

Submission
No 106

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

Name: Ms Michelle Moriarty

Date received: 7/02/2012

Partially Confidential

February 6, 2012

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: SRE and Ethics and Discrimination against my child at [redacted] School

Before my children attended Public School I enquired after the Religious Studies available through several schools and was informed that [redacted] had three options. I wanted my children to be offered a variety of choices and to learn the basics about as many religions as possible. I wanted to prevent my own children from making biased and discriminatory remarks about other religions, based on an uneducated "guess" or basic fear or lack of understanding.

After three years of religious study all of the options at [redacted] were exhausted. One of my children was driven to tears and could not sleep for several weeks based on the Catholic religious instructor's teachings at the time. I could live with that and it was a good lesson in what can happen when too much religious fervour is expressed by a person in a position of power. It was not until several formal complaints were registered with the school that the instructor in question was asked to stop instructing after a replacement was found. I do not believe that there was a formal investigation and the classes do not seem to be organised to a formal timetable. Has the class content of the individual SRE classes ever been investigated and made into a formal curriculum choice (pertaining to each religion) as the rest of the Public Education syllabus has?

We send our children to school to be educated, not to sit in classrooms, doing nothing. When non-compulsory religious studies are being offered, the students that do not opt for religious studies are discriminated against and offered nothing. The Ethics classes were a good alternative and were teaching the children to think of both sides in an argument...to see the "for and against". The Ethics classes were a valuable contribution and my children were learning from them. If the Ethics classes are to be investigated, that is a fantastic move towards a more formalised approach and standard curriculum choice, but ONLY if all of the Special Religious Education classes are also to be investigated.

Fred Nile does a lot of good, quality work, but unfortunately, in too many instances (throughout history, not just in the case of Fred Niles) religious fervour causes the people in question to be blinded to the goodness that non-religious teachings also offer. I believe that the Ethics classes will produce more rounded, well informed, thoughtful and less biased students. They definitely have a place in our education system.

Sincerely,
Michelle Moriarty