

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

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Friday 22 March 2024

To Whom It May Concern,

RE: Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Provisions Bill 2024

Herewith, I wish to submit my statement to the committee, to specifically address the parts of the Bill referring to changes in Homeschooling legal oversight. I am completely opposed to what is put forward.

I hereby request that my submission be deidentified and my privacy respected due to DV and family matters.

Your Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

RE: Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Provisions Bill 2024

I am writing as a parent who opted to homeschool my two children in the state of Victoria. I and my children are concerned about the Queensland Education Bill and its impact not just for Queenslanders but that it has the potential to start a completely inappropriate change in attitudes in other Australian legal jurisdictions.

My ex-partner and I are private school educated, tertiary educated. I have First Class Honours from Monash (BBus Hons), I am an ex-academic and Finance industry employee. The father of my children is a registered, working teacher here in Victoria. He has a double degree - BTeach/BArts.

We have always been registered homeschoolers here. I run a number of Facebook forums supporting homeschool parents, one of which is a national forum of almost 20,000 members. I am aware of the basics required in different Australian legal jurisdictions with regard to Homeschooling and I have many documents in my forums to share all that [including links to the appropriate state/territory legal requirements]. I have been involved in the Home Education Network (HEN) in the past [currently only as a paid member, coming up to 20 years at my next renewal].

I am well aware that there are families who do not register due to the onerous impact of the requirements and or due to trauma by their child/ren and family as a result of using the School system.

[HEN](#) runs annual surveys on social media as well as directly to their email list and members and I encourage you to take a look to see the significant percentage of respondents who homeschool due to school refusal, trauma or due to their child/ren having a special need. Our reasons were medical and philosophical and school can't {I do not recognise the term school refusal as appropriate}. One child always homeschooled but did prep part-time. The child still being homeschooled never went to school. Both children used the local kindergarten and had varied experiences.

We have used eclectic, natural, child-led education facilitation with our children. They have a love of learning and enquiring minds. We have done this without following any 'curriculum' – in Victoria we are required to address the 8 KLA's. We were very involved in homeschool meetups until the Federal and Victorian COVID19 lockdowns caused total carnage for homeschoolers to have social contact. The children got heavily involved in online social activities as well online learning opportunities that interested them.

My older child is now two years post-homeschool and pursuing her dream by studying at <https://aie.edu.au/>. In 2023 she did some Open University subjects but did not enjoy the experience. My younger child has this year and 2025 remaining in homeschool if she continues through to concluding year 12 equivalent. Both children get/got AIC funding for medical conditions which require them to be homeschooled.

I have several serious concerns about the Education Bill. The main points are:

- it breaches various State, Federal & International Human Rights and Disability laws;
- it will only increase unregistered homeschooling;
- it is a stick not a carrot approach to a broken institutionalised education system, thus punishing special needs even further as well as ignoring democratic rights of parents to educate their children as they see fit for the fast-changing modern world;
- it assumes that homeschooling is bad for children and that parents are in a cult due to one case;
- it is ill-informed about how education works and how homeschooling in particular operates for the best interest of the child in question;
- it appears to ignore the work done by HEU to already check applications and annual reports;
- the removal of provisional enrolment for homeschooling is dangerous and breaches disability law;
- the enforcement of ACARA is also a breach of disability law;
- Research clearly shows the benefits of homeschooling and that it is an integral part of the education system particularly as it addresses those students in the outer ranges of the bell curve.

Suggestions:

- No changes to the current regulatory framework.
- Incorporate a representative body akin to [VHEAC](#).
- Officially recognise and support that homeschooling has many [styles/flavours](#) due to the diverse needs of the individual children being educated - this can not be accomplished in schools.
- Change reporting requirements of homeschooling parents to reflect that some children can not read and or write due to disability - insisting on written work samples in such instances is discrimination.
- Do a much more professional survey of Queensland homeschoolers¹.
- Look further at homeschool legal frameworks in other regions, especially Victoria and A.C.T.

¹ I am aware that a very poor quality research survey was implemented about three years ago with an exceedingly low response rate of less than 10% and that this research was relied on to formulate the changes.

I encourage the committee to recommend no changes to the homeschool requirements PLUS extra staff for HEU who are educated about homeschooling and various forms of education especially where disability is an issue. The Australian school system is very obviously failing our children nation-wide. Issues like school refusal and school at home during lockdowns have massively increased realisations of the issue. Sadly, politicians want to go more heavily into 'institutionalised learning' and less into well structured IEPs. Homeschooling is just an IEP conducted by the parent/s. Homeschooling is not and should never be required to be 'school at home'.

As an ex-academic who dropped out of University and returned as a mature aged student, I would like to stress that 50-60% of university students have no ATAR and enter via other means. My older child undertook Open University Australia during 2023.

Some evidence of positive outcomes for homeschoolers as published by Home Education Network:

Styles of Homeschooling:

<https://home-ed.vic.edu.au/home-education-styles/>

Surveys [I expect HEN will send them to you in their own submission]:

2018 - <https://home-ed.vic.edu.au/vic-home-ed-survey-2018/>

2019 - <https://home-ed.vic.edu.au/2019-hen-survey/>

2020 - <https://home-ed.vic.edu.au/2020-survey-results/>

2021 - <https://home-ed.vic.edu.au/home-ed-survey-results-2021/>

2022 - <https://home-ed.vic.edu.au/2022-hen-survey-results/>

There are some other excellent links here about research on Homeschooling:

Main page - <https://home-ed.vic.edu.au/category/research/>

More specifically:-

School Can't survey -

<https://home-ed.vic.edu.au/school-cant-hen-and-the-senate-inquiry/>

Unschooling works -

<https://home-ed.vic.edu.au/unschooling-works-says-the-emerging-evidence/>

Home education is effective -

<https://home-ed.vic.edu.au/the-effectiveness-of-home-education/>

General feedback on Home education outcomes -

<https://home-ed.vic.edu.au/home-education-outcomes/>

Homeschooling works - <https://home-ed.vic.edu.au/homeschooling-works/>

Homeschooling and special needs and disability -

<https://home-ed.vic.edu.au/home-education-and-special-needs-children/>

It is clear that people who are homeschooled are generally not part of the 'normal' range of the bell curve and therefore homeschooling is the better option for them -

<https://home-ed.vic.edu.au/children-educated-at-home-dont-learn-like-they-do-in-school/>

HEN's alumni publications are a must read:

<https://home-ed.vic.edu.au/hen-handbook-of-home-educated-alumni/>

<https://home-ed.vic.edu.au/postcards-from-alumni/>

Thank you for considering this submission.

Final draft - Sunday 24 March 2024.