

**Submission
No 184**

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

Organisation: Austinmer Public School Parents & Citizens' Association
Date received: 23/02/2012

15 February 2012

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

Dear Sir or Madam,

I would be very grateful if the members of **General Purpose Standing Committee No. 2** would consider the information presented below when considering the future of Ethics Classes in NSW schools.

Austinmer Public School has only been offering Ethics Classes to students in Years 5 and 6 since May 2011. There are currently 34 students enrolled in the Ethics Classes out of a total school population of approximately 370 students.

The Ethics Classes are being taught by two trained volunteer teachers and there is also one volunteer Ethics Coordinator. Each member of the Ethics team has relevant tertiary qualifications, extensive professional experience in working with children and has been subjected to a police check. The classes run at our school on Tuesday mornings for 30 minutes.

At the end of 2011 the Ethics teachers invited feedback from the students who had participated in the classes last year. This was done to determine if the students were satisfied with the classes and to identify ways to improve on delivery.

Below are just some examples of student responses for your consideration. I trust that the members of the Standing committee will pay consideration to the statements below in their deliberations on the future of Ethics Classes in schools in NSW.

I like ethics because you learn about morals and how to be kind and fair to each and every person.

Primary Ethics made us all think about life in a different way and broaden our minds. We learnt a lot about what is right and what is wrong and it will help us make life decisions. Overall ethics is a great opportunity for anyone who is interested in philosophy and people's opinions. This has been a fantastic course for me and I have learnt a lot.

I think ethics is great because you can share your ideas and people respect you, whatever you say.

Ethics is a fun and enjoyable way to learn about the values and morals of life. In groups we discussed problems and everyday issues that we may face in life.

Ethics is a great way to talk about what's right and wrong, whether its stealing, lying, being greedy or just mean, you can discuss what you think and can always change your mind. It doesn't matter what your opinion is as long as you get out there and have a go.

Every week I look forward to ethics classes. It's a fun way to talk about morals. Primary ethics has taught me that there is no right or wrong answer and that it's ok to change your mind. Some topics that we discuss are stealing, lying, graffiti and being greedy. I really love ethics and hope that I can do it again in the future.

Ethics is a very fun class - you learn a lot and everyone gets a turn to speak. We learn about morals and lots of other things. I love going to ethics classes - I learn something new every time I go.

I like ethics because there is no right or wrong answer which means you always count.

The statements above demonstrate a high level of student satisfaction with the content of the Ethics Classes and the way that these classes are conducted. In addition to this they also demonstrate that the Ethics Classes present as a threat to no-one.

The students who attend our Ethics Classes are learning how to consider examples of real life situations from different perspectives and the importance of listening to and respecting the opinions of others. Consequently, the students are developing skills in moral reasoning and ethical conduct that they will be able to use in the future.

The members of Austinmer Public School P&C wish it to be known that they are deeply concerned that the NSW State Government may take action to support an individual and/or group who stands in the way of the continuation of these classes for little more than political expediency. One would hope that a government elected by democratic process to represent the interest of all would have more moral fabric.

If you would like any additional information please feel free to contact me on

Yours faithfully,

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Peter Holmes – Secretary