

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

Submission No: 1669
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Submitter Comments:

Dear Committee Members, I wish to put forward for your consideration my concerns regarding the proposed amendments to the education bill that has recently been presented to parliament. As a young family at the beginning of our home learning journey, my main concerns are as follows. 1. That appropriate, genuine consultation with real life home schooling families in Queensland and representatives from WITHIN the community was not undertaken when formulating these amendments. The recent growth in home education in Queensland where the numbers of legally registered home learning families have grown by almost 200% in the five years to 2023 (let alone the number of unregistered families) challenges a lot of society's preconceived ideas about what it means to be educated and what education looks like in 2024 and beyond. I implore you to genuinely engage with this community to better understand our reasons for choosing home education for our families. Spend time with the many many families choosing this way of life - attend their co-ops and meet ups, watch how natural learning occurs, leave behind the assumption that home schooling is "school at home" and better consider the implications of these proposed amendments on home learning families and the Home Education Unit - a government department that is already struggling to keep up with the increasing number of registrations, plans and reports. 2. I am extremely concerned that in section 7, chapter 9 part 5, it now states that home educating parents demonstrate that homeschooling is in the best interest of the child. My question is, ACCORDING TO WHOM? I object to the inclusion of a guiding principle that calls into question my natural authority and deep instincts as a parent to make the best choices for my child. Home education is a legal educational option in Australia and I'm not sure how this guiding principle accords with a parents' right to choose the education their child receives? Unlike a lot of other home learning families in Queensland, my children might do "okay" at school. They might even thrive. But is it the ONLY way they can thrive? After several years of conversations, research and careful consideration, the answer that our family has landed on is a categoric no. Our family has chosen to learn from home, life and in the community to better ensure all the other things that children (and humans) need to thrive - physical health and movement, freedom, self directed learning, family time, a slower pace of life, spending more time outdoors, more time for practical life skills, play, adventures, community participation, time with grandparents and so much more. These are our family's values. I object to a guiding principle that might one day compel our family to prioritise someone else's values and ideas ahead of our own. 3. I strongly object to the inclusion of the Australian National curriculum as the only definition of a high quality education. The National curriculum is not a better substitute for the carefully created and curated, individualised education my children will receive. Every child in Queensland deserves a high quality education, we can definitely agree on that. Under the current legislation, home educating families are ALREADY REQUIRED to submit a plan at the start of their home learning - a plan that includes English and Maths education and other learning subjects of the family/child's choosing - with the overarching requirement being that the plan delivers a high quality education to the child. Then at the end of the year, families need to provide a report detailing how they delivered a high quality education along with a new plan for the coming year. There are already processes in place that ensure home learning children get access to high quality education. The proposed compulsion for home learning families to follow and adhere to ACARA remove a lot of the choice and freedom for those families to follow their children's natural interests/abilities/motivations to learn, and seems to be an attempt by the government to compel families to replicate school at home. Home learning is NOT school at home. It can be for some families, but it can also be so many other things too. Any legislative changes need to allow for

learning and curriculums that are outside the Australian Curriculum box. Thank you for taking the time to read these concerns. Processing and responding to these proposed changes has taken considerable time and energy over the last few weeks. So I'm off to get on with our day - a day full of natural learning consisting of playground visit, finishing some craft projects, Easter discussions, Tablet time for some English and Maths learning, play, planning the rest of our week, exercise and home duties. I hope that, moving forward, this legislation can be amended to suit the needs of all students and families across Queensland. I look forward to your collaboration in response to the genuine concerns of many home learning families on these issues.