

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

Submission No: 1703
Submitted by: [REDACTED]
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Attachments: No attachment

Submitter Comments:

Dear Submissions Committee, I am writing to express concerns regarding proposed education legislation that was introduced to the Queensland parliament on the 6th of March 2024. https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/whole/html/bill.first/bill-2022-052?fbclid=IwAR1hZpIH9dxzn3QS7Jab-G4XshmLcX1MbiTjWMn_KrhFYb67bq15CvrMggl I am a professional in the community with two Bachelor's degrees and CA. My primary and secondary education was through a private Catholic school; however, I was a disengaged student who did not excel academically in these early years of school due to feeling bored in a classroom setting and not having my interests followed or encouraged. My two younger siblings were home educated, as were my wife and her four siblings. My younger brother is now a site manager for a large building company, my younger sister holds a diploma in early childhood education and worked in childcare settings as room leader for several years before having her own child. My wife and two of her sisters have completed Bachelor Degrees including one completing her teaching qualifications. My wife's two youngest siblings are now working on completing degrees in Economics and Engineering respectively. Home education without the national curriculum has not held them back in their lives and has allowed them to be engaged in their education and learning in a way that private college did not allow for in my own educational journey. My main concerns fall into two categories: firstly concerns around the freedom of parents to determine the best interest of their child, and secondly concerns regarding the necessity for children to follow an approved curriculum. The legislative change proposing that home education be in the "best interest of the child" is concerning as children in Australia's "best interest" should already be protected and therefore this change raises the question as to why it is being included as part of the education bill and how this might be intended to restrict home education. The best interest of a child is protected within the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), being ratified in Australia in 1990, which states that cases involving abuse, neglect and exploitation of a child be appropriately investigated, treated and followed-up with (article 9.1). Article 18.1 (CRC) also states that "parents or legal guardians have the primary responsibility for the upbringing and development of a child." As such the "best interest" of the child around abuse, neglect and exploitation is already protected and therefore parents should be able to make decisions around what educational method or approach they determine is best for their child as per their primary responsibility. Adding this change to the education bill will unfortunately not make children safer, but instead infringe on parental rights and ease of parents being able to choose home education. I strongly believe parental freedoms need to be protected and that the government should not be creating legislation that infringes on the parents' rights and responsibilities. The education of any child should be the responsibility of the parent, not the state, regardless of what type of educational institution or environment the child attends. I am further concerned about the proposal to mandate ACARA or an approved learning curriculum. The variety of approaches to education is vast and extensive across the globe. There are so many different methods, philosophies, and beliefs regarding how the education of a child should be approached. While some of these methods and philosophies, such as Montessori or Waldorf education have been allowed to a degree within the ACARA framework, there are hundreds of approaches that have not been. Should a parent not be able to choose to use a curriculum or educational philosophy besides the one dictated by the Australian government? Can they not choose to use the highly regarded Singaporean approach to math, or the highly regarded Nordic approach of not requiring examination until after age 16, or what about a classical approach that includes studying Latin and ancient classics? Or a unit study approach that explores a topic in depth across various learning

areas? With literally thousands of fantastic and brilliant educational approaches, why would we box all Australian children into one method? Would we not want to be growing a population with a diverse and vast expanse of knowledge and experience? All kids need learning to be meaningful, relevant and embedded in real life situations. This is not necessarily reflected in a prescriptive curriculum as per ACARA. I appreciate your consideration of my concerns and your work as a committee to ensure that this legislation is in the interest of all home educators and children.