

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

**Submission No:** 1986  
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**Submitter Comments:**

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to express my concerns in regards to the proposed changes to the Home Education legislation in Queensland. I object to the proposals in the Education Bill 2024. As a current Home Educating parent I am worried about the impact that they will have on my family and the Home Educating community. I have not been given a voice in the second round of consultation, due to the lack of an official state homeschooling association. Nor have I been given the opportunity for representation by those who hold my views, Amanda Bartle and Patricia Fitzgerald representing the people directly, were actively excluded. I have not been afforded the opportunity of a consultation representative in light of there being no official association.

I am particularly concerned about:

- Defining high-quality education as the Australian curriculum that our home educated children must follow.

One of the greatest benefits we have journeyed as a homeschooling family is the ability to learn according to our children's interest at their own pace. Initially we did abide by prescribed learning following the Australian Curriculum and found each of our children have their own method of learning that caters to their own individual needs. Although we thrive on the flexibility afforded to them by freedom of choice in interest lead learning. They have displayed a deeper understanding and retention enhancing academic outcomes than previous methods, this is inclusive of their time when they were enrolled in the public school system.

This has shown a one size fits all teaching style does not benefit educating children individually particularly within the home environment. It does not cater for the needs of diverse learners, religious backgrounds and differing educational philosophies. The school model is not replicative for the home and is not sought after as an option for families electing to homeschool. One of my children has dyslexia and was requiring extensive one on one time with the teacher/teacher aid, he was falling behind in the traditional schooling system due to a lack of support and resources available to him that catered to his individual learning needs. This was affecting the mental health and wellbeing of our child and ultimately what drove us to the option of homeschooling as an alternative way to educate our child according to his best interests. Homeschooling has afforded us the opportunity to correct this by choosing supportive resources according to his specific needs and learning style. The change in him was evident with a newfound enthusiasm for learning and grasping concepts that previously were out of reach by traditional means. This will be his seventh-year homeschooling and he is thriving having afforded the means to educate in the way that best fits him. The new bill would put my child's learning at a deficit as we previously experienced within the schooling system.

- Increased reporting expectation to demonstrate the educational progress.

I believe the proposed changes are not considering the needs or practises of the homeschooling community, holding them to a higher standard than teachers. Expecting homeschooling families to plan and report across all subjects consistent with the Australian Curriculum demonstrating progress across them all. It raises concerns about governmental overreach into our families' private educational choices. While losing potential learning opportunities from personalised learning by driving the demands centred around prescribed learning and outcomes. Additionally my concern is these requirements would make enrolling and remaining registered so difficult it will press families to no longer register or choose homeschooling as a viable option.

The proposed changes would come at a heavy burden to the system and the families with extra unnecessary labour on both ends creating a disadvantage to the parents and children by taking valuable time, energy and resources away, ultimately affecting the process of educating my children. The current requirement for reporting is effective and shows transparency, with each consecutive year the opportunity to showcase a differing third subject alongside learning areas maths and english.

- Who is responsible for determining if homeschooling is in the 'best interest of our children'?

Who is to determine what is best for my child is a parental fundamental right, it should not be encroached upon or restricted by a government body or agenda. As a parent I should have the personal freedom to advocate our right to choose how to raise and educate my children and what that looks like for our family. Forcing homeschool students to strictly follow a national curriculum infringes upon this parental right and autonomy in educational decision making. While the Australian Curriculum is a useful guideline and resource, enforcing strict adherence to it may prove unsuitable or inefficient due to the varied needs and situations of homeschool students and families. Additionally, I have great concern for the proposal of removing the use of gendered language within the curriculum, it is an overreach undermining parental rights to teach their children according to their own beliefs and values, to have freedom of personal expression, and to instil their cultural and social norms in their children's education. Embracing flexibility and autonomy are fundamental principles that underpin the achievement and efficacy of homeschooling as an educational choice. It is not a decision taken lightly and respectfully no one knows or loves my child or has their best interests at heart as I do, the mother of my children.

From the words of my children why they love to home educate:

- I feel like I can learn what interests me
- I experience in real life contexts and discover more in a hands on way
- I can spend time with my family
- I can create and explore in my own time and way
- I can customise and am responsible for my own education, spending more time on the areas needed and less on areas mastered
- learning is something I enjoy and can do firsthand

Thank you for taking the time to listen to my concerns. I hope that moving forward, this legislation can effectively cater to the needs of all Home Education students in Queensland. I look forward to hearing your response about this important issue.

Sincerely,

Katrina Edith Thomas

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