

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

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Dear Committee Members

I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the recent education legislation changes that have been proposed in our state. As a constituent and a member of the community, I believe it is crucial to voice my apprehensions about the potential impact of these changes on our education system.

I am a registered teacher of 32 years. I have had a variety of roles within schools including classroom teacher, curriculum coordinator and pastoral coordinator. My entire adult working life has been invested in educating young people in the areas of science, mathematics and personal growth. I have recently started home educating both my children to provide them with opportunities that are not available in a mainstream classroom. One of the primary motivations for homeschooling is to provide my children with a personalised learning experience that fosters their intellectual curiosity and allows them to learn at their own pace. These new regulations threaten to restrict this flexibility and stifle their natural inclination to explore and discover the world around them.

The proposed legislation raises several pressing concerns that I believe need to be addressed. Firstly, the reference to the Australian Curriculum be removed from the draft legislation, and instead replaced with covering the eight key learning areas, which will bring the legislation in line with the majority of other Australian jurisdictions. Secondly, the reference to a 'high quality education' be removed from the draft legislation, this is an ambiguous term and implies a measurement of some type will be applied. Thirdly, the provisional registration is maintained, and that the time frames unchanged from current regulations. Provisional registration is needed only in a minority of cases as evidenced by the departments own statistics. There will always be a need for some families to exit schools in a way that precludes a plan being written for a child in an expedient manner. I am concerned by the reference to 'best interests of the child' and believe it should be removed from the draft legislation. As a parent I find this offensive, the government can not claim to have the same level of care and concern, nor experience that I do for my own children. Finally, a parent representative body similar to Victorian Home Education Advisory Committee in Victoria needs to be formed so that Queensland home educators are able to collaborate with the HEU and Department of Education to formulate a workable and realistic legislative and regulatory framework.

Moreover, I am worried about the lack of transparency, timing and public consultation surrounding these changes. As a stakeholder in our education system, I believe it is imperative for the voices of educators, parents, students, and community members to be heard and considered in any decision-making process that impacts the education of our young people. My understanding is that key volunteers in the home education community have been excluded from consultation processes while businesses who have a vested financial interest in the home education community were invited to meet with government officials.

Additionally, it appears that the government is not aware of the multiple pathways to higher education. Many home educated students begin their tertiary studies before their peers. It appears as though the legislation in its current form would preclude many home educated students from beginning this part of their life journey.

In light of these issues, I respectfully urge the committee to reconsider the proposed changes to homeschooling legislation and to engage in a collaborative dialogue with homeschooling stakeholders to identify and address the real issues driving this educational choice. By doing so, we can work towards a more inclusive and responsive educational system that respects the choices and concerns of all families.

Thank you for taking the time to read my letter and for considering my concerns. I look forward to your response and to further dialogue on this important issue.

Sincerely,
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Home schooling parent and registered teacher.