EDUCATION AND TRAINING COMMITTEE

Inquiry into the extent, benefits and potential of music education in Victorian schools

Melbourne — 27 March 2013

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Ms H. Champion, Curriculum Manager, Performing Arts, Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority.
The CHAIR — Thank for coming along this morning, and welcome to the hearing. We know the purpose is to look at music education in Victorian schools. I have a couple of matters to cover. Hansard is recording the information, and you will have the opportunity to review it. If there are any errors, you will have the opportunity to make those changes. The evidence you give is covered under parliamentary privilege, which applies to the hearing proper, not to anything said outside of the room. We invite you to make an opening statement, and then we will have a number of questions. Over to you.

Dr HOWES — Thank you for the opportunity to appear before the committee. We would like to start with an apology, which is that we now have data for you that we can submit today. We would have liked to have had it earlier. I can only apologise. You would be aware that there is an intense load of VCE data processing over January and February, but I will table this if I can.

The CHAIR — Absolutely. Thank you.

Dr HOWES — This might be a good place to start. We are happy of course either today or subsequently to take requests for further data if you decide that is needed. This provides information about both provision at the institutional level and individual student enrolments at the senior secondary level. You would be aware that the VCAA does not hold data on the number of students who study instrumental music outside the VCE or indeed in music programs. That would be data kept by the individual sectors.

Pages 2 and 3 right through to 5 give you the data on providers, and I draw your attention to page 3, which is the key set of information. It provides a summary, and provision in the government sector — this is data from the last five years, being 2008 to 2012 — fell from 207 to 182. That can partly be explained by some campus amalgamations and school amalgamations, which of course reduce the total number of providers and impact on the number of providers that offer music. Nevertheless, that is a fall that is greater than would be accounted for by natural attrition. In the independent sector there was little change, and in the Catholic sector there was no change. The data on individual students —

The CHAIR — Before you move on to that, do you have any idea as to why that change may be as extravagant as it is in government schools, which fell from 207 to 182 providers?

Dr HOWES — Our view is that each provider would have a different reason. It could be availability of staff, it could be a change in demographic, it could be a drop in student demand and in some cases it will be an amalgamation of campuses and colleges. If there were two schools that amalgamated, that obviously reduced the number of providers, but that would need to be a case-by-case analysis of why each one of those has changed.

The CHAIR — We obviously have the names of the providers that have dropped off, so we could get that information by writing to some of those providers.

Ms CHAMPION — Yes, we could.

Dr HOWES — We will take you through the data reasonably quickly, and then obviously we are happy to go through it in more detail. Taking you to page 6, this is the number that is arguably more significant because it is the number of students who enrol. One argument would be that this is the more relevant data, rather than the number of providers, because what we are actually interested in is the number of students who undertake music rather than the number of schools that provide it, and it has been very stable. The largest subject choice, music performance, has stayed pretty stable over the last five years, and music styles and composition has stayed pretty stable as well.

Then you can see the breakdown right down to the level of instrument and the number of students who are doing that. It is disappointing for fans of the accordion that it has not seen much of an increase, but you can see that contemporary guitar continues to enjoy its pre-eminent place.

Ms CHAMPION — There is a renaissance in classical guitar.
Dr HOWES — Another point of interest to draw the committee’s attention to is a small point but not insignificant. At the bottom of page 7 are the alternative instruments that have been approved since the tabulation of this data. These are pretty esoteric instruments, but we would tender this as an indication of the capacity of the music program to be a genuinely inclusive one that has room for music from all cultures and all traditions, and I think that would be unusual across Australia.

Ms CHAMPION — It is.

The CHAIR — There are no numbers of those taken up. Are they just approved instruments?

Ms CHAMPION — They are small, with one or two in every year. You can see them up there with alternative instruments approved on lines 2 and 3 of the table above. For example, with tabla, we have one coming through this year and have had one in each of the previous two years, and there is enormous interest from the Indian community following the first one.

Dr HOWES — It is simply one indication that one of the strengths of the music curriculum in Victoria is the capacity to accommodate a single instrument that only one passionate student is interested in. We are pleased with the evidence that kids are taking up that advantage and coming to us asking for approval to do an instrument that is new, either being revived or not having been studied by a student before. Again, our sincere apologies that you did not have this before the meeting, but we are very happy to take further requests, because we have the capacity. Our data people are freer now, and we will be able to respond much more quickly to additional requests that you may have.

We have a brief statement more generally in relation to the curriculum. We provide a curriculum from Foundation to Year 10 through the Victorian Essential Learning Standards. Music is part of the Arts curriculum. The Arts is one of only five areas of the curriculum that is mandatory for reporting purposes in the first three years of school, and it is mandatory through to Year 10. The distinctive thing about the first three years of school is that only 5 of the 16 curriculum domains are mandatory for reporting purposes, and the Arts, with music as part of it, is one of them.

Senior secondary provision has been revised recently, and we think the evidence from enrolment trends is that the curriculum provides the capacity to attract students who are undertaking a wide study of musical instruments and interests in music. We are very confident in the quality of the curriculum. We are benchmarked against other international jurisdictions. When you look at our data compared to Australian data, it indicates strong performance at senior secondary level.

Everyone is aware that the Arts is one of the areas being developed under the Australian Curriculum. We do not believe that will have a significant impact, in part because the Victorian government’s position is to take what is beneficial from the Australian Curriculum but to not be constrained or limited by it where we think that might be detrimental to Victorian students. We will be providing advice to the minister when the Arts curriculum is finished about whether, in our view, that should be endorsed and, if it is, what modifications might be necessary to meet Victoria’s needs. The national curriculum is a useful exercise in trying to collate best practices from around Australia and to do more international benchmarking, and it is a good opportunity for us to learn what we can from that and make appropriate adjustments to the Victorian curriculum. But again the government’s position is not to feel constrained by the Australian Curriculum. These are our general opening comments.

The CHAIR — Thank you very much. We are going kick off with some questions. You mention the mandatory nature of the Arts being taught from Foundation to Year 10. How does that apply to music? Can you clarify whether music, as a subject, is mandatory from Foundation to Year 10?

Ms CHAMPION — As you would be aware, VCAA establishes the curriculum on behalf of the sectors but implementation is a matter for the sectors. In regard to the Arts in the VELS, the advice to the sectors — to schools, to providers — is that from Foundation to Year 2 in the early years of schooling students should be undertaking at least one arts discipline in performing and visual and that these may be done individually or in combination. The advice to the schools is that they should be offering, for example, music and visual arts or a combined music/drama or music/dance program along with media, and that
gives schools the flexibility to use their local resources to devise the program, be that specialist teachers or classroom teachers with particular interests and strengths. It also gives them the opportunity to work with partner organisations, whether they are funded through the Strategic Partnerships Program or other organisations that the schools form local partnerships with.

**The CHAIR** — So it is more broadly in the Arts area, not specifically related to music?

**Ms CHAMPION** — No.

**Dr HOWES** — It is true that from levels 5 and onward students could do the arts but not music. Before that it is expected that music would be part of their Arts curriculum.

**The CHAIR** — Okay.

**Dr HOWES** — Would it be helpful if we tabled a copy of the curriculum?

**The CHAIR** — Yes, sure.

**Dr HOWES** — We will make some copies of it and we will actually table a hard copy of it which sets out those requirements.

**The CHAIR** — Fantastic.

**Ms TIERNEY** — I just want to firstly ask a question in relation to page 5 on the data that you have just tabled, which goes to the geographic location of the provision of VCE music. It is clear that the eastern metropolitan region is doing quite well but the traditional lower socioeconomic areas of the northern suburbs, the western suburbs and regional and rural Victoria are somewhat below anyone’s expectations. When you see data like this, what happens internally in the department in terms of who you talk to? What degree of an eye goes over data like this from the department generally to try to even up a situation or seriously address access and equity issues?

**Dr HOWES** — This data is reported on an annual basis through the VCAA’s senior secondary curriculum assessment committee and the VCAA board, and members of the department sit on both of those. The process for the analysis of the data at the sectoral level is then the responsibility of the department, the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd and Independent Schools Victoria. The data about provision is, of course, strictly related to the data about student enrolments because provision is the result of student choice. It is a chicken and egg issue — if there is no teacher available, especially in regional areas, students do not have access unless they do it through distance education, which is always an option. As an authority we will support the sectors in responses that they may wish to make to this data, but we cannot direct the sectors in how they want to respond to the data. Our role is to draw it to their attention and make the data available, but we cannot direct how they will respond.

**Ms CHAMPION** — I could perhaps add that when we are reviewing the VCE curriculum we look at this data in depth, and there are always representatives from all of the stakeholders involved in that review. One of the questions we ask in developing the curriculum is about its flexibility for implementation in different situations. The issues raised by tables such as this are considered there, and in the curriculum design we take care that the curriculum can be implemented between classroom teachers and instrumental teachers. You will note on the top of page 5 that the Distance Education Centre Victoria is in fact the largest single provider of the VCE music style and composition subject, because one of the other factors in determining whether a school is able to provide music is the usually local decision about the number required for a minimum class size. Music is designed so that a combined unit 1 and 3 in Year 11 and Year 12 can be taught. It is not an ideal situation, but the curriculum recognises that this issue exists and does what it can to facilitate provision.

**Ms TIERNEY** — Just picking up on the issue of the shortage in rural and regional, previous witnesses indicated that they did not believe that there was a shortage of specialist music teachers and that the tool that the education department uses to make that determination is essentially the number of job ads being
listed and filled. I indicated to them that I thought a lot of country schools essentially make a decision not to have music because they think it is going to be very difficult to engage a specialist music teacher. That in itself is an ever-evolving thing where music and the arts do not necessarily get a look in because of the issue of critical mass, but also because you have to start somewhere, and we are talking about the higher end of VCE music in this case. I just ask you to make a comment on that.

**Dr HOWES** — One comment I would make first up is that it is worth interrogating this data reasonably closely, because on one level it is not as gloomy as it looks. The eastern metropolitan region clearly has more participation than any other region, but the numbers there have fallen slightly and the north has actually slightly increased. There is obviously still a substantial gap in terms of the total numbers but the trend numbers present a more complex picture.

**Ms CHAMPION** — You are right that it is an evolving situation and when you look at the actual numbers of schools in each region there are obviously considerably more in the eastern region, but it is the trends that are interesting here, and looking at individual school decisions is a way to unpack this data. For example, I know that Nhill has just appointed a music teacher and is going to be providing VCE music. I am not aware of Nhill having done that in the past 30 years.

**Dr HOWES** — The analytic that we did not get was what is the proportion of students in each region this represents. That would give the committee a more accurate read than just the total numbers, because, as Helen said, the eastern metropolitan region is the most populous region in respect of numbers. If that will be useful, we will try to get a percentage of students in each of these regions that undertake music.

**The CHAIR** — Yes, absolutely.

**Ms TIERNEY** — I just have a general follow-up question, which is an overlapping question about the devolution of decision making and schools making their own decisions about whether they advertise for a specialist music teacher or not. What leverage is there not to direct schools or anything like that? What sorts of influences can be utilised to try to encourage schools to do something, like Nhill has just done, to really show that it can be done, particularly in areas where traditionally it is not seriously considered?

**Ms CHAMPION** — David mentioned before the opportunities of benchmarking provided by an exercise such as national curriculum. Implementation of curriculum change also provides the sorts of opportunities you are speaking about. It gives an opportunity for advice to go out. You can use models — ‘You can do it this way’ — and the practice in providing general advice, because VCAA provides quite general advice that can then be tailored by the sectors according to their policies and needs and so on. We look to models — in a sense can-do models — where you might have a combination of the specialist teacher with classroom work in the primary schools working with partner organisations who are able to provide expertise of an ongoing nature. One of the things that is becoming clear from general research about teaching and learning is the ongoing nature, and that fly-in fly-out does not work in expert teacher provision, so that is the sort of model that we look to.

**Dr HOWES** — My view would be that as well as that it is a focus on the demand side rather than the supply side. This is very similar to the issue that we have with encouraging students to keep going with languages: it is helping students understand the benefit that music will bring to them. One of the reasons we think that sometimes students stop is because music is hard work at senior secondary level; it is practice and requires discipline and effort. This is part of addressing what some would regard as a tendency for this generation to take the easy option, but probably every generation said that about the one that comes after. But we do want a way to shift the mindset of students that we think would help music enrolment, but it is the issue of languages enrolment as well. These subjects certainly require sustained effort, and students are not always immediately able to see the rewards. In our thinking about this, we want to have as much of an emphasis on the demand as the supply side, and that involves working with parents as well.

**Ms MILLER** — Stakeholders suggest there is a significant variation in the quality and extent of music education in Victorian schools. Do you agree? How can schools be supported to improve music education?
Ms CHAMPION — As we have said, yes, there are variations in provision, and schools make different decisions about what will be provided. I know there was reference in the initial submission from the government to the different ways that music might be provided in schools. Sometimes it is in quite a formal manner on the timetable, and at other times it is more in the co-curricular program. Those things do add up to difference and different perceptions and so on of what is being provided.

Dr HOWES — In our view it would be a multipronged approach — teacher education, music educators, professional development for professional learning, the current music teachers, the provision of instruments. No single factor alone will have the desired impact; it will require a multipronged approach.

Mr ELASMAR — What additional resources and support will the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority provide for schools and teachers to implement the music component of the Australian Curriculum?

Dr HOWES — We have no plans for additional support at this stage, largely because if the draft curriculum proceeds in the way that it is formed and structured at the moment, Victorian teachers will notice almost no difference; the national curriculum is very similar to the approach that is taken in the Victorian curriculum. We would not see there being a particular need for an extensive professional learning program.

The CHAIR — Some of the evidence we have seen thus far suggests that across the board in our teaching and learning in Victoria we tend to lead the way, but in music there are some jurisdictions that we could potentially learn and benefit from. In the jurisdictions of Tasmania and Queensland particularly there is more of that specialist teacher offering throughout. Do you think the national curriculum may have a bit more of an impact in terms of that jurisdiction, or are we really all about looking at Singapore and some of the international examples and aspiring to match those?

Dr HOWES — It is certainly that, but I also invite Helen to comment on this. One of the questions is how you analyse the effectiveness of each approach. If we took as a measure the participation enrolments at senior secondary, especially when compared to New South Wales, we actually stack up pretty well.

Ms CHAMPION — Yes. Again it comes down to quite broad policy decisions about provision and specialist teachers that are not a matter for the curriculum assessment authority or the sectors. In benchmarking and being aware of what is going on interstate, there is the scope of the music curriculum, as we mentioned before. An inclusive curriculum allows schools to meet local needs for the students to make music in a range of styles and using a range of music-making traditions. I think Victoria is acknowledged for doing that particularly well, and certainly stacks up very well against other curricula, such as those of Singapore and Finland. I am not sure if you have had a chance to read Finland’s quite short curriculum, but it makes very specific reference to starting music at the same point that you would start language and so on, from the student’s own self. That is certainly very important.

The notion of what constitutes specialist music teaching is a very big point for discussion. Is this about a program that allows students to develop their creativity — to compose, to improvise and so on? Is it about a singing training program? Of course the curriculum requires both of those things — a broadly based music education that allows this throughway into the wide range of senior secondary offerings, but it is recognised that you need to start with student-centred learning, and certainly VELS is about that. The students need to be aware of their own ability as music makers, to take responsibility as music makers both for the quality of their performance but also to create music, to be able to respond to a wide range of music and for that to inform their own music making. When David mentions that the Australian Curriculum drafts are along that nature, that is because that is the benchmark. If you look at Ontario, Singapore and Finland, that is the way of their trends in music education.

Mr CRISP — I am interested in how music technology is currently being used in schools and what are some of the challenges that students and teachers face in integrating music technology into the music curriculum?
Ms CHAMPION — In quite diverse ways — very directly in terms of supporting students to compose and to record their music ideas and develop that work. It has been used extensively in some places in instrumental music teaching. There are so many apps and programs and so on where you can, for example, record something that is happening in the lesson, analyse it down to wave form and so on, which tells you a lot about tone production in the instrument — very technical matters. The student can take that, and it can be stored in many ways. They can go home and practise from that information, so it really is supporting excellent teaching and the availability of music.

You can look at how a performer performs, and you can access music from a very wide range. It is quite different to 30 years ago when your ability to use a piece of music in the classroom was about whether you could actually get hold of the cassette to use. Things have come a long way, and it is a very useful and highly regarded tool that is changing every day in how it can be used. But it is being used extensively.

Mr CRISP — Challenges for schools?

Dr HOWES — Just on one challenge, and then Helen might want to comment on this, and we have had discussions about this. One of the promises of interactive digital media was that students could develop much more self-paced learning programs, but we are a little sceptical about the efficacy of those. Our view would be that the developments in interactive digital media offer huge possibilities for enriching the program but in music in particular they do not replace the need for a teacher.

Ms CHAMPION — Absolutely. If you look at page 7 of the data, you can see the list of popular instruments — voice, contemporary and popular; guitar, contemporary and popular; and drum kit are three of the five most popular. They are the ones where the digital revolution has really provided a lot and just awareness of what contemporary vocal style is and so on. But the experience is that a teacher, face to face — because it is a physicality of singing — is still very important, and that is the same with every instrument. It is particularly true of voice that the one-to-one relationship with a singing teacher is absolutely crucial because there are matters of physicality that make it a very personal relationship. Certainly the advice is that YouTube makes a great support teacher but it is not a replacement teacher.

Dr HOWES — And that is how we would respond to your question about the challenges. We do not think there are now many restrictions in terms of access to the apps and to the digital tools that are available; it is more how to support schools in embedding these into an appropriate technology and to ensure that they are not seen as an alternative to the provision of face-to-face teaching. We think that is the greatest challenge.

The CHAIR — Just extending on from that, and we mentioned the shortage of specialist teachers, particularly in regions, the ability to be able to put a specialist teacher in a collaborative learning environment online — —

Ms CHAMPION — That is happening.

The CHAIR — That is happening at the moment?

Ms CHAMPION — Yes, there are a number of schools, I think towards the north-west of the state, that are using Polycom technologies and so on to basically videoconference lessons and so on. There are issues of course around sound and upload and download speeds and so on. The technology is not all you would really desire and again face to face is really essential. But certainly it is happening, and it is happening in other parts of Australia. There has been some work done on it.

The CHAIR — Successfully?

Ms CHAMPION — Again, it is the actual technology — the delivery. But yes, certainly the idea of teachers being able to mentor between perhaps a longer face-to-face lesson gap than you would really want. But it is supportive, and it can only get better as issues of the actual technology are resolved.
Dr HOWES — Unless we have misinterpreted the question we would not regard that as being in the suite of tools. We regard the technology question as the apps — —

The CHAIR — Yes.

Dr HOWES — Especially now the national broadband is here. Bandwidth access means that the teacher can set up the camera and say, ‘I really want to look at your fingers closely to try to see the pressure and all of that’. Okay, you do not have the tactile, but the evidence would be that it is not a bad alternative.

Ms CHAMPION — Certainly if you look online, you can find universities internationally where students are participating in masterclasses. One of our reviewers recently completed a jazz course online through Berkeley. He was in his lounge room in Rowville, and the teacher was at the site. It can be done.

The CHAIR — Okay, good.

Ms MILLER — How does AusVELS envisage that schools will balance the delivery of music with the other art forms such as dance, drama and the visual arts?

Ms CHAMPION — That really goes back to our reply to a very early question this morning about the advice that is in the curriculum at the moment about provision. It is going to be a matter for the sectors.

Mr ELASMAR — How does the curriculum enable schools to incorporate Indigenous and multicultural perspectives into the music program?

Ms CHAMPION — As we mentioned before, VELS — the curriculum for Foundation to Year 10 — is written in a style-neutral manner. There are no music styles provided, and schools are able to use any music. It refers to music from a wide range of times, places and cultures, so it is all available. VCE is set up so we can find a way for a student to use any instrument they wish and we have units available to support them. One of the reasons for introducing music investigation into the suite of units for VCE was to provide additional support for students wanting to use a traditional instrument. We have not had anybody apply to use an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander instrument such as a didgeridoo in VCE, but we have talked about it and we know it would work. We are just waiting for an application. But the rest of it, from Foundation to Year 10, you could use traditional and contemporary Aboriginal music as a basis for the delivery of the curriculum.

Dr HOWES — Can I just come back to that question, because it links with an earlier question that Nazih asked about support for schools. While we do not think that music teachers themselves will find much difference, one of the things that the government has asked us to do is to provide more and better support for schools in how they plan their whole curriculum. One of the advantages that the structure of VELS and now AusVELS provides potentially as a structure for the delivery of music education is that under a more rigid curriculum approach which separated out the arts disciplines they would then be treated in schools as separate disciplines. One of the advantages that we want to provide schools with — and we have not done it especially well and we would like to do it better — is to say, ‘How can you combine or integrate the teaching of music with the teaching of dance and drama?’ in particular, because while they are obviously separate disciplines, the potential for the combination of them is huge. Schools will often say, ‘We do not have the time to timetable music and dance and drama’. You do not have to — you can combine them in a pretty rigorous way.

The other thing we want to do is to take that a little further from the Arts and in both the primary and secondary sectors talk about, ‘When you are doing the history curriculum, where is the inclusion of the music of the time and the place that you are looking at?’ and being much more intentional about using every opportunity in the curriculum to deliver.

Ms MILLER — On that, do you think that the teachers at this point do not necessarily have the right tools to integrate that?
Dr HOWES — I think we could have given better support on that.

The CHAIR — And further to that — expertise in terms of being able to do that? Do we have the expertise in the classrooms at the moment?

Dr HOWES — My judgement would be that the issue is latent but that people still think that they have to treat the subject separately. It is a mindset. The mindset is probably the bigger hurdle than the expertise.

Ms CHAMPION — I think so, because part of the structuring of the integration is understanding what is meant by integration — understanding that it is not fixing pieces so nothing is taught and followed through on properly or sequentially but that you need to make decisions about the weighting of any particular learning stream in the pathway.

In implementation advice, if we are looking at music, dance and drama together as performing arts, it is possible to show models where because of resources a particular school might say, ‘We have a specialist music teacher, and they can lead this process. We can offer support from the classroom teachers to use aspects of drama, and for a whole-school program the school might come together in a combined performance, and then we can look at some of the resources offered by, for example, the Australian Ballet to put in the dance component and to look at it separately’. When you look at the draft Australian Curriculum for the Arts, there are commonalities. Even though each is being written as a separate and distinct subject, there are some common matters, so that sort of advice can be developed.

Dr HOWES — We think the advice we have provided to schools has been lacking in this respect because there has been an emphasis on school-based decision making. It is on our work plan this year to provide much stronger exemplars, which will not be imposed on schools but which schools will be able to access, that will give a level of support for integrating aspects of the Arts as well as the rest of the curriculum in a structured and intentional rather than an ad hoc way.

Ms MILLER — So that would be your ultimate goal?

Dr HOWES — This year our intent is to publish those as a resource for schools. It is on our work plan.

Ms TIERNEY — Regarding music education and the primary sector, do you have any comments to make in relation to the adequacy or otherwise of resources for classroom primary school teachers?

Ms CHAMPION — We do not, because we do not have data about the extent. I can find music programs quite readily in a large variety of styles. I am aware of many longstanding ones. There are always new ones coming on board and so on. However, in terms of giving a detailed answer, we just do not have that data.

The CHAIR — It seems already this morning that there is a gap in that we do not have data on what is happening in our primary schools. Would you consider that to be an important area where we need to get a better handle on what is happening, in contrast to what we are finding in secondary schools?

Dr HOWES — Yes, that would be consistent with our view, and it links again with this development of whole-school curriculum plans. The department, under the direction of the minister, is moving to require schools to be more accountable in relation to their curriculum plan and to have that publicised, and that will then give much greater capacity to identify how much music and the rest of the arts are included in the curriculum.

The CHAIR — I have a couple of other questions. Firstly, in terms of the figures that you presented today, do we have any way of understanding or knowing what percentage of kids may take up VCE music who have not done music in earlier years or may have done music outside of school?

Ms CHAMPION — No, and that data cannot be collected because VCE policy is that units 1, 2 and 3 are in fact open to anybody. The requirement is that you must do unit 3 before you do unit 4. There is anecdotal evidence that I am sure you will hear from other people that it is quite varied around just how a
school, particularly a 7–10, structures its music program. There is the formal curriculum and informal curriculum that a student may have been learning in the school, and the school may have known all about an instrument outside, but for various reasons the student may not have participated in elective programs in Years 9 and 10. They may have been in a co-curricula program, and then they will reappear in the numbers when they enrol in unit 1 VCE or in fact might go straight to unit 3, depending on their standard.

**The CHAIR** — This is a more general question. If you discovered a magic pot of money that was available to invest in schools to enhance music programs, what would you spend it on that you think would get the best return?

**Ms CHAMPION** — With the models that David has spoken of, there are obviously various levels at which you could resource those, so some money could go there. Following through on the research tells us about professional learning and being able to build the community of practice amongst music teachers to build awareness not just of the skill sets required but of how you can use technology and how you can embed in a meaningful way learning about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music or the music of Asia.

It also shows how you can ensure that it is broadly based music education, rather than specific training, which makes sense of the global aims of the curriculum about 21st century citizenship and participation, sustainability, practice and so on in terms of music. Then we will have students who are not only informed listeners and consumers of music but, in their chosen field of music practice, have the capacity to continue to learn their instrument even after they finish with a music teacher who was provided through the school or by their parents.

Students are able to take advantage of the technology to be a composer, and there is a vast online community of composers. Just looking at the debates around the music industry and the number of performers who are self-publishing and so on, there is a role for school music education to prepare and make students aware of their opportunities in all of that.

**Dr HOWES** — We would also be strong advocates — and this brings us back to the question about the use of digital technology — of the supply of instrumental music teachers, especially those who are equipped and trained to deliver on a hub-and-spoke model. There would be an investment in the digital delivery of those models of direct instruction, but also ensuring the supply of instrumental music teachers would be high on our list.

**Ms CHAMPION** — Also high on our list would be capacity building amongst them to move beyond some of the traditional methods and to look again at the music that the students are interested in but also at the music that is representative of the community. Then it is not a decision between art music and popular music but it actually represents what I think is generally acknowledged in Victoria — that those two exist and interplay in a dynamic manner and that there is no ‘this is the one; that is not the one’. The curriculum is actually taking a sounding of the community’s views on this matter — that all music can have value but that there are good and bad practitioners within all styles.

**Dr HOWES** — We are especially interested in this because we are expanding the number of VCE studies that are targeted at high-performing students. Higher education studies will be developed and co-constructed by us and Melbourne and Monash universities, and the key issue there is making sure that they are available to every student in the state through digitally enabled technology. We would like that to be able to include the provision of music so that learning these individual instruments can be delivered to a kid in Swan Hill who has a particular interest.

**The CHAIR** — Is there anything we have not covered this morning that you want to finally wrap up with?

**Dr HOWES** — No, but we will table a copy of the curriculum. We will inform you if it is going to be a difficulty, but otherwise we will supply you as quickly as we can with a breakdown of the regional figures to indicate a percentage of the students.
The CHAIR — I have one quick thing to finish with. What do you think the emergence of popular programs on television like *The Voice* and others has done for encouraging kids to pursue music?

Ms CHAMPION — I refer you to page 7, which shows 397 contemporary singers at unit 4. There is a definite impact, and it is not just in music. We have seen a range of dance styles change with the plethora of dance programs and so on, and I am sure that some of the drama-related ones have a definite impact on the drama and theatre studies solos that you see in a given year.

Dr HOWES — If you have a look at that data, it is hard to work out what other variable there would have been between 2010 and 2011 that produced such a spike.

The CHAIR — Get on board with *The Voice*.

Ms CHAMPION — That is the one. On the other hand, perhaps you should also take advantage of going to Top Acts or something and hear what we are talking about in terms of the quality and those students who not only had access to the possibilities on a television program but were all taught by expert teachers to achieve at the highest level.

The CHAIR — Thank you very much for coming in this morning. We will be in touch on some of those other elements of gathering some more evidence.

Witnesses withdrew.