

Submission  
No 160

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

**Name:** Name suppressed

**Date received:** 20/02/2012

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Partially Confidential

Dear Politicians etc,

I grew up on the northern shores of Sydney, and attended a public primary school at Beacon Hill from 1970 - 1977. Scripture classes were always an oddity for me. My usual group of friends was marched off after assembly on a particular day into their religious segregations – something I discovered was predetermined by the religious followings of ones parents.

I had no particular religion, similarly to my parents, although I was encouraged by the teachers to attend the Church of England scripture class – strange in itself as I thought a Church of Australia would be more relevant and I certainly was not a member of any religious affiliation. This class was the only class I attended where sensible questions were forbidden. In fact, it was the only class where asking questions was considered arrogant and ill mannered. In many cases, the questions were ignored, glossed over, or answered with a really weird answer – which made no sense, even to a seven year old.

I was ostracized due to asking questions, being a nuisance and a trouble maker, with the alternative of hanging out in the library with other trouble makers. I soon became bored of this and used to hang out in the playground, not on the monkey bars as that was forbidden as there was no supervision.

This fiasco had long lasting repercussions – I was deemed the oddball and class “smartarse” which seemed to follow on into other classes. To me, I was one of the only kids who was prepared to think for myself, and identify nonsense.

It could be argued that my nonsense detector was fine tuned since these first experiences, and I am now an environmental scientist almost completed a PhD.

However, I do consider that if I had an ethics class to attend rather than effectively doing nothing my childhood would have been slightly more enjoyable as a school student. I was very pleased to see the new ethics classes introduced last year as an alternative to religious lessons. I was horrified to hear that Fred Nile was successful at introducing the amendment bill to have them removed.

I am also horrified, in this day and age, to see that religious classes are still a feature in Public Schools. I suggest a more appropriate investigation would be – “Why are religious classes, in their present form, still being taught in Australian Public Schools?”

Incidentally, my children, whom will start school in 4 years, will be attending these religious classes and will have a list of questions to ask, and encouraged to refute nonsense answers.

Additionally, when I voted Liberal in the last NSW election, I was under the impression that the government would adhere to the ethics classes inclusion and persistence. I will be voting differently next time if this is jeopardized.

Sincerely