

Submission
No 283

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

Organisation: Leichhardt Public School Parents and Citizens Association
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LEICHHARDT PUBLIC SCHOOL PARENT'S & CITIZENS ASSOCIATION

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On 6 February 2012, the Leichhardt Parents and Citizens' Association voted overwhelmingly to make this submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry into Ethics Classes in support of Ethics classes.

This submission details Leichhardt Public School's involvement in Ethics classes. In doing so, it demonstrates the high level of support for Ethics classes at the school.

2009

To gain an idea of parental support for ethics classes as a meaningful alternative to Special Religious Education, signatures were collected from parents in the school grounds during November and December 2009. A total of 115 parents were asked if they wanted LPS to take part in the Ethics Pilot. **100%** of parents asked, signed in support of the pilot.

2010

LPS ran the Pilot Ethics Course in May 2010. 40 students took part in the pilot, which constituted roughly 60% of the Year 5 & 6 cohort. Anecdotal feedback regarding the pilot suggests it was a great success. Parents and students were grateful for the opportunity to take part in the pilot. This was demonstrated through comments and cards given to volunteer teachers by parents and students of the pilot.

2011

60% of Year 5 & 6 students participated in the first year of Ethics classes (roughly 60 out of 100 students).



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2012

LPS has a total of 572 students.

58% of Year 3 - 6 students (166 out of 286) have opt-outed of SRE.

44% of Year K - 2 students (125 out of 286) have opted-out of SRE.

That is, a total of 291 students school-wide have opted out of SRE.

60 students from Year 5 & 6 have enrolled in Ethics, and another 78 students from Years 3 & 4 have indicated they will enrol in Ethics, which is due to commence Term 3.

Volunteers

The classes are organised and run by a team of trained volunteers, all of who are parents of children at LPS. The team consists of one Ethics Co-ordinator and 3 volunteer teachers. There are an additional 4 parents that have applied to become future volunteer ethics teachers.

Culture of Acceptance

LPS is a multicultural school that prides itself on acceptance of diversity. Special Ethics Education is a deeply valued component of our school, along with SRE. Allowing these two programs to run side-by-side helps foster our culture of acceptance by setting a positive example. It demonstrates our acceptance of all faiths, and provides everyone with the same opportunity to engage in meaningful discussion, whether that takes place in Scripture or Ethics classes. Regardless of faith, the overwhelming majority of parents at LPS support Ethics, and wish to see it continue.

Simon Savage, President LPS P&C

on behalf of LPS Parents and Citizens' Association