

**Submission
No 140**

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

Name: Mr Alex Neilands

Date received: 13/02/2012

SUBMISSION TO THE INQUIRY INTO ETHICS CLASSES

13/02/2012

The Director
General Purpose Standing Committee No. 2

I am writing to add my support to the retention of ethics classes in NSW schools. I am a retired teacher having taught for many years in the west of Sydney and Newcastle schools. I believe the teaching of ethics should be an essential component in ALL children's education, not just those in the small minority who may receive it in scripture classes. In the schools I taught at from the early 1980's very few scripture teachers actually came into schools and the vast majority of students were herded into the hall to listen to whoever would come. Some speakers were good but unfortunately not many. I had to supervise behaviour - not easy. In later years the schools I taught at simply timetabled scripture for last period Friday and sent the children home. Ministers were welcome to come in but increasingly no-one ever did.

In my view the teaching of ethics is nothing to do with religious education.

It is ironically unethical for religious leaders to call for the end of ethics classes.

I am not convinced that any worthwhile ethics is taught in religious classes as they are not obliged to follow a curriculum and many religions have very suspect ethics as well.

Having had to deal with student welfare and discipline in my career I found that a good grounding in ethics morals and civics was missing amongst many students.

Ethics classes for all students can only improve our community and they should be completely divorced for any religious discussion or influence.

Please move to keep the ethics classes.

Thank you
Alex Neilands