

Submission  
No 194

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

**Name:** Mrs Carol Lack

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Partially Confidential

The Director  
General Purpose Standing Committee Number 2  
Parliament House  
Macquarie Street  
Sydney 2000

21 February 2012

Dear Sir

### INQUIRY INTO ETHICS CLASSES

The issue of examining the value of Ethics Classes, as has been demanded by Fred Nile, seems to have been done already, as the trial period before it began did seem to accomplish that and to justify that there was a need, and that these classes met that need. However surely, if it is to be done again, it is also reasonable and necessary to assess the appropriateness of and demand for SRE.

If I hark back to the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, I understand that as the quid pro quo for spending public funds on public education, the church demanded that the state provide this form of religious instruction, in lieu of what was previously church-based (and funded, presumably) education. Ignoring this historical rationale, it is difficult to comprehend how, other than by some sort of bigotry, it could be argued that SRE is a valid use of precious school hours and money, while a similar (although supporters of Ethics Classes might not call it similar) study of somewhat related ethical issues is invalid.

Furthermore, now that Australia has become a much more multicultural nation, with many non-Christian religions, as well as atheists and agnostics, represented in the community, SRE is even less valid, and even more inappropriate, today than it might have been in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. If the question of setting up SRE classes, to be compulsorily offered in every public school, were to be raised in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it is almost impossible to imagine that it would be passed, other than as an alternative to a more general study of ethics.

My year 6 grandson at [redacted] Public School did not want to give up his homework time of the previous 6 years in order to do Ethics, but his parents made the decision for him. The good news is that he actually enjoyed the discussions and felt they were worthwhile. If he were asked whether they should continue, he would definitely answer a resounding "yes".

I find it reprehensible that the state not only provides serious funding to private schools, many of which are religiously-based, but also subsidises this religious instruction in public schools, and would consider doing it without also allowing non-Christians the opportunity to consider ethical questions of (I would say) greater importance.

Yours faithfully

Carol I Lack