

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

Submission No: 1544
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Publication: Making the submission and your name public
Attachments: See attachment
Submitter Comments:

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the recent education legislation changes that have been proposed in our state. As a constituent and a member of the community, I believe it is crucial to voice my objections to the potential impact of these changes on our home education.

I am a mum and home-schooling parent to two incredibly talented, active & curious primary school aged children. I am also a qualified Youth & Family worker with over 10 years experience working closely with the school system and child protection services.

After 3 years of my children being educated in the state school system I recently removed my children because their safety were no longer assured, their well-being and best interests were NOT being met, and their education stagnated severely interrupted and limited within the school based education system and environment.

As their parent I exercise my right and responsibility to ensure their well-being & best interests are met daily. I spend a considerable amount of time ensuring their home education is of a high quality, flexible, meets their individual needs, is inclusive of all necessary skills and attributes to ensure they flourish as children and are positive members of the

community. There is NO one size fits all curriculum for that including the Australian school curriculum.

The proposed legislation raises many pressing concerns.

- I oppose the inclusion of the definition of a ‘high quality education’ being limited to the Australian Curriculum. I find this restrictive and will make it difficult to be able to provide a high quality education in the home learning environment, for children with divergent needs and differing learning styles. The Australian Curriculum is an incredibly complex document that has been tailored to educate children in schools. Many schools employ curriculum specialists to interpret and implement this document. As a homeschooler, we don’t have access to this level of expertise. In order to implement this, we would need to base our learning off over-simplified textbooks, rush through topics and stop the practical, hands-on nature of our learning. In our home education setting, this is not a high-quality education.

As an active participant in the homeschool community, we participate regularly in multiple learning co-ops and group activities. We regularly engage with lessons from other parents, community members, businesses and experts in their fields. Often, this sparks interests and passions within our children and we are able to go away and deeply explore an area of interest. Enforcing the Australian Curriculum will

severely limit this opportunistic learning and stifle the ability for us to form multi-age groups as the topics they will be investigating would be dictated according to their year level. One-size-fits-all approach that does not recognise the needs of our children or is in their best interest.

- I oppose the changes in the guiding principles of the legislation that state that ‘parents have the responsibility for choosing a suitable education environment for their children’ and that home education should be provided in a way that ‘is in the best interests of the child’. We already do this and the bill doesn’t address who decides what is in the child’s best interests and is open to interpretation. I believe this takes away a Queenslanders’ right to home-school and puts onus on the parent to prove they can home educate, more hoop jumping and unnecessary red tape.

- I strongly oppose the removal of provisional registration in the legislation. We believe that provisional registration is a measure to protect families leaving the school in an emergency situation and it is unreasonable for children to stay in potentially dangerous or damaging circumstances until a full plan is written. In our case, this was needed to ensure the safety of our children.

- I oppose the substantially increased workload and reporting requirements for home educators included in the legislation.

The information already provided by home educators far exceeds the reporting required by Education Queensland teachers and to provide this information for every single subject is unreasonable. Including the provision to demonstrate educational progress for each subject also exceeds the requirements for schools and teachers in Queensland and is unacceptable. For the years we were part of the school system we were given a very short report that was computer generated and automated and lacked real information and data on my child's education and yet the new proposed changes are asking parents for so much more.

Moreover, I am gravely concerned about the lack of transparency and public consultation surrounding these changes. As a stakeholder in our education system, I believe it is imperative for the voices of educators, parents, students, and community members to be heard and considered in any decision-making process that impacts our ability to educate our children to the highest standard.

In light of these concerns, I urge you to take into account all submissions and carefully reconsider the proposed education legislation and to prioritize the best interests of our rapidly growing and proactive home educating community. I implore you to advocate for a more inclusive and collaborative approach to policymaking that values input from all

stakeholders and ensures the integrity and quality of our education system.

Thank you for taking the time to read my submission and for considering my concerns. I look forward to your response on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Julie-Ann Christian