

**Submission  
No 66**

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

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Dear Committee,

I wish to explain why the current Ethics trial in NSW will move education in this State to a more shallow level if it is sustained and / or developed further.

Instruction is not education. Teaching involves engaging the heart and mind whilst helping develop understanding of information and necessary skills.

Thinkers through the ages have understood this - Socrates, Plato, Solomon, Jesus, Augustine, Confucius, Dewey, our own Indigenous peoples, Pascal. Even Hume had to come to grips with the heart in learning and logic.

The current Ethics program is a program in social consensus decision processes. IT IS NOT AN APPROPRIATE REPLACEMENT FOR SRE. The appropriate replacement for students not wanting to be in a particular confessional group would be A COMPARATIVE RELIGION COURSE.

This is because all people need opportunity for a dedicated time to pursue the essential 'search for human meaning' questions of life. Ethics is a derivative of and not a basis for undertaking this pursuit. It is our deepest held beliefs that inform what we believe to be right and wrong. That is the role of faith and religion.

If you allow Ethics to be seen as an equivalent to SRE, you will be contributing to an education system that will be further without soul. That is shallowness that leads to further disengagement of our young people.

History is full of examples that confirm this understanding - societies that loose the freedom to pursue deepest human meaning truth questions soon become more susceptible to centralist control. Perhaps a good re-reading of 'Brave New World' may remind us of this.

I refer you to the work of the Australian academic Emeritus Professor Brian Hill for more consideration of the role of religion in education in any school setting. More recently, Associate Professor David Tacey from La Trobe University has also been describing the loss of soul in academic thinking (and the oppression that results from it) in Australia.

I would be pleased to discuss this further if the committee believed that would be helpful.

Yours sincerely,

Stephen J Fyson PhD