

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

**Submission No:** 2111  
**Submitted by:** [REDACTED]  
**Publication:** Making the submission public but withholding your name  
**Attachments:** No attachment

### Submitter Comments:

Dear Committee Members, I am writing regarding the proposed legislation changes that will impact home education. As a family that currently home educate I have significant concerns about the change in legislation and what it will mean for my family. My family made the decision to home educate prior to my son reaching school age. This decision was made based on my partners significant experience as a teacher and thorough research where we found that home education could provide a tailored interest led approach to education which traditional schooling could not. This means we do not follow the Australian Curriculum. My son is now 7 years old and is thriving with our interest led approach to his education and this reinforces our decision to take this approach every single day. Home education without the use of the Australian Curriculum allows my son to learn new things when he is developmentally ready but also when it has meaning to him. There are so many examples of this, such as learning addition and subtraction to manage his pocket money or fractions to help with baking. This legislation proposes that all home educated children must follow the Australian Curriculum, and this means that all areas must be covered regardless of whether the child is interested in it or not. If my family had to follow this, then I have no doubt my son would lose his enthusiasm for learning and would become disinterested and disengaged with education. Further to this, he would no longer have time to deep dive into his interests due to the amount of content the Australian Curriculum covers. The Australian Curriculum is designed to be taught to multiple children at once because it is not possible to design an individual curriculum for each individual child. Home education offers children the chance to have an education that is specific to their needs and interests. You only have to speak to the home education community to hear about children who are undertaking TAFE and university courses at a young age, not because they are made to, but because that is where their interests are taking them, and home education has prepared them to be proactive, curious and dedicated learners. It should also be noted the proposed legislation does not actually list tertiary education as a valid option, which seems to be a major flaw. There were numerous instances in the briefing to the committee where the Deputy Director-General of the Department of Education and those with her did not answer the questions put to them, and only further highlighted the lack of community consultation and research done with regards to home education. The panel members were asked a question about how following the Australian Curriculum would improve educational outcomes for home educated children, and what specific data and evidence was used, and the response was that (only!) 20% of home educating families currently use the Australian Curriculum. I understand every home education family does things differently, and that does mean that some will choose to use elements of the Australian Curriculum as it suits their child. However, I take issue with Kathleen Forrester stating that because 20% of home educating families currently reference the Australian Curriculum in their educational plans means that it is a strong choice for all. It concerns me that the head of the Department of Education believes that 20% is enough to give the department confidence. Another such example was a question posed regarding how the proposed bill would address shortcomings in the current school system. The response was that students now have access to 'occupational therapists, physiotherapists, access to specialist advisory teachers, guidance officers, youth support coordinators'. This answer highlights the lack of understanding as to why families choose to home educate, and concerns me that those proposing this legislation have either not undertaken any research or community consultation, or failed to take it into consideration entirely. Having access to those services in no way addresses the shortcomings of the school system. Discussions with actual community groups and individuals who home educate will highlight this. Based on the information

provided during the briefing to the committee, it seems that the changes to home education proposed in this legislation are the result of recommendations from the Child Death Review Board. The specific case within the report that triggered this recommendation was the death of a child who had been home educated, and the responses the child provided to government agencies as well as a home visit done by Child and Youth Mental Health Services (CYMHS). The recommendation was around data sharing between government agencies and also oversight of children registered for home education to ensure their rights, best interests, safety and wellbeing. The department has not conveyed during the briefing how aligning to the Australian Curriculum meets any of the recommendations put forward. If there was a serious attempt to meet the above recommendations, then the proposed legislation would have looked at annual home visits and further funding for the Home Education Unit to be able to review a larger percentage of annual reports submitted by home education families. These would have actually had a material impact on the safety of children. In conclusion, these proposed changes are not evidence based, have not been based on community consultation with the families that will actually be impacted by the changes, and will not address child safety concerns in any way whatsoever. These proposed changes will make it more difficult for families to home educate, with no benefits. The increased documentation will overwhelm HEU especially as there has been no further budget allocated, increasing already delayed turnaround times for registration and reporting. I urge the Committee to consider the points I have made in my submission and reconsider what is best for Queensland families like mine.