

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

Submission No: 1915
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Submitter Comments:

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my deep concerns regarding the proposed changes to the Home Education legislation in Queensland. I DO NOT support some of these changes that have been introduced.

This is my eighth year as a Home Educating parent of 4 children. We are actively engaged in our community, and I enjoy having the freedom to educate my children in a way that best suit their individualised learning needs and interests. As such, I feel compelled to address the discrepancy between the proposed changes and the realities of Home Education. I am worried about the impact that they will have on my family and the Home Educating community.

I am concerned about the lack of transparency and proper consultation with current homeschooling families around these changes. Queensland has NO official state homeschooling association. The two people representing the people directly, Amanda Bartle and Patricia Fitzgerald, were actively excluded. Amanda and Patricia were well known to the EGPA review team and directors, and were actively excluded, as mentioned in the briefing. I do not believe we were represented in the second round of consultation because of this. Furthermore, no one asked ME who I wanted as a consultation representative considering we have NO official association. As such, the proposed changes appear disconnected from the actual needs and practices of the homeschooling community. These changes will place a greater unnecessary burden upon us and our children.

I am particularly concerned about:

- **Who is responsible for determining if homeschooling is in the 'best interest of our children' (s7)**

Being a parent is a huge responsibility but also one of the most rewarding things in my life. I love my children more than anyone else and I only want the best for my children.

My two eldest children started in mainstream schooling, although we found did not meet their educational or emotional needs. As such, I chose to stay at home and teach my children, like many others. This choice is not easy and families do not take it on lightly. Many sacrifices are made: career, income, cost, and time.

I enjoy spending time with my children every day and learning along beside them. I know their unique needs, interests, and aspirations. I believe there is no one better than a parent that can determine what is in the best interest of their child/children.

My question is who would decide what is in the best interest of MY child? And how would they make this judgement? Furthermore, if we are asking this of homeschooling families will we be asking this of schooled families?

- **Defining high-quality education as the Australian curriculum that our home educated children must follow (s217)**

The Australian curriculum is made for schools, we must take into consideration that Home Education looks very different to schools. The Australian curriculum is a one size fits all model that is needed in a school environment.

However, homeschooling affords us the opportunity to create an individualised learning plan. Many families including my own, follow an interest or project lead learning style. This enables deep learning in an area of particular interest.

We are doing everything we can to ensure our children are receiving a 'high quality education' (that has already been approved by the HEU) that is adapted to suit the different learning styles of each of my children. This flexibility allows us to enrich our children's educational experience and enhance academic outcomes.

The suggestion to mandate 'following the Australian curriculum' overlooks the diverse approaches and resources utilized by homeschooling families. This also removes all flexibility for parents to choose curriculum that suits the individual learning style and interests of their children. Most families choose homeschooling for its flexibility and individualised approach to education.

- **Increased reporting expectation to demonstrate the educational progress (s217)**

Currently we report each year on maths, English and one other area of learning (science, art, music, HASS, HPE etc) that we demonstrate progress in. Under this new proposed legislation, we will be required to plan and report on all subjects consistent with the Australian curriculum and demonstrate progress across them all.

My question, do ALL teachers have to demonstrate progress for ALL their students in ALL learning areas every year? If not, why would you expect a Home Education parent to do so?

I believe this is holding parents to a greater expectation than teachers. Furthermore, it is unrealistic that every student will make progress in every subject every year. This 'higher' expectation will come at a cost of our time, resources, and ultimately our children's education.

Thank you for taking the time to listen to my concerns. It is my hope, going forward this legislation can suit the needs of all Home Educated students across Queensland. I look forward to hearing your response about this important issue.

Sincerely,

Holly Page

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