

Submission  
No 145

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

**Name:** Mrs Diana Shanks

**Date received:** 14/02/2012

---

Partially Confidential

**From:** Diana Shanks and Gavin Coopey  
**To:** <gpscno2@parliament.nsw.gov.au>  
**Date:** 2/14/2012 12:35 pm  
**Subject:** In support of Ethics classes in schools

I would like to indicate in this email my support for the continuation of Ethics classes in Schools.

In 2011 my son attended the class offered in his primary school-

He enjoyed the classes and was able to discuss with us the subject that was the lesson for that day. It stimulated discussion with our family and we enjoyed his stories of what opinions were held by other children also in the class. The individual conducting the class made the format as well as the subject, interesting and enjoyable and appropriately pitched at his age level of 11/12.

I was therefore very happy that after 5 years of non scripture classes where my son did drawing he was at last able to use this time in a meaningful and constructive manner.

To me there is absolutely no valid reason why these classes should not be offered to those children who wish to participate in them. Our children are attending public education at non religious schools. Why then is religious studies firstly part of the weekly lesson schedule and secondly the only option. I believe this is discrimination.

Absolutely my experience with school was that moral and ethical, as well as religious concepts were discussed as part of the curriculum outside of the scripture classes. Therefore all children were receiving equal opportunities to be exposed to the concepts of living within a caring community where ones behaviour and beliefs impact on others.

Families or individuals who choose not hold a religious faith, may hold a spiritual faith of another kind or like us just have faith- in human nature and moral judgements.

And this is acceptable. The rule cannot be in our so called multi cultural, advanced Australian society to offer only the choice of religious studies or drawing!

People behave in good ways not just because of their religious beliefs and in many cases their religion warps their sense of what is right or wrong moral behaviour as we know it!

Our children who attend Ethics classes and learn about moral issues are not wasting their time! Drawing for 1/2 hour is wasting time! These children as well as the children who choose to attend scripture classes are learning to be good global citizens.

I implore you to not listen to Rev Fred Nile and his justifications for the repealing the Education Amendment (Ethics) Act 2010. Look to the future, learn from the past.

Yours sincerely,  
Diana Shanks  
parent.