

**Submission
No 437**

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

Name: Ms Polly Seidler

Date received: 6/03/2012

INQUIRY INTO EDUCATION AMENDMENT (ETHICS CLASSES REPEAL) BILL 2011

**From: Ms, Polly Seidler – SRE (Christian) teacher Yrs 5-6
Darlinghurst Public School**

Who am I?

1. I write this private submission as a SRE teacher (Christian) to Years 5-6 at Darlinghurst Public School. I am authorised to teach this SRE class through St Johns Anglican Church Darlinghurst. I write this submission personally from my experiences as a SRE teacher to Years 5-6 at Darlinghurst School.

2. I am an experienced SRE teacher to years 5-6. I've taught SRE (Christian) class to Years 5-6 Darlinghurst Public since the start of 2008. Thus this year (2012) is my 5th year teaching SRE to years 5-6 at the school. I have experienced the implementation of the Ethics trial class in Term 2 of 2010 and the full implementation of Ethics classes in 2011 and this year (2012), and its impact on SRE procedures and significant reduction in SRE enrolments. I was previously SRE teacher at Darlington school (2007), Newtown North (2005-2006) and Marrickville Public School (2003 part – to years 3-4) and Year 7 of Sydney Girls High in 2003.

Summary:

3. My submission notes breaches of stated legislative (and Dept policy) requirements in the implementation of SEE ("Ethics") classes. I also note policy guidelines that unduly preference servicing the logistical needs for Ethics classes and the promotion of Ethics classes in the school community in a way that far exceeds any promotion or mention of SRE offerings. I seek modification of the legislation in its current format.

4. I ask the government that:

- * implement enforceable policies which ensure the legislative requirements for first opting out of SRE are before enrolment into Ethics class can happen;
- * that the name of Special Education in Ethics be changed to "Special Secularist Philosophical Ethical discussion" or something similar to be transparent about the who the Ethics classes are designed for, namely those who are not in SRE, and that the class is to cater for the secularists, and that it is of a discussion format.
- * remove the required minimum class numbers for Ethics, as, in small schools, this encourages breach of stated legislative requirement of section 33A(2) and the encouragement of kids already on SRE roll to enrol into Ethics to make up the minimum class numbers.
- * that both SRE and Ethics teachers get the same information regarding students in their classes– either both get numbers or both get roll of names, and that

notification of any modification be made to such teachers when a parent writes to change enrolment; and

*mandate to principals via dept guidelines that the same level of PR (and mentioning of the course offerings) within the school about the SRE/Ethics timeslot options – currently there is a disparity in promotion of Ethics via school newsletters and emails to parents, order to serve the logistical wants of the provider of Ethics classes in a way that is not offered to providers of SRE classes.

*allow SRE classes to proceed at the start of each year and term, even before Ethics class can ascertain whether it has secured minimum numbers. Currently, SRE classes are delayed starting to allow logistics for enrolment into Ethics.

About Darlinghurst Public School and its Christian SRE offerings

5. I note that due to the small school size of Darlinghurst Public, the Christian SRE options are shared between the Catholic and Anglican teachers such that Roman Catholic and Protestant SRE is combined. Currently Anglicans provide SRE for kindergarten and Years 3-4 and Years 5-6, and Roman Catholic SRE teachers for Years 1 and for Year 2. As far as I am aware, Anglican SRE curriculum has been taught to Years 3-6 at the school at least since the start of 2007, and possibly earlier. In 2011, a Jewish SRE option started at the school.

6. The school runs on an opt-in basis for SRE. In other words, only those parents who write to have their child enrolled into SRE are enrolled into SRE, irrespective of the religion noted on the enrolment form when they first enrol at the school. I understand this is contrary to standard Dept Education policy where children are placed in the SRE classes that accords with their religion stated at the time of school enrolment, unless the parent opts the child out of SRE, or selects a SRE option different from the stated religion at time of enrolment.

7. It is Dept Education policy to roll over names on SRE roll from one year to the next, unless the parent writes to withdraw the child from SRE. This was not followed by the school in 2010 and 2011. Contrary to the parents' last written communication to the school about their preference for SRE, some children whose parents did not return a SRE enrolment form at the start of the year, were placed in non-SRE class for the first few weeks of term in 2010 and the first week of 2011 until their parent returned an enrolment form for SRE timeslot. I note this impacted the way the class rolls for SRE were generated in 2010 and 2011 – with many children starting SRE later than what their parents had last communicated to the school.

Outline of enrolled numbers of SRE and Ethics in Years 5-6 for 2010- 2012.

8. Until any Ethics offering, I have only ever experienced one child withdraw from SRE in 2009 on the grounds that the child wanted to spend the SRE class time to do homework with the nonSRE children. The implementation of the Ethics course at Darlinghurst Public has led to reduced enrolments of for SRE for years 5-6, as some students left SRE to attend Ethics classes. Below are the figures showing reduced enrolments for SRE due to Ethics participation.

2009 SRE roll of years 4-5 who were at school the following year of 2010: 13
2010 SRE roll years 5-6: 12 (but reduced to 6 in Term 2 due to Ethics trial participation)

ie 12 in SRE reduced to 6 due to Ethics participation.

2010 – SRE roll of years 4-5 who were at school the following year of 2011: 20

2011: SRE roll yrs 5-6 14-15* (the other 5-6* were in Ethics. *one child alternated between Ethics and SRE due to parent selecting both options on the enrolment form).

ie 20 reduced to 14-15 due to Ethics participation.

2011: SRE roll of years 4-5 who were at school the following year of 2012: 14-15

2012: SRE roll of years 5-6: 11-13 (2-4 left to participate in Ethics, at date of writing I was told by a student that a further 2 have left to enrol in Ethics but this has not been confirmed by the school to me).

ie 14-15 in SRE reduced to 11-13 (numbers still to be confirmed) due to Ethics participation.

Implementation of the Ethics trial classes - OFFERING AND ENROLMENT

(a) Stated policy before the Ethics trial of 2010– to offer only to nonSRE students

8. Much of the lobbying and media campaigning to promote the Ethics classes, especially in 2010, had its main proponent, Mr Simon Longstaff of St James Ethics Centre, say repeatedly to the media that the first option for parents for SRE timeslot was between SRE and non-SRE. Once that selection has been made, *only those who had opted out of SRE*, were to be offered the Ethics class option. eg Simon Longstaff said: the ethics class is “for those children who have already decided to opt out of SRE”, “the Ethics course is only be offered to nonSRE (students)”. (Enrolment forms are to have) first line as SRE/nonSRE (before selection of Ethics can be made). (Source: the open house program, on radio 103.2FM, broadcast date 18/4/2010). Similar comments were said by Mr Simon Longstaff in other media (copies which can be provided if requested). This promised policy was not enforced in 2010 or 2011. I do not know whether it was implemented by the school in 2012.

9. The Ethics trial in 2010 required a minimum of 10 students to proceed. At the start of 2010, in the week that SRE classes started, which was week 2 or 3 of term 1, only 3 students had indicated their wish to participate in the Ethics trial enrolment for Term 2, so it appeared there were insufficient numbers for Ethics trial to go ahead. Given the promise given to only invite those who had opted out of SRE, as a SRE teacher, I was surprised to see 2 of the 3 names noted for the Ethics trial who were on the SRE roll of 2009. By the end of Term 1, through much lobbying by the proponents of the Ethics course, the minimum numbers for Ethics trial were obtained - 6 of the Ethics trial students were on the SRE roll the year before. This was in contrast to publicly stated policy about the implementation of the Ethics trial being only for those students who had opted out of SRE.

(b) Change in Dept Education policy re Ethics offering– never communicated to parties

10. Contrary to the policy stated at 8, at the time of the Ethics trial in 2010, Dept Education changed the policy at the start of 2010 to state that the Ethics trial and class were to be offered to **all** parents, irrespective of whether the child was already enrolled in SRE.

11. At no time was this change in Dept Education policy (of offering Ethics trial classes to all students) communicated to the providers of SRE (eg Anglican Education Commission), which caused much of the tension between parties discussing the Ethics classes in the media debate of 2010. At no time was the policy openly declared by the proponents by the Ethics course publicly. If there is to be a change in proclaimed policy about the implementation and enrolment for Ethics courses, then such policy should be widely disseminated to all players including the current SRE providers, so as not take any player by surprise.

12. The Ethics trial of Term 2, 2010 at the school included 6 students who had been on the SRE roll the year before. 3 never participated in SRE again (in 2010, outside of Term 2 when Ethics trial was offered, they were in nonSRE, and the one former SRE child who was at the school in 2011 in 6th class again did Ethics).

After the Ethics trial of term 2 concluded, 3 students who were in SRE class in Term 1 of 2010 were not returned to SRE class in Term 3 week 1, but were in nonSRE even though at no time had their parents written to opt them out of SRE. Only after I, as SRE teacher, noted the absences, and pursued the issue with the school office staff, did the 3 students eventually return to SRE (in accordance with their parents' stated wishes). The school roll keepers appear to have assumed that enrolment in the Ethics trial of Term 2 was a deemed opting out from SRE from Term 3 onwards (even though their parents had selected SRE for that year, excepting the Ethics trail in Term 2). This resulted in children whose parents had never disenrolled them from SRE missing SRE classes (other than during Term 2 when the Ethics trial was run).

(c.) Ethics classes offering and enrolment implementation for classes of 2011

13. The legislative requirement of 33A (2) of the Education Act states that entitlement to enrol in Ethics classes is restricted "*If the parent of a child objects to the child receiving special religious education*". In other words the classes are designed for the non-SRE students whose parents want a teacher-led option. To date, the Dept Education has not adopted any workable policy to ensure this legislative requirement is enforced. How can a child who participates in SRE at any time, with their parents' permission, meet the definition of 'a parent who objects to the receiving of SRE'?

14. I attach to this submission the School SRE/Ethics enrolment form issued at the start of 2011. Given Darlinghurst School requires a parent to write to enrol a child into SRE, any name on the SRE roll of 2010 existed with the parents' full consent to for their child to participate in SRE. Yet, at the start of 2011, 5 of those on the SRE roll in 2010, were transferred to Ethics classes in 2011 without ever first opting out of

SRE (simply by ticking Ethics box on the enrolment form). This enrolment form is in breach of legislative requirements that limits enrolment into Ethics to those who have first opted out of SRE.

15. Another child had their parents tick BOTH Ethics and SRE on the enrolment form and throughout the year this child alternated on a random basis between both classes – whichever class took that child's fancy that day. This child was listed Ethics roll for 2011 – yet the parents ticking of SRE shows that child in no possible way met the legislative requirement for *"If the parent of a child objects to the child receiving special religious education"*. How is it that this child was allowed to be listed on the Ethics roll? That this child was enrolled into Ethics was in breach of clear legislative policy limiting enrolment into Ethics for those who have disenrolled from SRE.

16. The child was allowed to attend SRE classes as the enrolment form permitted that child to do so but at no time did the school ever include that child on the SRE roll. That the child was allowed to attend SRE or Ethics at that child's own pleasure, I submit was a breach of the school's duty of care to that child, let alone a breach of stated legislative policy of who can attend Ethics classes (only those who have opted out of SRE – which this child never did).

17. The enrolment form was in the front stand at the school, which is how I obtained a copy. When I noted to the school the breach of legislative requirements concerning the enrolment form, the school officers kept insisting that the enrolment form was compliant and that the SRE roll names were complete and accurate.

18. It was not until a fundraising function on 6 August 2012 that I showed the form to Mr Simon Longstaff of St James Ethics Centre and leading proponent of the Ethics course. Mr Longstaff acknowledged that the school's enrolment form breached legislative requirements (which was to first have a choice between SRE and nonSRE), and only nonSRE children can be enrolled into Ethics. He then promptly referred the matter to Primary Ethics who I believe then raised the issue with the Department of Education who then raised the issue with the school. But it should not require a SRE teacher to set about meeting a top officer of Primary Ethics socially to enforce stated legislative requirements. Had I not met Simon Longstaff socially, I query whether the enrolment form would ever have been amended. To date I have not seen any copy of any amended enrolment form, so cannot comment whether the current (2012) SRE/Ethics enrolment form complies with the legislative requirements.

Reduction in number of SRE classes to satisfy logistics of Ethics enrolment in 2012

19. In 2012, the SRE/Ethics classes did not start at the school until week 4 of the school year. I believe the reason for the delayed start date was for the school to ensure proper enrolments into SRE and Ethics classes. In prior years, SRE started in week 2. Thus, there has been a loss to SRE students by lessening the number of SRE classes a year in order to comply with logistics of managing enrolments for Ethics. This is unreasonable given the classes are designed to cater for nonSRE children, so there should be no need to reduce the number of SRE classes, while the Ethics roll is being generated.

20. There should be nothing to prohibit SRE starting in week 2 of the school year, and then if any parent writes to disenroll a child from SRE, this can be implemented as the year progresses, otherwise the SRE roll from the previous year should be maintained until any parent communicates disenrollment from SRE. This will uphold the legislative requirement to restrict Ethics enrolment to 'parents who object to the receiving of SRE' - which by definition, excludes children already on SRE previous years' SRE roll. The proponents of Ethics classes kept insisting that they did not want to detract from SRE, and wanted to cater for nonSRE children, yet the implementation of Ethics has led to this unfortunate result of lessening the number of SRE classes that would otherwise be offered at the school.

DISPARITY OF INFORMATION GIVEN TO ETHICS AND SRE TEACHERS

21. The Department of Education's guidelines to Principals (on Department web site) state that Principals must provide Ethics teachers with a list of names of students in Ethics. By contrast, since 2012, Darlinghurst School says they are only obligated to provide the numbers (not names) of SRE enrolled students to SRE teachers. There is a disparity of information that is required to be given by the school to Ethics teachers and that required to be given to SRE teachers. This disparity gives undue preferential treatment to Ethics teachers compared to SRE teachers and has no possible justification (other than a Departmental preference for Ethics classes over SRE classes). As a matter of equity, either the school is required to supply names on roll to *both* SRE and Ethics teachers, or supply only enrolled numbers to both class providers.

22. The enrolment numbers for SRE classes for 2012 was provided by the school to SRE teachers only 2 days before SRE classes started. In prior years, the rolls for SRE were given at least 1 week prior to the commencement of classes at the start of the year. Given parents communicate to Primary Ethics their interest in Ethics class (to enable Primary Ethics to determine if there are sufficient students for enrolment for a class to happen), Primary Ethics gets both names and numbers long before the SRE teachers get their enrolment numbers. This gives Primary Ethics an advantage to plan their teacher allocation to classes in a way that SRE teachers are not given. Also, this time frame does not allow much time for SRE teachers to obtain the required teaching materials for the year. Again, as a matter of equity, both providers during the SRE/Ethics timeslot should be given enrolment numbers at the same time. Currently there is a policy that gives preferential treatment in assisting the logistics of the provision of Ethics classes compared to the provision of SRE classes.

Ethics' minimum class numbers and promotion of Ethics class at school

23. Ethics requires at least 8 students to proceed. In small schools where there are less than 8 students in nonSRE, proponents of Ethics courses approach parents of SRE kids to enrol into Ethics, so as to meet minimum Ethics class number requirements to enable the Ethics course to be offered at the school. This happened for the Ethics trial of 2010 and the notification at end of 2010 for provision of Ethics classes in 2011. If the aim of the Ethics classes is to meet the needs of nonSRE students, and not to

undermine SRE enrolments, why is there a Departmental policy to inform all parents when the Ethics class is available? Children on SRE roll, by definition, do not meet the legislative requirements of 'a parent who objects to the receiving of SRE'. What is lost by restricting notification of the Ethics classes to those for whom the classes are intended, namely nonSRE children? The current department policy to offer the Ethics course to all parents, both SRE and nonSRE, goes against stated legislative requirement of s33(A)(2) for enrolment restrictions to 'parents who object to the receiving of SRE' which by definition is can only be nonSRE children - and even more so in schools that run SRE on an 'opt in' basis, such that child in SRE class are only there with their parents explicit written consent.

24. In late 2011, at the start of a SRE class, three SRE students in my class approached me as SRE teacher and said they would like to visit Ethics class that day and noted "The Ethics teacher said it would be ok for us to visit". Only once I explained that their parents had told the school that they were to be in SRE, did those three children stay. But it is a concern if there is any truth to the fact that the Ethics teacher was allowing visiting students - which breaches legislative requirements of who may attend Ethics classes namely those who have first opted out of SRE and whose parents have authorised to visit Ethics. I submit that this is symptomatic of the mood encouraged by the Ethics class advocates that the Ethics class is for anyone, not just those in nonSRE.

Intended audience for Ethics classes to be clarified to parents

25. The reason for the lobbying for the provision of the current Ethics classes was to provide a teacher-lead option for parents who object to the receiving of SRE during that timeslot. In other words, the Ethics class was to cater for parents who do not want any special religious instruction beyond the school curriculum's general religious education. As (Ethics main lobbyist and spokesperson) Simon Longstaff noted on 'Insight' programme on SBS TV in 2010, 'there needs to be a meaningful alternative for those children that don't attend (SRE)'. He assumed that reading and doing homework (the options for nonSRE children) is not meaningful, but only a teacher-led option is meaningful.

26. To ensure a level playing field, the Ethics course should be renamed with a label which is consistent with the other offerings for the SRE timeslot. This could be achieved through branding which specifies the philosophical outlook of secularism - so that parents understand this is the non-religious option for the SRE timeslot. Currently the name is not commensurate with any sort of religious classification so as to make it clear that this is the option for parents wanting a 'no religious consideration' for their child during the SRE timeslot option.

27. I have witnessed several students depart from SRE to Ethics, as there has been no explanation that the class is intended to cater only for nonSRE children or 'parents who object to the receiving of SRE'. I note that students who left SRE for Ethics in 2010, 2011 and 2012 - many were students who told me that they had undertaken Roman Catholic first communion. And many of those students who left SRE to do the Ethics trial in 2010, or Ethics class in 2011 went on to church-based high schools. Any parent who has their child undertake Roman Catholic first communion or who

attends a church-based high school, and who were on SRE roll, seems to be inconsistent with the provisions of the wording of s33A(2) which limits enrolment to parents 'who object to the receiving of SRE'. The Ethics classes' intended audience was to cater for parents who do not want their child to receive special religious instruction. While each parent has the right to educate their child in the way they think best, I thought it best for this inquiry to note who is leaving SRE classes to participate in Ethics classes – it is not just the secularists, but includes children of parents who have their child participate in religious rituals and attend church based high schools.

28. The name 'Ethics' suggests that there is some teaching or instruction on right and wrong or ways to think about such issues. Instead it should be made clear to parents that the course consists of secular philosophical ethical *discussion*. Even the Primary Ethics web site (<http://www.primaryethics.com.au/>) front page refers in its last paragraph to "Sign up your school for *Philosophical Ethics* classes". I submit that because the Primary Ethics site itself has referred to the class as 'Philosophical Ethics' is a hint that the bare name "Ethics" does not adequately describe the Ethics classes.

29. Another reason for the requested name change is that the current name (which is shortened to) 'Ethics' suggests that the alternative SRE timeslot options do not consider ethical content. I know the Anglican SRE curriculum has lots of ethical content of behaviours and attitudes that are referenced to the Bible. Again, I ask that the government repeal the legislation in its current format and then **change the name of the course** in the legislation to reflect that this is the option for the secularists, and consists of philosophical discussion.

30. Another reason I submit that the name of the courses be changed is to address a implementation policy which suggests that the Ethics class is for all children including SRE children. At the time of discussion about implementing the Ethics classes, those opposed to the proposed Ethics class rollout expressed concern that SRE students would miss out on participating in and contributing towards the ethical discussion with their classmates during the Ethics classes, since the Ethics option is held at the same time as the SRE option. To address this issue, Primary Ethics stated (and continue to state) on their web site that they will make their curriculum free-of-charge to the SRE providers to incorporate such elements into SRE classes.

31. While this appears a generous offer from Primary Ethics, no one has considered the consequence of implementing this which would result in leaving out parts of the (already very full) current SRE curriculum to make time for the new Ethics curriculum material. Any new curriculum material to be incorporated into a SRE class entails reduction of the existing SRE curriculum which is already very full. It seems the Ethics classes were allowed to proceed with the SRE children having to miss out on their own SRE class to participate in the Ethics class, or forfeit elements of the SRE curriculum which would be removed to incorporate the Ethics curriculum into the SRE classes. This is ironic given the statements made by Ethics spokesperson that the Ethics classes were not designed to undermine SRE.

32. If the name change to "Secularist philosophical ethical discussion" is given (and legislated that it not be allowed to abbreviated on any enrolment form or mentioning

in school newsletters or emails etc), this will make it clear that the curriculum is intended for parents who want the 'secularist' option for the SRE timeslot.

33. While advocates for the Ethics course claim that only 'religious' families select SRE for their child, this is not a fair characterisation of the children who enrol into SRE classes. An enrolment into an SRE class cannot be any indication of the families stated beliefs. For instance, in the era before Ethics classes existed, among the SRE classes I have taught have been some children whose parents do not go to church or ever read the Bible, yet those children had questions about God, so their parents enrolled those children into Christian SRE to help those children explore their religious questions. SRE provided the chance for that child to receive education about the Bible and its claims, without the parent having to take the child to church or religious gathering. Another child from a different faith background also wanted to learn about the Bible, so was enrolled into Christian SRE. I query whether the Ethics class is now depriving such children (from non-religious homes) to be so free to be learn about the Bible (or other religious teachings) for themselves. This is the reason why until Ethics class existed, no other class was to be scheduled during the time of SRE, so that children could be unencumbered to explore the different religious faiths offered through SRE. It is regrettable that the Ethics class advocates assume that all children have the same religious views as their parents – namely that if a parent has no interest in religion that their child has the same outlook. The Ethics class offering puts an extra hurdle for children of such parents to freely participate in SRE.

DISPARITY IN PROMOTION OF THE ETHICS COURSE WITHIN SCHOOL COMMUNITY COMPARED TO SRE OPTIONS

34. The school has promoted the Ethics course in a way that has never been offered for SRE options.

35. For instance, in late 2009, at a function to parents of incoming kindergarten students of the school, the Darlinghurst School Principal noted the school's offering of Ethics. At no time were the SRE options ever mentioned to balance this statement.

36. Also, the school has often encouraged the enrolment into the Ethics course, or assisted the logistical needs for the Ethics providers (such as seeking volunteers for Ethics teacher positions), through the school generated email lists or the school email system of communication to parents and through the printed school newsletter.

37. For instance, on 13 December 2010, the Vice Principal emailed some Ethics advocates at the school, and P&C representatives an email about the upcoming Ethics course, from which I now quote

"If any of your friends or family would have an interest in their children participating, or volunteering themselves, please get them to also register their interest online.

Please go to <http://www.primaryethics.com.au> and click on the buttons on the home page"

38. This email was then added to and sent from an Ethics lobbyist from within the school community school to all parents of the then year 4-5 on 15 December 2012. This email told how to register their children for Ethics class and listed the web site. The email also encouraged others to onforward the email with information about the Primary Ethics web site.

39. No where in either of the above emails does it mention that the Ethics option is only for those who have opted out of SRE!

40. Further, the Ethics course coordinator at the school, placed a notice in the school newsletter of 3 August 2012 entitled "Call for Volunteers Special Ethics Education, 2012-13", and an email of same date was sent entitled "Volunteer – Ethics". This was to seek teachers for Ethics for Years 3-4 for 2012 and 2013. This notice included reference to the Primary Ethics web site.

41. I submit that if SRE providers ever emailed every parent in the school soliciting enrolment into their SRE class option away from parents' current SRE choice, there would be an outcry! Thus, the Ethics course has been allowed to get preferential PR treatment by the school as it was offered the chance to solicit for its courses in a way that SRE providers would be denied.

42. Further, I note at the time of the publication of on 3 August 2011 calling for volunteers to teach Ethics, not even the NSW Minister of Education knew anything about an Ethics course proposal for Years 3-4. In other words, the Ethics course advocates were using a school newsletter to gather teachers for a course that had at that time not yet received Department awareness or approval. Thus the school resources were being used to serve the logistical needs (namely seeking out teachers) for one SRE timeslot option (Ethics), and this was not in any way balanced by any reference to the other SRE options on offer.

43. While parents should be informed of educational options at the school, it is important that the manner of such communication is done so as not to present Ethics in a way that ignores the other SRE options– that each option (SRE and Ethics) is given equal treatment (and it is made that Ethics is only for those who have opted out of SRE). The Department should require that any Ethics PR within the school (using school resources such as school photocopiers, eg school newsletters, or disseminated through school provided email lists of parents, or if any school official makes reference to the Ethics class options (eg Principal speaking at a function for parents of incoming students to the school) must at the same time list the SRE options, so parents understand that this is just one of the options for that timeslot to cater for those who object to receiving SRE (ie using words of the legislation s33A(2)). Also to mandate that if the web site for Primary Ethics or contact info is ever listed, then likewise list the contact info for the SRE provider and the web site of the SRE options (eg if Anglican SRE offered at the school, to list the Anglican SRE curriculum which is noted at www.whysre.com.au). If there is to be a call for volunteers for Ethics and contact name of Ethics coordinator noted, then likewise inquiries about SRE teacher positions should be noted with each religion's SRE coordinator for the school. ie equal treatment for all SRE timeslot players, and ensuring one option does not get more airtime than the other options.

Conclusion

44. I call upon the government to repeal *Education Amendment (Ethics) Act 2010* in its current format and to change the name of the course from Special Education in Ethics to 'Special Education in Secularist Philosophical Ethical discussion', which would be shortened to 'Secularist Philosophical Ethical Discussion' or "Secularism" for short.

45. I also ask that the policy guidelines and implementation of Ethics be amended to:

- * ensure the legislative requirements for first opting out of SRE before any enrolment into Ethics class is possible;

- *remove the required minimum class numbers for Ethics class participants,

- * ensure that both SRE and Ethics teachers get the same information regarding students in their classes— either both get numbers or both get roll of names, and that notification of any modification be made to such teachers when a parent writes to change enrolment;

- *mandate the same level of PR (and mentioning of the course offerings) within the school about the SRE/Ethics timeslot. Any mention of Ethics should also mention the other SRE options with the same level of detail eg if a web site is noted, so too for SRE, if a contact person is noted, so to SRE contact person.

- *allow SRE classes to proceed at the start of each year and term, even before Ethics class can ascertain whether it will proceed or not. Do not deprive SRE children of classes, to cater for the logistics of the Ethics class organisers.

46. I am happy to clarify my submission or to attend any inquiry hearing to discuss further issues raised by my submission.

47. I am happy for my submission to be made public.

Sincerely,
Polly Seidler



Darlinghurst School
Term One, 2011
Student Contact detail Updates

Crn. of Womerah Ave. & Liverpool St
 Botts Point NSW 2011

Telephone: 02 9331 4295
 Facsimile: 02 9361 5389
 darlinghur-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au
 www.darlinghur-p.schools.nsw.edu.au

ABN 59 217 820 2

Name..... Class

Home address

Home phone number

Email address

Scripture choice

Catholic

Protestant

Non Scripture

Ethics (Yrs 5& 6 only)

I would like the newsletter sent to the email addresses indicated below. Yes No

Please fill in what is applicable to your family structure.

Details of Mother/ Carer	
Mother's Name	
Mother's work phone number and/or mobile phone number	
Email address	

Details of Father/Carer	
Father's name	
Father's work phone number and/or mobile number	
Email address	

Emergency Contact Person	
Name	
Relationship to family	
Home number	
Mobile phone number	

Signed _____

Date _____