

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

Submission No: 1709
Submitted by: [REDACTED]
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Attachments: No attachment

Submitter Comments:

Dear members of the EPGA Committee, I am writing to voice my deepest concerns regarding the proposed changes to Qld's home education laws as outlined in the Education General Provisions and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. As an active home-schooling parent, some of these new measures are a serious cause for concern and will have a negative impact on many in the homeschool community. Introducing myself, I am a small business owner and university teacher with twenty years lecturing and program coordinating experience. My wife and I made the decision (after many months of deliberation) to homeschool our first child, like so many other parents, as a pure result of our child's deteriorating mental health, lack of interest in all things that once brought him joy, and simply decreasing love of life, learning and happiness. For a parent to see their 4 year old child who once sang, laughed and danced his way through every day turn into an anxious, fearful, energy-less boy who cried daily was beyond heartbreaking. We did our best to help him through the school year. Unfortunately it was very clear that although the school he was at was very aware, and they were indeed full of the best intentions, but their actions and words were conflicted and in the end incredibly detrimental. The tipping point for me was arriving at school toward the end of the year and his teacher explaining to me they had made wonderful provisions to accommodate him, and showed me his personal 'desk' shunted up against the back wall of the classroom, with his back facing the rest of the room and all the other kids, where he would work on his own 'projects'. My son was simply looking at me with eyes saying please, take me home. My eyes are welling as I write this, remembering what was, and what could have been. In complete contrast, while I am writing this I am hearing the sounds of activity, loud discussion and laughter from both of our boys. It is the sound of joy. The flexibility of homeschooling has enabled this change in our children. Learning beyond the confines of a rigid, standardised curriculum has unlocked their love of learning and enabled them to follow their interests as far as they want to go. Mandating adherence to the Australian Curriculum will limit their ability to do this, as well as increase pressure on homeschooling parents who have sacrificed much in order to prioritise the well-being of their children. The homeschooling community is a generous, proactive and strong community of individuals who need support in what they do, rather than imposing restrictions and increasing reporting requirements to add to their workload. Another concerning proposed amendment of the bill is the inclusion of homeschooling needing to be 'in the best interests of the child'. This statement for us is evident in the dramatic improvement in the well-being of our children, but how is it to be determined or assessed now, to satisfy the legislation? Thank you for taking the time to read my letter and for considering my concerns. Sincerely Homeschooling parent.