

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

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Submission to the committee
EDUCATION (GENERAL PROVISIONS) AND OTHER
LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2024

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I am writing this to show my objection to the bill currently before the committee regarding Home Education. I have several concerns regarding the proposed changes to the home education system. My main concerns are as follows:

- The implementation of the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) and the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority (QCAA) syllabuses, and how this may impact currently recognized alternative approaches to education.
- The requirement for parents to prove that home education is in the best interest of their child/ren, which could create additional challenges and barriers for families already undertaking this responsibility.
- A potential misunderstanding of the reasons why families choose to home educate, which could lead to policies that do not adequately support the diverse needs and motivations of these families.

I will address each of these concerns below.

ACARA and the QCAA syllabuses:

While the curriculum has been implemented in schools throughout Queensland, I find it antiquated and not in the best interest of children. Much of what my daughter was bringing home from school didn't seem to make sense, leaving me wondering why it was being taught at all. Forcing children to learn subjects that don't interest them, and at a predetermined pace, can be detrimental to their learning experience. When children are compelled to study topics they find unengaging, they may struggle to grasp the material, leading to frustration and a sense of failure. Additionally, the rigid time constraints imposed on students can further exacerbate these challenges, as there may not be sufficient opportunity for students to seek additional help or clarification.

This approach to education can create a stressful environment for both students and teachers. Students may feel overwhelmed by the demands placed on them, while teachers may struggle to meet the individual needs of each student within the confines of a standardized curriculum.

A more flexible and personalized approach to education has helped many home educated children alleviate these issues. Allowing students to pursue topics that genuinely interest them has increased their motivation and engagement, leading to better learning outcomes.

Since removing my daughter from mainstream education she has become much more engaged in her education, and is excited about what the next days lessons will be.

Parents having to prove that home education is in the best interests of child/ren.

As a parent who has recently joined the home education movement, I find it perplexing that there may be a mandatory requirement to prove that this choice is in the best interest of the child. Many parents, including myself, make the decision to remove their child from mainstream schooling after careful consideration and numerous discussions.

When I decided to pull my daughter out of school, it was not a decision made lightly. I had extensively discussed my concerns about how my daughter was being treated and the extent of her isolation with her teacher, teacher aids, and the Head of Department (HOD). Although it seemed like a solution was reached after my conversation with the HOD, it was disheartening to discover that the proposed solution was essentially retracted during the staff meeting that afternoon.

The library, which was supposed to be a sanctuary not just for my daughter but for many other children, was suddenly scheduled to be closed in the mornings, with lunchtime access reduced to just two days a week. This made it challenging for my daughter, who is not sports-oriented, to participate in any of the activities offered at school.

On numerous occasions, my daughter was left to sit alone on the bench seats without any interaction from other children. She would come home in tears almost daily, and getting her dressed in the morning to go to school became a struggle. The isolation and lack of action to address the situation deeply impacted her mental health and caused immense frustration.

Witnessing your child in such a distressing environment on a daily basis is heartbreaking. Knowing that you are the one putting her in that situation is a feeling I never want to experience again. I am confident that I have made the best decision in removing her from public school education. And I should not have to prove that to anyone.

Potential misunderstandings as to why families home educate.

Making the decision to homeschool is deeply personal, driven by a desire to provide the best possible educational experience for our children. It's not just a right but also a responsibility we take seriously as parents, guided by our understanding of Section 7(a-d) of the Education Act 2006, which allows us to choose an educational environment that aligns with our children's needs and values.

Many of us who have chosen homeschooling have done so after feeling let down by the mainstream education system. We felt compelled to seek alternatives when faced with what we perceived as systemic shortcomings. This decision is not taken lightly; it's often a last resort after exhausting other options.

Having experienced homeschooling with my daughter, I can attest to its transformative effects. She has blossomed in ways I hadn't imagined. Not only has she developed a newfound confidence, but she's also more enthusiastic about learning. Being able to tailor her education to her interests has ignited a passion for learning that I believe would have been stifled in a traditional school setting.

As I conclude, I humbly request that any decisions regarding changes to home education requirements be made with careful consideration. These decisions have the potential to significantly impact numerous families and could potentially exacerbate challenges related to our children's mental well-being.

The choice to homeschool is often made after thorough deliberation, and any alterations to the current framework should be approached with sensitivity to the diverse needs of homeschooling families. Changes that are not well-thought-out or fail to consider the unique circumstances of each family could inadvertently cause harm and distress.

Thank you for dedicating your time and attention to this matter. Your thoughtful consideration is greatly appreciated.

Warm regards,

