


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

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## COMMITTEE SUBMISSION – EDUCATION LAW CHANGES 2024

Dear Committee members,

As an educator who has worked in a variety of early childhood and primary education settings over the past 20 years, I am opposed to the proposed changes to the Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. My concerns are as follows:

1. The Australian Curriculum (ACARA) is not the only benchmark for a high-quality education, and a blanket rule for this to be implemented in the unique home education setting is not appropriate.
2. Homeschooling is a necessary, legitimate, and successful choice for many families. Why is the State Government so concerned with the increased number of families choosing this option for their families?

### The Australian Curriculum

It was noted in the committee public briefing, held on the 18<sup>th</sup> March 2024, that a major driver for implementing the directive to enforce ACARA onto homeschooling families is due to the small percentage of students who find themselves returning to mainstream education for any reason. In this scenario, and if ACARA is as flexible in a school setting as it has been assured, then teachers (who are trained in its implementation), are the perfect professionals to adjust according to those individual student needs on their return to mainstream in the same way they do for all children.

Home-schooling parents are already required by the home education unit to demonstrate evidence of a high-quality education and show evidence of a child's progress – where is the evidence that this system is failing?

Distance Education (which uses the Australian Curriculum) is already offered as a way of doing 'school at home'. It has the same time pressures, assessment, and stipulated requirement to sit, and interact with a teacher or students for long periods of time. There is very little consideration for support requirements and the practicalities of multiple students of different levels requiring parental guidance.

Children have diverse needs and unique ways of learning, so saying all should be following the ACARA either on campus or at home is akin to putting a square peg in a round hole. This is precisely why young adults for generations have been offered so many career pathways – working in a family business, gaining a trade qualification through an apprenticeship, or accessing university to name just a few.

As a parent with children in the mainstream schooling system, I can attest that constant assessment and benchmarking take a toll on the mental health of individuals in a way that can impact them well beyond the classroom. A broad solution like enforcing curriculum is clumsy at best, and not the answer for specific, individual needs. What is being forgotten in this scenario is that parents are the first educators for our children. They have a wealth of knowledge about what works for their children as individuals, what motivates and inspires them to learn. For many children, taking away the pressures of a crowded curriculum provides time for them to connect and learn in different ways. To quote an expert in the field Dr Ross W Greene - “Children do well, if they can”. Is it not our role as parents, and educators to provide them with options for them to do well?

My work in early childhood and primary education environments has only emphasised that children are all unique and learn in very different ways. There are many other high quality educational resources available for families to choose when homeschooling – why limit education to ACARA?

#### Increasing number of families homeschooling

Why is an increase in the number of families choosing to homeschool considered a problem? If children are not having their needs met in the classroom, homeschooling is a valid and legitimate choice. Demeaning those choices as being due to parents accessing social media, as was suggested in the committee hearing, demonstrates a clear lack of understanding of the factors driving home education. Families are already required to submit educational plans and reports on their child’s progress – where is the evidence to suggest this process needs to be made more arduous and paperwork intense?

#### Conclusion

Thank you to the committee for opening the door for genuine feedback and communication from the homeschooling community regarding this proposed Legislation that directly affects them. It was noted in the briefing that only associations and businesses were included in consultation during stage 2 and that when individuals contacted the department on behalf of the QLD homeschooling community, they were actively excluded. This is unacceptable and not in keeping with the democratic society in which we live. Education cannot follow a one-size-fits-all approach when the needs of families are so varied.

Yours sincerely,

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