

**Submission
No 417**

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

Name: Mrs L Tyrrell

Date received: 7/03/2012

The Director of Ethics Standing Committee,
Parliament House
Macquarie Street,
Sydney N.S.W. 2000.



To Whom It May Concern,

Dear Sir/Madam,

It has been brought to my attention that the question of Special Religious Education versus Ethics is once again being raised. Firstly I would like to point out that I have no objection to the introduction of ethics classes within the state school system, however I do object to the teaching of ethics as a replacement to Special Religious Education.

A question was recently raised on 'Face book' regarding religious education stating: 'What has the church ever done for our state schools?' To which an answer was given: "If you know anything about the history of education in the state schools in N.S.W. you will know that it was the churches that first brought education to this state for the children whose parents were not able to send their children 'home' to England." And so there is a long-standing connection between church and state within the education system, which was set on Christian principles as Australia was then regarded as a 'Christian' country. However with the arrival of people of other religions the S.R.E. classes are now, rightly so, available for children of all religious persuasions.

As a S.R.E. teacher at my local public school of 30 years standing I would like to point out that the standard of teaching material available to the S.R.E. teacher has advanced over the years in conjunction with the advances of education. There is nothing 'old fashioned' or 'out of date' about the standard set by the board of studies regarding S.R.E. and from this year the S.R.E. teacher, regardless of religious persuasion, when applying for registration has to give account of the material that they planned to present to the children, with a web address to the curriculum being used, thus allowing the parents access to the lessons that are being taught to their children. So the teaching of S.R.E. within our schools is no hit and miss affair.

Although I can only speak in regard to the teaching S.R.E. from a Christian viewpoint I would like to point out that the children are taught a standard of 'ethics' that encourages them to become 'ethical' human beings knowing right from wrong and in such knowledge will be able to take their place as responsible members of society.

As I have stated I do not have a problem with the introduction of 'ethics', however it should not be as a replacement for the 'ethics' already being taught in the S.R.E. classes. The idea of the introduction of 'ethics' was initially for the children who for whatever reason, being that a S.R.E. class was not available for their particular religion or their parents for whatever reason didn't want their child receiving religious education, it was not and should not be a replacement for S.R.E. for those children and their parents who wish their children to receive religious instruction within the state school system.

Thankyou for considering my remarks,

Regards,
(Mrs) L. Tyrrell.