

**Submission
No 238**

INQUIRY INTO EDUCATION AMENDMENT (ETHICS CLASSES REPEAL) BILL 2011

Name: Ms Evelyn Bowes

Date received: 23/02/2012

23rd February 2012

The Director
General Purpose Standing Committee No 2
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
Sydney NSW 2000

Dear Sir/Madam,

This submission is to request that the government does not repeal the Education Act (Ethics) 2010 as is being currently proposed.

The act currently ensures there is a legal requirement to offer ethics classes as an option for those not attending scripture classes. To remove this right without an alternative productive activity (i.e. they just waste their time playing rather than doing sport, another learning activity etc.) means the children will in effect be doing nothing beneficial. The argument that it would be unfair to those doing the scripture classes if the others did something different is untenable as it means the non scripture children would as a result be treated unfairly.

The removal of ethics is discriminatory to those parents who do not have a religious affiliation but would like the benefits that ethics would provide. Scripture teaches a moral framework that incorporates ethics, however, it is from a religious basis. To deny an alternative opportunity to learn ethics is inherently unfair to that child and is also a loss to society in terms of developing well rounded individuals as they move into adulthood.

My two daughters currently attend scripture classes. Ethics classes are not at present offered for their age group. Our family has no particular religious affiliation, but I feel strongly that they should learn something, rather than nothing. However, I would like there to be an option that is not faith based. They should not be denied an option based on their religious beliefs (or lack thereof). My submission is based on the concept of fairness in the treatment of all children in our schools.

I had highlighted these issues to Mr O'Farrell prior to the last election and he had committed that they would not be removed i.e. the majority of the people voted at the last election on the promise that ethics classes would not be removed. I understand that the repealing of the act is an initiative from an independent member of Parliament and do not necessarily represent the view of the government however I would request the committee take into account the position of the majority of the electorate which was to support the implementation of Ethics classes in NSW.

In summary, I request that the government does not repeal the Education Act (Ethics) 2010 on the basis it is inherently unfair and discriminatory to a section of society, does not represent the majority view of the electorate and is also a loss to society in terms of developing well rounded individuals as they move into adulthood.

Yours Sincerely

Ms Evelyn Bowes