

Submission
No 402

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

Name: Name suppressed

Date received: 21/02/2012

Partially Confidential

The Director

General Purpose Standing Committee No. 2

Parliament House

Macquarie St

Sydney NSW 2000

21/2/2102

Re: Submission to the Inquiry into Ethics Classes

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to express my strong support for the continuation of ethics classes as an alternative to SRE. It is disappointing that consideration is being given to repealing the legislation which entitles children to receive a secular alternative to SRE. While scrutiny of ethics classes is welcome, a similar investigation in SRE should be conducted.

In our diverse society, it is important that children are not forced to choose between either SRE or sitting quietly and doing nothing meaningful. I am a parent of 2 children, one of whom is school-aged but not yet old enough to enrol in ethics classes. It is entirely unacceptable to me that he is currently required to sit quietly and waste valuable learning time, simply because our family believe faith and spirituality are a personal matter and we do not wish to engage with the particular religious instruction offered at his school. I am looking forward to the day when both my children are able to be offered ethics classes. My child attends to school to learn. Our choices with regard to matters of religion should not prevent him from doing so.

My strong opinions about this matter led to me becoming the ethics coordinator at my child's school. A significant number of parents have expressed their support to me and to the ethics teachers about having the option available, and shock that there would be any consideration given to repealing the legislation allowing families to choose this alternative. Having children who have opted out of SRE engaged in learning means that there is less disruption for the entire school during SRE time, as it is extremely difficult for teachers to maintain a calm environment when children are not permitted to do anything other than occupy themselves. Ethics classes in no way undermine SRE – they are simply an alternative for those who would not attend SRE anyway.

Yours sincerely