


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

**Submission No:** 1661  
**Submitted by:**   
**Publication:** Making the submission public but withholding your name  
**Attachments:** See attachment  
**Submitter Comments:**

Education  
General Provisions  
Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

Dear Committee,

As an experienced secondary school teacher, parent of multiple neurodiverse children and long-time home educator, I am writing to express my deep concerns with the proposed legislation changes which will affect home educators like myself.

Having engaged in the education system both professionally and from a home education perspective for over 25 years I completely reject the assertion that the proposed legislation will ensure, "every child will have access to a high quality education, no matter who they are or where they live in QLD." In fact I believe that the new legislation will work to have the opposite effect for the thousands of students across Queensland who are currently registered through the home education unit (HEU).

My main concern with this legislation change is the proposed mandate for home educators to adhere to the Australian National Curriculum.

My first question is, why has there been a push to change the current planning and reporting system for home educators in the first place? Is there any evidence to suggest that registered home educated students are less prepared for vocational and academic pathways? Certainly, in my own experience, my home-educated students who have reached school-leaver age have all moved easily into the tertiary study of their choices (Engineering, Science and Design) without requiring years of study aligned with the Australian Curriculum.

The decision to require adherence to the Australian curriculum seems to have been made under the assumption that the Australian curriculum is synonymous with an excellent education, without taking into account the fact that many reports, including one from Learning First in 2023 (Jensen 2023), highlight significant flaws and inadequacies with the current Australian curriculum. Criticisms include a lack of depth and breadth, particularly in the area of science education, poor sequencing of content and a marked decline in educational outcomes. Many parents choosing to homeschool, including a number of former teachers such as myself, have researched and found alternative curriculum choices and methodologies which are suited to their individual students needs and provide an excellent tailored education for their students. Why would this option be removed?

There has been discussion that the decision to mandate adherence to the Australian curriculum has been made to bring Queensland in line with the other states in Australia however there are few states which require this adherence. I know first hand from a period of home educating in Victoria that home educators are only required to provide learning opportunities across 8 key learning areas using whatever curriculum, program or plan they believe will best support their learners. I would encourage the committee to explore the various models of home education across the country to see that the legislation changes proposed in this current bill would result in Queensland bringing about the most arduous requirements for home schooling in the country.

Personally my main concern with requiring adherence to a particular curriculum is that it doesn't allow for inquiry led or interest based self directed learning which, from an educators perspective, provides the best model for ensuring depth of knowledge and retaining of information. Facilitating my children to undertake their own investigations, to have a say and control in their own learning direction and outcomes has enabled my children to become active and engage learners who have gone on to achieve incredibly high levels. Mandating adherence to the Australian Curriculum enforces a "school at home" type system onto families who for a range

of reasons have determined that the school model is not the best fit for their learners and who are already enabling excellent outcomes for their children without it.

My own journey to home education began when, after several years of secondary teaching experience, I had my own child who was not coping in the school system. Despite the best efforts of the primary school we had chosen and the skill of the teaching staff who were working with my child, it quickly became apparent that the social and sensory demands of school were not going to be a good fit for my child. Reflecting on my own experience watching neurodivergent students struggling in secondary school I determined that I needed to find an alternative. Many of my fellow home educators have had similar experiences with their own children whereby they have resorted to homeschooling following experiences of bullying, trauma or severe anxiety. Once we began home educating my eldest I began to see the benefits not only in him personally (as he was now thriving) but also in my ability to provide a rich, tailor made education to suit his needs, his opportunity to engage in well-supported social interactions with other home educated students, the benefits to our family of a richer family life and more active involvement in our children's lives. Our children were thriving and we decided that home education would be the best fit for all of our children. Many of my fellow home educating parents are struggling with managing the competing needs of neurodivergent children in a world which is not structured to support them. Many children have lasting trauma from their attempts to fit into a school system which does not cater to their needs. Many parents arrive at home educating as a last resort after trying many different schools along the way. For many of these neurodivergent children, a structured and overloaded curriculum and 'school at home' model will not enable them to achieve their best outcomes. Forcing parents to adopt a teacher relationship with their child and to replicate school in the home environment only adds to the stress these parents are already under. A more flexible approach such as the one currently in place which gives parents the opportunity to design an excellent education which is tailored to the individual needs of their child will lead to far superior outcomes than the one proposed by the changes in legislation.

My final concern is that the Australian curriculum was designed to be implemented by trained teachers who have undertaken years of study to enable them to interpret and implement the Australian curriculum effectively in a classroom setting. Many homeschooling parents do not have this training or skill set however this does not preclude them from providing an excellent education for their children merely that they will need to be able to draw an alternative curriculum and methodologies, ones which work better in an home based setting.

From a welfare perspective I am concerned that onerous legislative changes such as the ones proposed in this bill will only serve to drive more families to 'fly under the radar' by not registering thus losing the support and oversight needed to support the safety and wellbeing of all students. I encourage the committee to consider instead how home educators might be better supported with resources, guidance and opportunities to provide an excellent education for their children. I implore the committee to listen to the submissions made by many homeschoolers across the state who are objecting to the proposed changes. I respectfully ask that adequate consultation take place which involves actually talking to current home educators and not merely businesses set to profit from this legislative change. I encourage investigation into whether the proposed changes are required and whether there is any evidence to support the need for such changes.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely

Concerned home educator

## References

Jensen, B. (2023). *Fixing the hole in Australian education, The Australian Curriculum benchmarked against the best*. Retrieved from Learning First:  
<https://learningfirst.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/FULL-REPORT-COMBINED.pdf>