


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

**Submission No:** 1880  
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**Submitter Comments:**

Elizabeth Baker



I am the parent of a child who has been registered for home education in Queensland since 2019, her prep year. I am making a submission to express some of my concerns about the Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024.

My concerns relate to the following parts of the bill and the process of consultation leading up to this bill:

1. Division 2, Clause 68 S217 (1) (b), that the child's education program be 'consistent with an approved education and training program', and for this to be defined as the Australian Curriculum or QCAA syllabuses.

The Australian Curriculum and QCAA senior syllabuses are not designed to be applied by a non-teacher supporting the learning and development of their individual child. They have little relevance when I am working with my unique child, with her individual interests and preferences and her own developmental trajectory. It is a particular strength of home education that our children and young people acquire and develop the skills and knowledge that are valued across the Australian community when they are ready to do so, and through activities and relationships they find intrinsically valuable, and this would be threatened by requiring families to follow any given curriculum. Across the home educated community, self-directed learning or having the choice of all available curricula and activities has not proved to be a barrier to further education and future aspirations.

The home educating community in Queensland is already largely rejecting the Australian Curriculum. In my own planning for HEU, I mention the Australian Curriculum in passing but do not use it as the basis for any of my planning. I wonder whether that means my family has been included in the 20% figure that was put forward at the public briefing on 18/03/2024. Claims that most other states require use of the Australian Curriculum as the basis for home education planning and reporting are inaccurate.

As the senior syllabuses prepare young people for exams which are not available to home educated young people, and which they would

likely not take even if they were able to do so, these do not appear able to provide the basis for a high-quality education for children who do not go to school.

2. Part 4 Division 2 S7 (b) (da) (i) that home education be provided in a way that is in the best interests of the child.

It is hard to see how these proposed changes address concerns about child safety. A program which accords with the Australian Curriculum will not ensure any higher level of safety for an individual child. Assessing the best interests of a child is complex, and this is surely not something HEU can do in the context of text-based planning and reporting and with no direct contact with the child. This standard is also not being applied to decisions about whether an individual child has a school-based education, although it is very evident that experiences in schools contribute to poor wellbeing for some children.

Further, the removal of the option of provisional registration would jeopardise child safety and wellbeing. When children are in significant distress, there can be urgent need for them to leave school. It would be an unreasonable additional stressor for these families, and a threat to child wellbeing, if these children are required return to school, or seek an exemption from returning to school, while the planning of a learning program is done.

3. Consultation process.

I have concerns about the consultation process engaged in by the Department of Education in this matter. Like others, I provided input in 2022. However, we were consulted on a different set of issues to what has been put forward in this legislation. Additionally, the home education community and its representatives were excluded from the second stage of the consultation process, while for-profit businesses were included. These businesses cannot speak for the home education community. My view is that an organisation bringing together representatives from HEU and the Queensland home education community is needed to ensure that policy reflects the needs of home educating families.