

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

**Submission No:** 1722  
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**Submitter Comments:**

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to express my strong support for home schooling in Queensland to be treated as a valid and valuable educational option for children and families. As a concerned citizen, I believe that parents should have the freedom to choose the best educational path for their children, including the option to home school. Current proposed changes seem to imply that home schooling is a lesser option and that parents will be required to justify why it is in their child's best interests. No such policy exists when a parent chooses state or private schooling which suggests this is a targeted and discriminatory act against home schooling.

I would like for a moment to share with you the circumstances that led our family to home schooling. One of our four children was born with a disability. They require a significant level of support to learn and upon reaching school age they were not yet toileting independently. I approached our local school with their needs only to be told they were unsure if they could cater to our child's needs and that they would get back to me via email. A week later I chased it up and was told the email was coming. This was two years ago, and I still have not had a response. I then approached our local special school only to be told that as my child does not have an intellectual disability, they are not eligible to attend. This left me one other option of paying \$10,000 per annum for a private special school.

Our family chose to home school in the best interests of our child and at a huge financial cost. We are now a single income family fighting to make ends meet because we so deeply value what is best for our child. Our story is not unique, I have met so many families who have made the choice to home school due to similar circumstances. The question we are all left asking is why? Why are the government trying to make homeschooling harder instead of providing more support? Why aren't they examining the state school system which is failing us? Where is the support for families forced to sacrifice income to support their children's needs?

In addition to our family's story, I'd like to personally support the benefits of home schooling as a valid and beneficial educational choice for all Australian families. There are several compelling reasons why home schooling is in the best interests of the child and why parents should have the autonomy to decide how they educate their children:

1. **Tailored Education:** Home schooling allows for a personalized and tailored education that can cater to the unique learning styles, interests, and needs of each child. This individualized approach ensures that children can reach their full potential academically, socially, and emotionally.
2. **Flexible Learning Environment:** Home schooling provides a flexible learning environment that can adapt to the child's pace of learning and life circumstances. This flexibility allows for a more balanced and enriched educational experience, including opportunities for real-world learning experiences and exploration.
3. **Safe and Nurturing Environment:** Home schooling provides a safe and nurturing environment where children can learn without the distractions and pressures often found in traditional school settings. This supportive environment fosters creativity, critical thinking, and a love for learning.
4. **Addressing Special Needs:** The current public schooling system often struggles to adequately support children with disabilities and neurodiversity. Home schooling allows

parents to tailor education plans and resources specifically to meet their child's unique needs, ensuring they receive the appropriate support and accommodations.

5. Parental Involvement: Home schooling encourages strong parental involvement in their child's education, fostering close relationships and a deeper understanding of their child's strengths, challenges, and progress.

It is crucial to recognize that home schooling offers numerous benefits and while it should be subject to reasonable oversight and accountability evidence suggests that a rigid curriculum is not necessary, and that learning can take place in many different ways. Schools in Sweden for example do not teach children to read until 8 years of age yet data shows these students achieve the same or better academic results as other countries, including Australia. Another more personal example is my child with a disability. Being at home allowed us to customise the learning plan to focus on self-help and hygiene skills as a subject in prep, if we were being held accountable to the national curriculum which assumes this knowledge is already acquired then we would not have had the freedom to support our child's needs. The national curriculum would suggest that it was essential for my child to learn to read before they had learned to use the toilet.

Parents who choose to home school should be supported and valued by the government. They deserve to be listened too and consulted with. These actions have the potential to create positive change such as: improving support and resources, increased access to educational materials, guidance from qualified educators, and funded opportunities for social interaction and extracurricular activities.

In conclusion, I respectfully request that you support and uphold the rights of parents to choose home schooling as an educational option for their children in the way that they feel is most suitable for their child. By promoting educational diversity and parental choice, we can create a more inclusive and effective education system that meets the diverse needs of all children.

Thank you for considering my perspective on this important matter. I look forward to your continued support for parental rights and educational freedom.

Kindest Regards,

Hayley Shipley