

**Submission
No 262**

INQUIRY INTO EDUCATION AMENDMENT (ETHICS CLASSES REPEAL) BILL 2011

Name: Ms Dianne Butland

Date received: 24/02/2012

Legislative Council Inquiry into Special Ethics Education

It is with serious moral and ethical concern that I find that the right of children and family who do not want to take part in special religious education is being held up to challenge again.

The purpose and intent of a program of ethics education is demonstrated by the inability of some religious groups to accept that diversity exists and others may not want a religious education. Religious groups have no right to force others to participate in religious education or to restrict those others from alternative education.

The Australian census reveals an increasing percentage of people indicating they have no religion. This sector of the NSW population must be catered for. Special Ethics Education is part of the response to the democratic rights of these people and their children.

Secular public education cannot be withdrawn from people by the restrictions sought by some religious groups. Tolerance and diversity is essential to ensuring a peaceful and ethical society.

Children of families who do not want to participate in Special Religious Education should not be marginalised. All children should have access to relevant and challenging educational experiences. The arrogance of those who would wish to restrict others from education without religious indoctrination is unethical.