

Submission
No 403

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

Name: Dr Lisa Melton & Mr Gerard Page

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Partially Confidential

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

Dear Sir/Madam,

Our children attend _____ Public School in _____ NSW.

We do not wish our children to be taught only one religious ideology. We would like our children to be taught about the many different faiths and cultures that surround them. We would also like them, in addition to the values and morals instilled in them at home, to have the opportunity at school to learn the basis of moral and ethical decision making and cultural differences.

As none of the current 'scripture' options provided at the school offer this general educational experience we have opted for our children to go to 'non-scripture' during the allocated time for religious education. This means our children sit in the library at school to read. No one doubts the value of reading time, however, there are ample other opportunities for this both at home and at school.

This is an inequitable and discriminatory system whereby our children are missing out on valuable learning time.

While scrutiny of ethics classes and careful planning of their content is welcome. We would also like to see a parallel investigation of religious education in NSW primary schools.

If the Education Amendment (Ethics) Act 2010 were repealed, there would no longer be a legal requirement to offer ethics classes as an option for children not attending SRE classes. This move would return us to a situation in which children, such as ours, opting out of SRE are given no meaningful learning opportunities during this allocated time.

This learning time should be devoted to introducing children to the concepts of moral and ethical decision making and contribute to the process of producing an informed population that is tolerant and understanding of cultural differences.

Surely this is an opportunity to great to miss.

We would urge the committee to not only retain Ethics classes in NSW, but to extend this program to include all year groups and all schools.

Yours sincerely,

Lisa Melton
Gerard Page