

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

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As a long term home educating parent of seven I do not approve of the proposed changes to Queensland home education legislation as outlined in the bill currently being discussed in parliament.

I do not believe it is in the best interests of our children for the government education department to hold home educating parents to a complicated curriculum designed for delivery in a classroom to twenty or more students by one teacher. There is much evidence available to suggest that individually tailored programs, and fostering a love of learning through waiting for each child's readiness, and working with their interests delivers far better educational outcomes than a one-size-fits-all program.

I have seen this over my twenty plus years home educating, both in my own family, and in others I have known during this time. Many of these families have children who are now adults and successful in a variety of careers, some of whom even entered and completed tertiary education early. It concerns me that the education department seek to implement changes to current practice when it would seem they understand little about the process of home education, and how it differs from school education. They would appear to not be aware of the amazing outcomes being achieved by home educated people, not only in Queensland, but across the country, and the world!

Furthermore, five of my seven children have additional needs which we have been able to support far better in a home environment than a classroom would have time or resources for (my husband, as a former teacher who has seen the struggles of students who are not receiving the support they need, and friends who have had experiences in schools where supports for their children with additional needs were extremely limited will verify this statement.)

To expect families to strictly follow the Australian Curriculum, whether the children have additional needs or not, shows little understanding about the nature of home education, and how it works within the framework of a family. Without this understanding, it cannot be said in truth that this proposed amendment would be in the best interests of our children.

As to the child safety concerns addressed in the bill, I believe it is erroneous to suggest a strong link between home education and poor child safety outcomes. I believe these issues are best addressed proactively, at a community level, and if the government were to contribute to that community support, it could be in the form of free or low cost parenting programs like Circle of Security, which promote secure attachment between children and caregivers, more freely available practical support and mental health support for all new parents, and for families at all stages of life who are experiencing personal or relational difficulties.

Please consider my submission. I DO NOT SUPPORT THE PASSING OF THIS BILL for the reasons outlined above.

I believe it will especially place undue stress on home educating families whose children have additional needs, and who are already providing them with a quality tailored education. I believe it is out of touch with the reality of home education, and does not address the issue of why increasingly more parents are choosing to home educate rather than send their children to public schools.

It has also been brought to my attention that there has been a lack of representative consultation for home educating families directly- and these are the people who will most be affected by legislative changes! Amanda Bartle, and Patricia Fitzgerald, who were representing us directly were actively excluded in the second round of consultation.

Home educating parents have not been given a fair hearing on this matter, and the volume of letters to the committee will hopefully make it clear that we are not happy with the proposed changes!

Thankyou for reading my submission.