

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

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Issues Concerning Proposed Revisions to Home Education Regulations

To the Education Committee of the Queensland Parliament,

I, a mother of nine children, with 22 years of homeschooling experience, previously studied a 4 year Bachelour of Education, would like to express my sincere apprehensions regarding the proposed alterations to the Education (General Provisions) Act (EGPA) pertaining to home education.

1. I object to the insufficient consultation: It is stated that 'extensive consultation' was undertaken with stakeholders. However, 300 submissions from a pool greater than 10,000 regististered homeschoolers is not extensive. It appears that the proposed modifications were introduced following a comprehensive review of Queensland's legislation. However, it is imperative to acknowledge that the voices of homeschooling families were not adequately solicited during this process. As a stakeholder with lived experience and representing Simply Homeschool as a Qld registration consultant, I highly value transparency and meaningful engagement. It is crucial that any revisions to the EGPA take into account the perspectives of those directly impacted—namely, the students and their families.
2. I object to the requirement to follow the Australian curriculum or other approved senior subjects: Homeschooling offers a distinctive opportunity for tailored, adaptable learning experiences customised to suit the unique needs of each student. The proposed mandate to adhere to the Australian Curriculum will impede this personalised approach. While I acknowledge the importance of standards, rigid adherence to the Australian curriculum will inhibit creativity, exploration, and the pursuit of individual interests. It will also inhibit a quality education being delivered in a way that addresses a child's inherent needs. I am currently homeschooling my 13 yr old who suffered a perinatal stroke. We have been working within his capacities and at this pace and after 7 yrs of phonics instruction, he can now read CVC words and can read what would be a Prep/Yr 1text. He

would not be able to devote this many years to this one important skill if he were to be required to follow the Australian Curriculum.

3. I object to the new guiding principle of having to prove homeschooling is in the best interest of the child. Who makes this decision and what training will they be required to undertake? Will they have extensive training in delivering education to students with complex needs? The legislation appropriately underscores that home education must be provided in the best interests of the child or young person, prioritising their safety and well-being. As a homeschooler, I firmly believe in the significance of this principle. However, it is crucial to strike a balance between ensuring safety and affording families the autonomy to select educational methods that resonate with their values and circumstances.
4. I object to reporting on all 8 KLA's. The reporting process currently in place adequately shows educational progress of the homeschooling children in Qld. We already have the most comprehensive review and reporting processes within Australian States. What evidence is there that substantially increased reporting requirements will improve educational outcomes for the 10,000 plus families currently registered for homeschooling in Queensland?

In conclusion, I implore the Queensland Government to directly engage with homeschooling families, including young parents like myself, prior to finalising any amendments to the EGPA. Follow other states in Australia with the inclusion of a governing body selected by the Qld Education Minister and after a full review and interview process, comprised of stakeholders who will liaise with the government and the homeschooling community to draft and legislate for the 10,000 plus homeschooling families in Queensland. If these current changes are introduced and passed, you will see large numbers of families disengaging from the regulative processes. This is something we all wish to avoid. Let us cultivate a supportive atmosphere that values choice, safety, and holistic growth. Our education system should empower us to become well-informed, involved citizens, irrespective of our learning environment.

Thank you for considering my perspective.

Kind regards,

Donna Stewart.