

Submission  
No 253

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

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

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*Partially Confidential*

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

23 February 2011

Dear Sir/Madam

Our children attend [redacted] NSW. It is a great school in a rural community with just over 400 kids from K-12. When our children started at BCS, we were told that they would be attending Special Religious Education (SRE) classes, in the form of Scripture classes, for an hour every week, unless we chose to write to the school and request that they opted out. We were given no information about the content of the Scripture classes, who would teach them, what training they had and what teaching methods would be used. In short, nothing was provided to us about these classes to enable us to make an informed choice.

We chose for our children to 'opt out' of Scripture. Until last year, they spent Scripture time doing 'private study' under the supervision of a regular teacher. This usually involved being given a photocopied worksheet they had already completed and being sent to another classroom. When the opportunity came along for our younger daughter to attend Ethics classes last year when she was in Year 5, we were informed about the content of the classes, given links to further information, and were introduced to the teacher and the coordinator of the course. Our daughter was lucky enough to be one of the first group of children at BCS to be taught the Ethics program. She gained so much from these classes and they led to many stimulating and engaging conversations at home. We have been nothing but 100 percent happy with the subject matter and the way in which these classes have been taught. Our daughter enjoyed the classes so much that she is taking them again this year. Sadly, our older daughter had moved to Year 7 before the classes were available.

We fail to understand why anyone would see the Ethics program as a threat to Scripture or other SRE classes. If parents wish for their children to attend Scripture classes, then they can attend them. If they wish their children to attend Ethics classes, they should have the same right. If SRE providers think that ethics is something that should be taught to the students they teach, then they should incorporate it into their classes. And all parents should be properly informed about the content, nature and training undertaken by the providers for all SRE options available in their school.

Those who choose to promote or provide SRE classes have the right to decide what is taught in those classes – but they should not have the right to dictate whether students can or cannot be taught ethics. That, surely, should be up to their parents. We would be bitterly disappointed if Ethics classes were to be withdrawn from NSW public schools. We feel so strongly about this that even when our daughter has finished primary school, we will continue to argue for the right for other children to experience the same opportunity.

Yours sincerely,