

**Submission  
No 18**

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

**Name:** Mrs Vicki Simpson

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2 December 2011

The Director  
General Purpose Standing Committee No. 2  
Parliament House  
Macquarie St  
Sydney NSW 2000

Dear Sir/Madam,

As a grandparent of pre-school children, I was very glad to know that my grandchildren would soon have the opportunity of attending ethics classes – should their parents decide – instead of SRE classes or just “twiddling their thumbs” should they not attend SRE classes.

I was pleased that they would have the opportunity in ethics classes to think for themselves, and to listen to other points of view (of *their peers* as well as ethics teacher) regarding ethics, morals, values – all such important skills to live a good life and to be a good human being. Many children in today’s modern society are craving for guidance and understanding in the ordinary skills of interrelating with their peers and others in ordinary life situations – skills that ethics classes would certainly help develop.

My overall opinion concerning SRE classes is that their message is rather confusing and overwhelming for a young child to absorb, and pretty irrelevant to their everyday life. A young child is usually unable to understand such a thing as a ‘spiritual’ life or afterlife – surely this is something that develops as one grows older. I feel, therefore, that SRE classes are a form of brainwashing. “Faith” is something a young child cannot understand. But, nevertheless, I accept the right of those who wish their children to attend SRE classes to have such classes in schools.

*However I am incensed that ethics classes are now to be investigated, only one year after being introduced into schools, with the possibility of the Education Amendment (Ethics) Act 2010 being eventually repealed.*

Is there also to be a similar and expensive enquiry into SRE classes to investigate “the stated objectives, curriculum, implementation, effectiveness” of these particular classes? I understand there has never been a formal investigation of SRE classes since they were introduced in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Should ethics classes be terminated in our schools, I, along with other grandparents, parents and students, will be furious at the prospect of children and their parents not having the choice to follow their own path in regard to the teaching and learning of morals and values – whether that be a religious or non-religious path – the right to choose being a fundamental right of every human being.

It is a form of gross discrimination to not have such a choice.

I trust your committee will consider my views.

Yours faithfully,

Vicki Simpson