

REVIEW OF THE QUEENSLAND HOME EDUCATION UNIT - TERMS OF REFERENCE

Background

- The Queensland Government respects the right of parents to educate their child at home and acknowledges the importance of ensuring effective regulation of home education, while supporting parents in the process, when they make this choice.
- The *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006* (the Act) provides the legislative basis for regulation of home education.
- In line with the Act, to be home educated, a child must be registered by the Chief Executive, Department of Education through the Queensland Home Education Unit (HEU).
- Changes to home education regulation had been proposed under the Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024 (the Bill).
- On 15 April, the Honourable Di Farmer MP, Minister for Education and Minister for Youth Justice announced that the government would make changes to a number of aspects of the EGPA Bill to avoid any unintended consequences and respond to stakeholder opposition to proposed amendments. This included removal of those provisions relating to home education.
- At the same time, it was announced a home education advisory group would be established and a review will commence into the role of the Home Education Unit to how best it can help not only better regulate, but provide important support to families who choose to home educate.

Terms of Reference

- The review will be informed by stakeholder perspectives, and explore how existing regulatory services can be improved and parents supported so that children and young people can access a high-quality education.
- The review will:
 - consider the diverse experience and needs of home educating parents;
 - identify any gaps and areas for improvement in the approach to regulation, education and support of home educators; and
 - provide recommendations, where appropriate, to enhance the effectiveness of regulation, including supports for home education parents, options to engage more broadly with home educators in the absence of a peak body, and other supportive activities within the existing legislative framework of the Act.
- The review will include:
 - a. *Desk-Top Research*: A comprehensive analysis of existing documentation, policies, and procedures related to current regulatory practices, including supports for parents, for home education in Queensland;
 - b. *Comparative Analysis*: Examination of the regulatory and support approaches adopted by other jurisdictions, both nationally and (where relevant) internationally, to identify best practices and potential strategies for improvement;
 - c. *Engagement with Stakeholders*: establishment of a Home Education Expert Group comprising of parent home educators, plus interviews or focus groups with representative home education bodies, relevant government agencies, HEU management and officers, educational professionals, and other interested advocacy groups; and

- d. *Market Research*: surveys, interviews, or focus groups with an invited representative sample of home educators to gather a range of insights into their experiences, challenges, and perspectives on regulation, including supports (to be outsourced to a separate provider with relevant expertise).

The review will not extend to:

- policy proposals for a different model of delivery, for example part time schooling;
- making recommendations about legislative provisions relating to home education;
- recommendations related to student-specific supports; or
- consider, investigate or make findings or recommendations about: state or non-state schooling; government funding of schools; or regulatory or standards frameworks in other fields.

Review outputs

- A final report, with key findings and recommendations, will be provided to the Minister for Education and Minister for Youth Justice.

Review process and consultation

- The review will be led by an independent expert commissioned by government, supported by the Department of Education as required.
- Broad stakeholder consultation will occur with parties that may have an interest in or be affected by home education to inform analysis and development of findings and recommendations.
- A Home Education Expert Group will be established to provide direct input into the Review and comprise 12 parent home educators, up to three nominee members from established home education sector representative organisations, and up to three observer members nominated by the Department, or invited from a relevant government agency, who have expertise in curriculum, in disability and inclusion and flexible learning/student engagement. The group will be established via an Expression of Interest process.
- The review is expected to be conducted over a period of three months, with the final report to be delivered no later than 1 September 2024.