

**Submission
No 260**

INQUIRY INTO EDUCATION AMENDMENT (ETHICS CLASSES REPEAL) BILL 2011

Name: Ms Karen Brock

Date received: 23/02/2012

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

23 February 2012

Dear Sir/Madam,

It is very disappointing that the ethics classes currently available in some public schools are under threat so soon after inception, and so soon after the election of the Liberal government which committed to the retention of the classes during the election campaign.

Since my children were old enough to ask about such things as god and religion, I have always tried to take a measured approach with my responses. If asked if god is real, I would say “some people think so, but no one really knows”. When my daughter started school, I gave her the choice of whether or not to attend SRE because I didn’t want to push my views on her. The SRE teacher had no such qualms about what he told a group of five year olds. My daughter came home from her first SRE class claiming to be the holder of the truth – god is real because she had been told so at school. In her view I hadn’t given her a clear answer because I didn’t know the answer. Now she had found someone who did.

My daughter no longer attends SRE because if no one really knows the answer about god, I’d rather her views were influenced by her parents than by a complete stranger. I would also like her to know that there are religions other than Christianity, and that they all have their beliefs and their place. It mystifies me that at a public school in a secular country young children are exposed to black and white religious views with no context of the wider world or differing perspectives. As such, I believe a review of the current content and context of SRE classes is well overdue.

At our school ethics classes are only available in years 5 and 6, so my daughter now colours in during SRE. I hope that when the time comes ethics classes will still be available so that she, and my two younger children, will have the option to use their minds and develop their understanding of the world we live in during the 30 valuable minutes each week that are currently wasted.

Kind Regards,

Karen Brock