

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

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Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my concerns regarding the recent proposed changes to education legislation. I strongly believe in my need to voice my concerns from a home educating parent point of view.

I am a parent of 5 children. In our family we have ASD, ADHD, multiple twice exceptional children including dyslexia and specific learning disorders. Relating to these multiple diagnoses there are mental health challenges that accompany them such as OCD, and generalised anxiety.

We tried school. It was never our intent to home educate. However, my first child was labelled a 'bad kid' as his high IQ mean he was bored, he would look out the window and not pay attention as he already knew the content. Instead of extending him, the teacher punished him and when I questioned her about it I was told, 'he's just a bad kid' and 'my children get c's and d's why shouldn't yours'. This attitude was the last straw for me, I had tried to advocate for him through the school system for years and I was clearly getting nowhere. My second child also high IQ began at school. He did have helpful and understanding teachers, however the environment itself was not conducive to his mental well-being. Every afternoon he would come home in a state of panic and rage that he had held down all day and could no longer contain. After 18 months of us as parents, his teachers and his occupational therapist trying to help with this, it was obvious to me that school was causing more damage than growth.

These circumstances led us to remove both our oldest from school and begin to home educate. Here they blossomed. We were able to study things that certainly did not fit the curriculum but did extend them in ways that traditional sit down school learning could not. We could follow their intense interests for days, even weeks, going on excursions, researching and library visits to nurture their interests and learning opportunities. When it came time for child number 3 to begin school, it was never a question of whether he would attend traditional school. Home education was so obviously the right choice for this sensitive, inquisitive child.

My eldest has now graduated and is a polite well rounded young man, he finished his year 12 year by studying full time at TAFE a Diploma of Photography and is in the process of launching his own photography business. My other children continue to learn and pursue their interests with fascination and joy at the world around us.

Home educating has certainly not been all flowers and sunshine. There have been huge challenges not least of these only having one income to rely on. But the benefits for our children has outweighed all those challenges.

I specifically oppose changes to enforce use of ACARA as I know from experience that freedom from ACARA was the thing that helped my children most in their learning journey. I also oppose the changes to removing provisional registration. The ability to remove my eldest when he was being bullied and punished by his teacher was very important for his mental health.

I hold great concern for the lack of engagement and consultation with the home education community in QLD around these proposed changes.

In light of these concerns, I urge you to carefully reconsider the proposed education legislation and to prioritize the best interests of our students, teachers, and schools. I implore you to advocate for a more inclusive and collaborative approach to policymaking that values input from all stakeholders and ensures the integrity and quality of our education system.

Thank you for taking the time to read my letter and for considering my concerns. I look forward to your response and to further dialogue on this important issue.