

**Submission
No 296**

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

Name: Ms Wendy Blyth

Date received: 29/02/2012

28th February 2012

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

Re: Inquiry into Ethics Classes

I am a mother of two children (one in Year 2 and one in Year 6) at a regional school. This is an excellent school, with dedicated and caring teachers. The school always tries to meet the needs of individual students and families to the best of its ability.

Both of my children have been in non-scripture since Kindergarten (I withdrew my eldest son from scripture in Kinder when I saw the material he was coming home with. I was shocked to find that it had not changed since I was a primary student in Sydney in the 1970's.). My younger son has never been enrolled in scripture.

At our relatively small school, being a non-scripture student has at times been an ostracising experience for my children. Thankfully, that all ended for my eldest son when a Year 5/6 Ethics class began in Term 2 of 2011.

I am the Ethics Coordinator for the school. We were the first school in the local area to start Ethics classes.

I am a psychologist. I also studied philosophy throughout my Bachelor's degree. The Ethics Teacher at our school is a parent from our school community and is a registered primary school teacher in NSW.

I observed a number of Ethics classes at our school in 2011. Each class was a delight. The children were always engaged and animated in their discussions. I found the classes presented to the children to be appropriate for their age level, and watched with some amazement as the students developed their critical thinking skills and became passionate in articulating their opinions.

Our school again has a class of Year 5/6 students for 2012, with other families eagerly awaiting the introduction of Ethics classes for Years 3 and 4.

I welcome this inquiry into Ethics classes, and believe that a similar inquiry into SRE is long overdue.

Yours sincerely,

Wendy Blyth, B.A. (Hons), MPsych(Clin);

cc.

MP