

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

Submission No: 2062
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Submission to the Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024 (QLD)

Dear Committee Members

I am writing to object to the wording of several of the changes proposed in the Bill listed above, specifically those concerning the home education system.

I am a parent of 3 children, two of which we are currently home educating. The eldest was educated entirely via the state school system. My family has home educated for 4 years. Myself, my wife and all three of my children have experienced bullying and violence while attending state schools. These have ranged from physical attacks (with weapons), choking, deliberate triggering of allergies “to see what will happen” by older children amongst other incidents. My children have the right to a high-quality education. They have not experienced it the hands of the State School System. Home Educating provided a safe positive alternative. They currently enjoy learning from home and want to continue doing so.

I have four main concerns about the wording of the proposed bill,

1. D2, C18, Section 7 Guiding principles

The use of generic terms without definition:

- “suitable educational environment”,
- “recognises wellbeing as a foundation of educational engagement”
- “in the best interests of the child”

I’m sure these are well intentioned statements, sounding noble on face value, but their use enables a raft of issues.

Where is “suitable”, “wellbeing” or “best interests” defined in the legislation? As written, it is open to interpretation as these terms are so broad reaching.

Will home educators need to prove that the education we are providing satisfies these terms?

Who will be making those judgements?

Will HEU fund and provide a panel of Health Experts to make these judgements?

This kind of wording starts to overlap with Child Protective Law and ventures towards stolen generation territory with its blatant vagueness leading to government overreach into people’s lives.

2. D2, C63, Section 211 (1)

The reduction in response time from 28 days to 14 days is manifestly excessive.

Australia Post officially says at most it should take “4 days” for a letter to travel from a rural location to a Metro location. However, our very own application to HEU travelling from a Brisbane suburb to the CBD was routed to Adelaide and

back via Melbourne. To ensure it was received in a timely manner I was forced to physically drive to the CBD to deliver it in person.

I have worked in the IT industry for over 25 years and can confidently say that email is no more reliable than postal mail.

Responding to a request while juggling the time demands of educating and providing for a family is difficult. A reduction in available time just adds an extra level of stress.

Even a Government FOI request is allowed 25 business day response time once the application is received!

3. D2, C68, Section 217 (1)(ba)(ii)

The requirement to increase annotations and samples from three subjects to all eight is manifestly excessive.

Increasing the reporting load for the parent and HEU will swamp both parties in an excessive amount of paperwork. The current response time for HEU when processing reports and plans is 6-8 weeks. So currently to process 1 plan and 3 subjects is approximately 1.5-2 weeks each. Increasing it by another 5 subjects more than doubles the workload.

HEU will not be able to cope without a massive injection of funding, resources, and staff. Where will that funding come from?

4. D2, C68, Section 217 (3)(a)

Enshrining in QLD legislation that a national school curriculum is the leading formal curriculum gives away our States self-governing power.

I understand that we already follow the Australian Curriculum and that is the guide for all States. The wording of this bill affects our States autonomy and inflicts upon home educators a curriculum that HEU/QCAA has no control over.

Are you trying to rewrite the Constitution and forfeit the States right to govern education?

Thank you for considering my concerns.

Lenard Barrett

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All personal information after my name must be withdrawn for privacy and safety reasons.