

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

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Submitter Comments:

I am a second generation home educator, writing with my concerns about the proposals in the Education Bill 2024 (Qld).

I don't believe these changes will support home educators.

The Bill is poorly designed and consultation has clearly been insufficient.

I strongly encourage further consultation with the experienced and highly active home educator community to identify workable and effective solutions.

My home education story

I was home educated for all of K-12, without the national curriculum.

Some highlights:

- I participated in English Competitions alongside both mainstream school and home educated children, and was awarded High Distinctions in 3 out of 4 years.
- I had unique work experience opportunities from the age of 11.
- I was a member of our local youth orchestra and played at our local 2000 Olympics torch relay event.
- I received a university offer out of year 12, but decided to enter the workforce instead.
- I entered the NSW Public Service through an extensive and lengthy bulk recruitment process, which included aptitude tests and interviews, where I was ranked in the Top 20.
- During my time in the public service, I worked in the court system, and also had the rare opportunity to be part of setting up a new statutory body to administer new legislation.

My siblings were also home educated without the national curriculum:

- Two are qualified gymnastics coaches and are founders/operators of a gymnastics club.
- One is working with an NDIS nonprofit organisation
- One has worked in the political arena and has completed a law degree

I now have the privilege to see my growing family develop and learn in line with their learning styles, abilities, and interests, and am excited to see their journey unfold!

The proposals will make Qld less consistent with home education in other states

This is the opposite to what was stated in the briefing (ie that these changes will bring Qld in line with other states).

In fact, my understanding is that the proposals will likely make Qld the most restrictive state for home education.

I home educate in NSW, and advise that NSW does not follow the Australian Curriculum.

This erroneous statement does not give me confidence as to their understanding of the landscape of home education across Australian jurisdictions.

The proposals do not support home education as a valid first choice for parents

A parent already bears the right and responsibility to choose a high quality education for their child.

Home education is a legal and valid "first choice", and a reason should not be required, just like any other educational choice such as public or private school.

The additional wording along the lines of whether home education is best for the child, are unnecessary, and opens the door of parents needing to prove their decision, reducing the legitimacy of home education as a valid first choice.

It is inappropriate for government to step into that decision making process.

The proposals impose requirements on home educators beyond what is imposed on teachers.

Schools are not required to prove academic progress of each child for each subject for every year.

This additional requirement on home educators, and any requirement for that matter that extends beyond those of schools, singles out and disenfranchises parents and care givers.

Requirement to follow the national curriculum

As a 2nd generation home educator, I chose the pathway of home education because I wanted my children to experience a high quality education.

I highly value the 1:1 setting and the flexibility and breadth of learning the home education environment provides.

Being required to use the national curriculum works against the beauty of a high quality home education.

It's way too much of a one-size-fits-all approach, and designed to be implemented in classroom settings, not in a highly tailored and responsive 1:1 environment.

This requirement will:

- limit and restrict flexibility of choosing the best resources to suit each individual child
- remove a breadth of learning opportunities that go beyond the National curriculum
- disenfranchise and marginalise learners, including the many children not suited to the national curriculum
- increase red tape and work for the unit processing these applications.

Removal of the 60 day provisional registration

This creates the potential for further harm for children in unsafe environments. Parents cannot be expected to submit an entire educational plan on the day they register their children for home education, especially in cases where a child is dealing with school-related bullying or trauma. The removal of provisional registration is likely to extend the period of time a child remains in that unsafe environment.

NSW faces a challenge where there can be up to 12 weeks wait between initial application being lodged and registration being granted.

In the statewide Facebook group I'm in, almost every day there are posts from stressed-out parents where the school is putting unreasonable pressure for a child to return to school, even if there is mental or physical health, bullying or other school-related trauma. Parents are often needing to get medical certificates, receive phone calls, visits from truancy officers, or threatened with legal action even though they are taking responsibility for their child's safety and education and taking active steps to register for home education.

Provisional registration removes unnecessary stress and distraction so parents can focus on what matters most - their child's well being and education.

Qld should not remove provisional registration. If anything, NSW should implement provisional registration, to cover the time between the application being lodged and registration given.

Provisional registration is not a gap in learning, but rather a needed transitional period to best set them up for home education success.

It should be noted that the presence of the application itself indicates that the parent is heavily invested in the education of their child, who lives under the same roof.

In closing, I stress that we as home educators want the very best education for our children. It is for this reason we are highly engaged and vocal about our concerns with this Bill.

Thank you for your consideration.