

**Submission  
No 225**

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

**Organisation:** North Sydney Demonstration School P&C Association

**Date received:** 23/02/2012

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North Sydney Demonstration School P&C Association  
C/- North Sydney Demonstration School  
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## North Sydney Demonstration School

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

23 February 2012

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Ethics classes at North Sydney Demonstration School

Ethics classes were first introduced at North Sydney Dem in 2011 and made available to students in Years 5 and 6 with strong support from staff, parents and the P&C.

In 2011, we had one full class of 21 Year 5 and 6 students enrolled in Ethics classes and feedback from teachers and parents has been extremely positive.

This year, 44 Year 5 and 6 students are currently enrolled to take Ethics classes with 7 on a waiting list.

The North Sydney Dem community consider the introduction of Ethics at the school a great opportunity for students whose parents choose not to enrol them in SRE (Special Religious Education). Over the years there has been concern from parents that there has been no alternative to SRE, and this has often been considered a waste of valuable learning time. Indeed, considered objectively this lack of alternative to SRE represented nothing less than religious discrimination, a position that was rectified by the introduction of Ethics classes in 2011.

Ethics classes provide our children with an opportunity to explore, discuss and understand the process of ethical decision-making. Ethics classes are not prescriptive in any way and are not intended to provide students with definitive ethical responses. Rather, students are encouraged to identify the significant factors at play in any ethical dilemma, and to bring these factors together in an objective and logical decision-making process. This should lead to sound ethical decisions and, as a result, a fair and just society.

The P&C believes that this type of learning is highly beneficial for those students not enrolled in SRE, making valuable use of the students' time and thus eliminating the religious discrimination on which the previous system (no alternative to SRE) was founded.

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North Sydney Demonstration School P&C Association does support the continuation of Ethics classes.

North Sydney Demonstration School P&C Association does not support the formal inquiry to examine "the stated objectives, curriculum, implementation, effectiveness and other related matters pertaining to the current operation of 'special education in ethics' being conducted in State schools, and whether the Education Amendment (Ethics) Act 2010 should be repealed."

Yours faithfully

Claire Hanley  
Executive Committee – P&C Association

Co-operating school with  
The University of Sydney