

Submission  
No 55

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

**Name:** Ms Kathryn Newburg

**Date received:** 7/12/2011

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Partially Confidential

Re: Education Amendment (Ethics) Act 2010

As a parent and Ethics coordinator at my child's school classes for those children who opt out of SRE.

I fully support Ethics

As the Ethics coordinator, I conducted a survey of parents and found that a significant majority supported the option of Ethics. The supporters even included those who chose for their own children to attend SRE. Even one of our Catholic SRE teachers supports Ethics being available.

Of those who opposed it, I received some rather heated and incorrect information about the role and history of SRE. Generally these people failed to acknowledge that Ethics was about providing an option for children who were already not attending SRE.

Ethics is not competing with SRE. It is an alternative to do something meaningful, for those who would otherwise be "thumb-twiddling" as they would otherwise attend "non-scripture" (as it is called). To argue against Ethics being held concurrently with SRE is effectively arguing that SRE should be compulsory. As SRE is not compulsory, it makes sense to offer an alternative.

Our school currently offers Catholic, Anglican, Orthodox and Hindu SRE. In an already crowded curriculum, it is unethical to force any child to not use their time productively, if they do not follow any of these beliefs.

Ethics is a valid area of study and it is included in tertiary courses in many if not all faculties. At the primary level, the children discuss age-appropriate issues such as animal cruelty, telling the truth, vandalism etc.

Primary Ethics is a very well run organisation, which is completely objective and the course is well researched.

Depending on the school, the religion and the teacher, SRE classes vary considerably. I have heard cases where SRE teachers have told young children that they (or family/friends) will go to hell, and that god is always watching them (which was taken quite literally causing great distress).

Ethics is an important part of life and society, which we all need to learn about, regardless of our religious persuasion.

Please attend to this inquiry in an objective and professional manner. As Members of the Legislative Council, committee members should consider the views of the wider constituency in 21st century NSW, rather than just their own personal views, which may be disproportionately influenced by their own religious views.

I trust that in the interests of fairness, an equally robust inquiry into SRE will be proposed.

Regards,

Kathryn Newburg