

Submission
No 2

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

Name: Mr Darren Friend

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Partially Confidential

GPSC2 GPSC2 - Ethics

From: "Darren friend"
To: <gpscno2@parliament.nsw.gov.au>
Date: 11/24/2011 1:08 PM
Subject: Ethics
CC:

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

Dear Madame / Sir

I am writing to you as I have heard through the press that there will be a further inquiry into ethics as a subject in NSW education. I am the father of two boys, the oldest is in Year 2 at [redacted] I am keen to see the ethics program introduced to the school so that my sons may attend it. We are a non religious family. When my son was enrolled initially we were told that there is a period of time set aside for scripture each week. We are not affiliated with any church and were given a number of options including several Christian sects and Muslim. I asked for information on the class but was told that by law the teachers are not allowed to comment on the Scripture classes. So it was that we enrolled our son in a randomly chosen Christian sect for scripture with no idea of the content, who would teach, what would be taught. I expected the story of Jesus, some other stories from the bible etc. We had no contact from the scripture teacher throughout that year and only learnt what was taught when my boy brought the materials home at the end of the school year. I felt these materials were not appropriate and far exceeded what I was prepared to allow my child to be exposed to in terms of religion. Materials that suggest the individual should put their trust in god & Jesus ahead of common sense do not concur with the values we are trying to instill in our children.

I am keen to see the time dedicated to scripture used in other meaningful ways that can add value to our children's education. I know that similar programs have been run in Victoria and other countries. I lived in Japan for 13 years before returning to Australia in 2005. Ethics has been a long standing subject in Japanese education. The Japanese population is predominately non religious. Ethics is credited with helping produce the cooperative society that Japan enjoys. I support the rights of religious groups to run scripture in schools, but there must be something provided for those who are not aligned with organized religion. Currently my child is left to read, play computer games or do art during the period assigned for scripture.

Sincerely,

Darren Friend