

**Submission
No 316**

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

Organisation: Balgowlah North Public School P & C
Date received: 23/02/2012



Balgowlah North Public School P&C

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The Director
General Purpose Standing Committee No. 2
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23rd February, 2012

Submission of the Balgowlah North Public School P & C in relation to the Parliamentary Inquiry into Ethics Classes.

The P&C of the Balgowlah North Public School strongly supports the retention of the Education Amendment (Ethics) Act 2010 which allows ethics classes as an option for students who choose not to attend SRE classes.

The implementation of Ethics classes into BNPS was supported by unanimous resolution, and with the support of the School Principal, at the P&C meeting held on 30 November 2011. At that meeting, a working party was formed and a resolution passed unanimously to take steps to introduce ethics classes at Balgowlah North Public School. The support of the school community as represented by the P&C is clearly already manifesting. This reflects a school community that values the fundamental importance of tolerance and diversity of beliefs and religion, and seeks to minimise discrimination against those who do not hold particular religious beliefs. The introduction of ethics classes is one important means of ensuring such discrimination does not take place.

Since that meeting, and with the assistance and support of the St James Primary Ethics Centre, BNPS is now expecting to have classes commencing in Term 2 following parent notifications in mid Term 1. A number of parents have volunteered to undertake teacher interviews and training, in accordance with the Ethics Centre structure and curriculum.

The proposed ethics classes will finally provide children who choose not to attend weekly SRE classes (comprising Combined Christian, Catholic or Bahai classes) with the opportunity to learn about the commonalities underlying various religious beliefs and ethical codes in a structured and critical manner. Without such an opportunity, valuable prime learning time in an already packed school curriculum is wasted. The naturally inquiring mind of a child deserves better. For the introduction and implementation of a structured ethics program into the BNPS primary school to be thwarted by the repeal of the 2010 Act would be contrary to the views and desires of the school parent community of the BNPS. More significantly however, it would deny the children of BNPS an invaluable learning and development opportunity.

Yours Sincerely

Debbie Emmerton