

Submission
No 284

INQUIRY INTO EDUCATION AMENDMENT (ETHICS CLASSES REPEAL) BILL 2011

Organisation: The Uniting Church in Australia, Synod of NSW and the ACT
Date received: 28/02/2012



The Uniting Church in Australia
SYNOD OF NSW AND THE ACT

Moderator:
REV DR BRIAN BROWN

Level 9, 222 Pitt Street
Sydney 2000
PO Box A2178 Sydney South 1235
Telephone: (02) 8267 4324
Fax: (02) 9261 4359

Hon Marie Ficarra MLC
Committee Chair
General Purpose Standing Committee No. 2
Parliament of New South Wales
Macquarie St
Sydney NSW 2000

28th February 2012

Submission to the Inquiry into the
Education Amendment (Ethics Classes Repeal) Bill 2011

To The Hon Maria Ficarra,

Thank you for your invitation to contribute to the Inquiry into the Education Amendment (Ethics Classes Repeal) Bill 2011.

Throughout the conversations leading to the trial of Special Ethics classes and the review of these classes, the Uniting Church maintained a welcoming response to the option of Special Education in Ethics (SEE) for those children whose parents make a decision for them not to attend SRE classes. This continues to be our position today.

The Uniting Church firmly believes that Special Religious Education is an important ministry which continues to assist our schools and wider society by providing an avenue for nurturing the spiritual wellbeing of students. The Uniting Church also supports the continuation of the option of Special Ethics classes for students who do not attend Special Religious Education, as this can provide a comparable but not religion based educational experience as students are encouraged to engage in ethical reflective practice in a facilitated manner.

In response to the specific terms of reference given, how well the educational objectives were achieved and the effectiveness of the special ethics classes is something for participants, parents, and independent evaluation to comment on.

In response to term of reference (b), the Uniting Church does not support the repeal of the Special Ethics classes because we believe we must give priority to learning opportunities for all students, not just those with whom we share faith convictions. We respect the freedom of parents to elect for their children not to participate in SRE and we trust that they might encounter God through other means.

Thank you for your consideration of this submission.

Yours Sincerely,

Rev Dr Brian Brown
Moderator