

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

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Dear Committee,

I write today to express my opposition to the proposed changes to homeschool legislation as part of the Inquiry into Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024.

I am a father of three children, all of whom have been homeschooled since 2018. Our homeschooling journey started suddenly when it became apparent that the private school our children were enrolled in was unable to fulfill their education requirements. All three children were identified early as being highly gifted. The school made considerable attempts to support this, particularly with my eldest, using the support of a gifted coordinator and their classroom teachers. Unfortunately, they were unable to provide sufficient challenge and extension for them. This resulted in considerable anxiety, depression and a loss of interest in learning.

I recognised this from my own schooling which was a combination of state and private education in Queensland. The highlights of my time in school were always when attempts were made to extend me beyond the classroom curriculum, however those attempts were few and far between. I found myself jealous of friends who attended external tutors such as Kumon Maths as they were able to move ahead at their own pace. The only maths challenge I ever had was during extension maths competitions where I was held back by the lack of mathematical tools I had since I was stuck in standard maths classrooms.

I was very excited when my eldest was accelerated through second grade. I felt that at least she would have the opportunities I never had. However, after a few months of catching up she quickly found herself once again moving at a snail's pace compared to what her mind desired. As the emotional toll grew we were left with no option but to find an alternative.

Since homeschooling, all three children are now able to move at their own pace through each subject. In most cases this is far beyond the national curriculum. The proposed change to require homeschooling to follow the national curriculum will severely limit my own and the many other gifted children who homeschool. The curriculum does not address highly gifted individuals and does not accommodate the pace at which they learn. ACARA states "All students are entitled to rigorous, relevant and engaging learning programs drawn from a challenging curriculum that addresses their individual learning needs." We have had to home school our children to address these needs. The proposed changes will prevent this.

Additionally, the removal of the 60-day provisional registration will cause considerable distress and impact on children such as my own. The decision to homeschool came to us after a very distressing and negative experience in school. We worked with the school for months attempting to resolve the situation however it continued to escalate and cause harm to my child. By the time we had decided homeschooling was our only option we needed to resolve the school situation immediately. The 60-day provisional registration allowed us to immediately address our child's needs whilst preparing the appropriate plan to submit to the department. Continuity of learning is provided as the reason for the removal, however in situations such as ours meaningful learning had ceased at school. The provisional registration allowed us to address the situation, begin repairing the emotional toll and

return to meaningful, challenging learning promptly without continuing the damage the school environment was causing.

Home schooling is not a decision we took lightly, and I know from conversations with other parents none of them do either. Most of those who take this approach do so to address limitations of the standard school environment and its curriculum. Bringing home schooling closer to that environment simply removes our ability to address the individual needs of our children and limits their development. I know from friends who are teachers that they wish they were able to provide such individualised support for their students. Please support us by withdrawing these changes from the bill.

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