

**Submission
No 12**

**INQUIRY INTO EDUCATION AMENDMENT (ETHICS
CLASSES REPEAL) BILL 2011**

Name: Mr Michael Cahill

Date received: 1/12/2011

Dr Michael Cahill



Date: 1/12/2011

General Purpose Standing Committee No. 2

Education Amendment (Ethics) Act 2010 Inquiry

Parliament House

Macquarie Street

Sydney NSW 2000

To Whom It May Concern :

I am writing as a member of the public and a parent in regards to the inquiry into the Education Amendment (Ethics) Act 2010 .

In particular, my children attend the local public school and do not attend Special Religious Education (SRE) sessions because our family is not religious. As a child, I attended the same school and likewise did not participate in SRE.

Before the 2010 Act was passed , the situation for my children was the same as it was for me in the 1980s – that is, during the time set aside in the school week for religious indoctrination, those who chose not to participate were given no alternative apart from boredom. This situation discriminated against people on the basis of their religion , and the 2010 Act introducing ethics classes was an important step in removing this discrimination by providing meaningful content to students for whom SRE is not relevant.

If the committee intends a detailed inquiry into the effectiveness of 'special education in ethics' beyond the evaluation already presented in 2010, I urge that be done in the context of a broader inquiry into the purpose and effectiveness of SRE in public schools. It may be that after an objective evaluation, the best outcome would be the repeal all sections of the 1980 Education Act relating to SRE so that school time is used to educate all students regardless of their beliefs, leaving indoctrination out of the public school system.

Sincerely,

Dr Michael Cahill