

Submission
No 198

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

Name: Revd Dr Peter Barnes

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GPSC2 GPSC2 - Ethics submission

From:
To: <gpscno2@parliament.nsw.gov.au>
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It is not immediately obvious that ethics classes can work or have worked. They have only operated for years 5-6, so the rest of the primary and infants classes are left out. So far, the students are only encouraged to develop their own ethical system when they are not well equipped to do so. We would not adopt this approach for any other subject. One should also point out that students can opt out of ethics classes as well as SRE classes, so there remains the problem of looking after such students. The churches have been able to draw on volunteers to teach SRE but it is by no means clear where the ethics teachers might come from or how they will be attracted in sufficient numbers to make the system workable.

But most of all, there has been a long-standing agreement between church and state that SRE be taught in state schools. In 1881 in NSW this could be for up to an hour a day (not week). This should not be interpreted as a tyrannous imposition but as an opportunity for all students to be exposed to SRE. Teaching ethics disrupts that undertaking without replacing it with anything that is practicable and worthwhile.

Rev. Dr Peter Barnes