

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

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Submitter Comments:

Subject: A Call for Equity. Ensuring Support for Homeschooling Children with and without Disabilities: Dear Committee Members, I have only just been advised about the proposed changes in relation to homeschooling so it is with deep concern I express the following: The impact on children with disabilities and special learning needs and their families should not go unnoticed or continue to fail to gain any meaningful recognition. As a homeschooling family that has been deeply committed to advocating for the rights of all children to receive a quality education, I urge the committee to consider the unique challenges faced by families of children with disabilities and to ensure that the proposed changes adequately support their educational needs without overburden and further unnecessary data for data's sake. As you should be aware, many children with disabilities have struggled within traditional school settings, where resources and support may be insufficient or inaccessible. For these children, homeschooling often represents a lifeline, an opportunity to receive a personalised, tailored education that meets their individual needs and abilities. However, the proposed changes risk further marginalising children with disabilities by imposing rigid curriculum requirements that may be entirely unsuitable or only vaguely feasible for them. The list of specialised or user specific alternative approaches to learning for these children do not fall within the mainstream inflexible guidelines as it is, let alone with further restrictions placed. While generational outcomes have to conform, the steady decline in education standards are not necessarily of families' making, rather this falls to a system that simply grinds along and fails to consider people. Coming from a generation where the School Inspector would arrive in the class unannounced and teachers would teach. This has progressed to monumental paperwork, data collecting and admin with the teacher getting to teach somewhere in the day; the system is so far gone as to have become blindingly obvious to even the media. I completely understand and even applaud a National Curriculum, however note that the further increase in admin and data mining over the quality of actual education and interacting with children is one of the many reasons families choose to go down the path of home education. I also urge you to be mindful that home education families sacrifice income, do not gain any assistance apart from the text book allowance when a child reaches the qualifying age, unfortunately that comes with a caveat and is somehow only valid until a certain date. ie: if you don't "claim it by xyz date, you don't receive it. Why is that? The parents that teach, by and large don't have a 4 year degree in Education, nor receive upwards of \$80 000 to teach their students. Yet often manage to have their children graduate from University, conquer productive and important jobs and professions. So one might consider, that as part of the rubrics filling, data collecting model; rather than spend the hours involved in the monumental data collection, it is more prudent and valuable for home educators to teach a child with the time allocated. Unfortunately without consultation, we can only guess at the reasoning and what statements in the proposal will mean for us eg: 1 - s7 Clause 18 = Who defines suitable education "environment" ? 2 - s206 Chapter 9, part 5, division 2 - What now happens to people in emergency need, eg Domestic violence victims escaping to protect their children? 3 - s208(2) How would any family be able to report data outside their registration period? 4 - s211 Clause 63 - Show cause from 28 to 14 days, for those that receive them, it often relates to having difficulty with departmental paperwork, so families often seek assistance from the Home Ed community to comprehend the requirements, this takes time. Please refer to below NCT and paperwork burden, when people are new to the system. 5 - s217 Clause 68 is somewhat obscure, but appears to have significant impact and burden on home education families: Does this mean that the Qld Gov no longer has faith in the HEU and requires them to conform only to paperwork and not use their educational judgment on

what target and educational milestones/progress are being met? How and who is defining - "consistent with" the curriculum? ie What we are supposed to match, if the rigid data requirement cannot be met in traditional ways? All-subject-evidence-reporting, adds an incredible burden to all home education reporting families, with a huge amount of admin work that directly takes away from our teaching time with our children. As relevant to the home education families income and cost burden, please note we (the home education families) do not get NCT (non contact time) from our teaching and life so this is something that needs to be considered. Those are items noted from my brief perusal since being notified about the proposal 12 hours ago, so there may have been more queries for the proposal if I had time to look over further. I implore the committee to consider how the proposed changes will impact homeschooling children and families including those with disabilities, children who are unable to learn within the confines of a traditional curriculum. What provisions will be made to ensure that these families are not further disadvantaged or overburdened and that children are allowed to receive the support and flexible accommodations they need to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally? Furthermore, I implore the committee to recognise the invaluable unpaid role that homeschooling parents play in advocating for their children and providing them with the specialised support they require. Rather than imposing top-down mandates, why is there no consultation with stake holders? We are very much willing to work collaboratively to develop policies that empower parents, provisioning informed decisions about their children's education; thus ensuring that all children, regardless of ability, have access to the resources and support they need to succeed. In conclusion, I urge the committee to prioritise the needs of children, including those with disabilities in the drafting of homeschooling legislation and to ensure that the proposed changes support their right to receive an appropriate and inclusive quality education. Thank you for your attention and consideration. Sincerely, [REDACTED]
Education Family and Advocate