

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

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Submitter Comments:

As a homeschooling parent, I do not support some of these changes and I am worried about the impact that they will have on homeschooling students. Of particular concern to me, is the enforcement to be consistent with the Australian Curriculum and senior subject syllabus as the only approved and suitable education programs, under section 217. Education isn't a one-size-fits-all thing. There are many ways to learn, and the Australian Curriculum doesn't cater to a lot of them. Homeschooling can be a vibrant ecosystem, tailored to each child's unique pace and passion. Stripping away the freedom of homeschooling is extinguishing the flame of educational innovation. It is pushing uniformity over uniqueness. We are a long-term homeschooling family, and chose this path because we wanted the best opportunities for our children. Homeschooling has allowed our children the freedom to be themselves; to learn, grow and explore the world around them on their terms. Many of our best education moments happen through volunteering, learning from experts in their fields, through excursions, project group gatherings and so much more. The real life experiences go far beyond a learning-outcome checklist. Restricting homeschool families to the Australian Curriculum doesn't support the incredible opportunities that individualised learning and incidental learning offer. Our homeschooled children are aged 14, 10, and 5, and they are each others daily class mates. We are also active participants in the local homeschool community, and we participate regularly in multiage learning opportunities and group activities. As a family we do a lot of collaborative project based learning; choosing a topic that sparks interests and passions, working together to design a project that encompasses several key learning areas for each child, and each child contributing to that project based on their best ability appropriate to their stage of life. One benefit of the current homeschooling system is that it caters to different age groups and abilities to work together in this way. Enforcing the Australian Curriculum would severely limit the ability for us to form multi-age groups (either at home or within the wider homeschool community) as the topics they will be investigating would be dictated according to their year level. All 3 of our children would be required to engage in different topics and key learning areas to each other. None of them will be learning the same topics in the same year, so the opportunities to share projects will essentially be taken away from their daily education. The Australian Curriculum is designed for a large group of same age students. It's not designed for children of different ages and abilities to work together around a dining room table. With a class size of only 3 children, whom I have known for their entire lives, I am able to provide activities and lessons tailored to each individual child's needs. This means they can learn science at one year level, English at another year level, Art a different year level, all on the one day. Home education is flexible in a way schools can't be. Which is why it works. Home education is adaptable, accessing resources in ways schools can only hope and dream about. Let's not limit that opportunity with this short-sighted reform. Children learn best and retain information when they are interested and engaged. Letting them have a say in what they learn about is important. We should be encouraging them to find their passions and to explore deeper into topics of interest. The Australian Curriculum tells them what to learn and when to learn it, whether they are interested and engaged or not. All of our children respond positively to the project based learning style. But in particular it has become a necessity for our middle child. He is 10 and is diagnosed with a severe recessive and expressive communication disorder, intellectual impairment, and ASD level 2. We have spent a lot of time consulting with numerous specialists and allied health experts to determine how to best educate him. The project based learning style enables him to become deeply immersed in an area of interest to him. We can generally manipulate the projects to cross at least 4 key learning areas, plus life skills and communication skills that are not

covered in the curriculum. The fact that he can contribute to other peoples projects and become a valuable team member has been of great benefit to him socially and emotionally also. It's not always all about education. The whole child's holistic development and wellbeing matters. The Australian Curriculum is an arbitrary academic only measuring stick with little regard to cognitive load and developmental readiness. It's also lacking in meaning or relevance for many children. For education to be inclusive of all students, I believe it is important to understand the reasoning behind the education decisions of the families who have chosen this path. Another point of particular concern to me is the addition to this legislation in section 7, that parents will need to justify their child's eligibility or reason to be homeschooled. Home education is, and should remain, a valid and legal choice for all families across Australia. No other form of education requires this justification. Parents don't need to justify that private school, boarding school, state school, religious affiliated school or distance education are in the best interest of their child. What school is "suitable" for an individual child should be up to the parents, who know the child best. I completely and unequivocally agree that all children should be given the opportunities of a high-quality education. That is why we, and most homeschoolers, homeschool. But it seems that instead of opting for a "high quality education", Queensland is moving to one-size-fits all standardised education that limits choice and scope currently available. I'm concerned that the legislation has been proposed without proper consultation with current homeschooling families and I hope that you will take my feedback into consideration. Thank you for taking the time to listen to my concerns. I hope that, going forward, this legislation can suit the needs of all students, of all needs, and all abilities across Queensland. I look forward to hearing your response about this important issue.