

These expectations on homeschooling families will stifle the homeschooling child's right to a deep and experiential learning journey. It will force families to away from providing a high quality, engaging and meaningful education, not towards it. It will remove the ability for a child to follow a tangent in their learning, to use learning content to understand the learning process instead of vice versa. And it will, as with most school children, see homeschooling children thinking that we learn to show evidence of knowledge, that there is an end point to ones learning career and that meeting standard indicates intellect. This will replace the beautiful and more necessary understanding that most homeschooled children are instilled with, that we can continue to learn and grow throughout our time on this earth.

As a home educator, an experienced mainstream educator and parent with a great love for the learning process, I object to the proposals in the Education Bill 2024. I suggest deeper research and understanding of learning is required by those writing the legislation. I also encourage consultation not only with those in the homeschooling community but on the frontlines of the mainstream school system, teachers. Such consultation will find the reform you require moves so strongly in the opposite direction to these proposals, that it is harmful for the current proposals to be legislated.

Kind Regards

Micarlé Callea