

Submission
No 5

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

Name: Mr Howard Lovatt

Date received: 1/12/2011

Partially Confidential

Howard Lovatt

1 December 11

The Director
General Purpose Standing Committee No. 2
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
Sydney NSW 2000
gpscsecretariat@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Dear Director and Honourable Members,

RE: Education Amendment (Ethics) Act 2010

I would like to submit a comment to the review of Ethics classes in NSW; as parent of a child at a school that offers ethics as an alternative to scripture, public.

The NSW government should be interested in what is taught in schools and should regularly review curriculum, appropriateness, and outcomes. However, it is even more vital that these reviews are performed uniformly across all subjects, with a common set of standards applied to all so that parliament is seen to be fair and representative of all.

I cannot find any reports on reviews of Scripture classes, despite their long history in schools, and therefore assume that no such review has occurred (perhaps the committee could recommend a review if one exists?). I did however find a number of sources of information that suggested that there may well be problems with the teaching of scripture in schools, e.g. <http://www.abc.net.au/religion/articles/2011/04/12/3188943.htm?topic1=&topic2=> and <http://skepticonline.libsyn.com/webpage/the-skeptic-zone-155-8-oct-2011> (12 mins into podcast). I also have personal experience of problems with scripture teaching with one set of relatives fearing that their daughter will be ostracised if she does not take scripture.

It would therefore seem to me to be appropriate that this committee recommends that a single committee is formed that reviews under the same terms of reference and produces recommendations that apply to the teaching of both ethics and scripture in schools. Rather than review one without reviewing the other.

I would also suggest to the committee that Australia is a multicultural society and therefore not offering choice of ethical/religious teaching, i.e. not offering ethics and a plurality of religions, is inappropriate and discriminatory.

Yours sincerely,

Howard Lovatt