

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

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Submission on: Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

I am writing to voice my objection to the proposed amendments to the Education General Provisions Act (EGPA). There are many elements of this proposed amendment that are not relevant to myself and my family. However, I do find particularly alarming the proposed amendments proposed to sections 7 and 217 of the Act.

We are a long term homeschooling family. We believe that the essential goal of education should be to create individuals who possess the skills, drive and capacity for learning so as to equip them for the uncertain world that they will enter into as adults. We do not believe the Australian curriculum performs this job adequately today. As such, we chose to homeschool for the following reasons.:

1. **We have the education and resources to provide our children with a higher quality education ourselves.** Both my husband and I have Bachelors and Masters qualifications across the fields of science, technology, economics and the arts. We are well qualified in our respective fields.
2. **We do not believe that the Australian curriculum encourages the deep learning required to build lifelong learners.** After reviewing the Australian curriculum alongside the latest global research on best practice education approaches, we felt that the Australian curriculum was more concerned with building up a base of facts within the child rather than equipping them with the skills necessary to acquire new knowledge in a self-directed manner.

While I recognise that not every family has the luxury of resources we have, I believe that the proposed amendments to the EGPA would curtail the ability of those families who do have these resources to choose to do better. It is this removal of choice and agency on the part of the parent to which I most strenuously object.

Specifically, Section 7 seeks to define, in legislation, what is in 'the best interests of the child' and what constitutes 'high quality education'. Each parent must and should make these definitions for themselves. For some, this will be sending their children to school, for others it will be the choice to homeschool. It is not the role of the government to make these definitions on our behalf. It is the role of the parent to make these decisions based upon the circumstances and context of their family. I refuse to abdicate my responsibilities as a parent to the government.

Further, Section 217 seeks to constrain the education of a child to 'approved education and training programs'. To constrain our ability to use only those materials that have been approved by the Queensland or Australian government agencies seems parochial at best and insular at worst. Today's technology allows us to reach across the globe for high quality educational materials and approaches. Further, as technology removes the barriers that physical borders once represented, our children will by necessity need to compete with the best and brightest that the world has to offer as they enter into the job market. Why would we, as conscientious adults, knowingly legislate to remove the ability to effectively compete on the world stage from our children?

I wholeheartedly endorse the need for governments to regulate the minimum standards to which we should educate the next generation of Queenslanders. What I fundamentally disagree with is the manner in which this legislation seeks to enforce a curriculum that has obvious flaws within it; multiple papers by the Australian Council for Educational Research, for example, have found it wanting.

Our government needs to do better. Forcing an adoption of the national curriculum is simply lazy policy making that is disrespectful of the diversity of our population. It is not inclusive, it is not in the best interests of our children and it is certainly not good government.

We can do better than this. We owe it to our children to do better.