CORRECTED VERSION

EDUCATION AND TRAINING COMMITTEE

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

Melbourne — 6 May 2013

Members

Mr P. Crisp                     Mr D. Southwick
Mr N. Elasmar                   Ms G. Tierney
Ms E. Miller

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Witnesses

Marlee-Alice, Year 11 student, Princes Hill Secondary College and Member, VicSRC Executive,
Nico and Ivy, Year 11 students, Princes Hill Secondary College;
Michael, Year 11, Narre Warren South P–12 College;
Chris and Liam, Year 11 students, Ringwood Secondary College;
Luke and Joel, Year 12 students, Balwyn High School;
Chelsea, Year 12 student, and Anthony, Year 11 student, Hoppers Crossing Secondary College;
Subi, Year 11 student, and Flora, Year 12 student, Nossal High School; and
Grace, Year 9, Koonung Secondary College.
The CHAIR — I firstly want to thank you all for coming out today to appear before the parliamentary committee. Is this the first time of doing something like this for you all? Excellent. Hopefully you enjoy the experience and do not look at it as too daunting. It is very much just a discussion from our perspective to find out a bit more about what you are doing in your schools with music and how we can ensure that there are more programs available for schools at both the primary and secondary level. I will firstly thank Kate Walsh, the Victorian SRC representative, for organising all this and getting you along here today.

I need to point out a couple of things to you. Firstly this is a parliamentary inquiry, and these little things in front of you are not to sing into. Although if you wish to do that at any point, feel free. But they are just for recording the information that you give today by Hansard. All of the information will be recorded, and there will be a transcript. You will only be referred to by your first names in the transcript. We do not expect you to answer every question we ask, but if you would like to make a contribution, make a signal of hands. If you want to speak, Michael, just move the microphone towards you and give us your first name before you answer so we can gather that information through Hansard.

The second thing I need to point out is the official part, which is that the information you give is covered by what we call parliamentary privilege, which is the privilege afforded to members of Parliament. That means that we will not be suing you, and your school will not be suing you, for information that you might be providing today. That is the same privilege afforded to members of Parliament, but it only applies to what is said in the hearing itself. As I say, there are a number of questions we are going to ask of you. You do not have to answer every one them, but if you feel like you wish to contribute, please do.

I will start by asking the first question, and this one I am going to ask of all of you. It will be an opportunity for you to introduce who you are, what year level you are in, what involvement in music you have at your school and what sort of music programs are on offer at your school. For those learning an instrument: what age did you learn, and why did you choose your instrument? So there will be a bit about what programs are currently offered at your school, what you study, what instrument you have chosen and why.

Nico, we might start with you.

NICO — Nico, Year 11, units 1 and 2 VCE music performance. I have been playing guitar for four years now. The reason I chose is it that I think guitar is a very versatile instrument, along with others; and I think it is an instrument that is easily accessible by lots of people. I have travelled quite a bit, and I find that at lots of places I have been to, like Papua New Guinea, everyone there loves music, and the fact that you can bring a guitar and people there can learn it very easily. That is the main reason I learn it.

The CHAIR — What age?

NICO — Sixteen.

The CHAIR — At what age did you start learning the guitar?

NICO — At what age did I start learning it? Twelve, or something like that, but I was more self-taught from 11 onwards.

The CHAIR — The name of your school?

NICO — Princes Hill Secondary College.

MARLEE-ALICE — I am Marlee. I am from Princes Hill Secondary College. I am 17 and I am in Year 11. I started playing music when — that is a hard; I started learning how to play music properly when I was about 13 or 14. I started learning music because I moved inner city to Princes Hill, where music is a really big thing. When you are involved with the music department you really feel involved in the school. Since I started that I have been singing, I have learnt ukulele, guitar and trumpet, and plus that I have also learnt cello because of relative stuff, and pretty much all brass that I can get my hands on.
The CHAIR — Is there a particular favourite?

MARLEE-ALICE — I love ukulele because it is very transportable and I can share music with a lot of people, and it is quirky and different and it makes me happy.

The CHAIR — Great. Did they have a music program in your primary school, to your knowledge?

MARLEE-ALICE — No. I did at one of my schools, but I did not learn any music in primary school.

The CHAIR — Nico, what about yourself? Did you have any music program at your primary school?

NICO — Yes, I went to Collingwood College and I was in the Steiner stream and you majored in either viola, violin or cello, and I played cello for three years there.

MICHAEL — Michelle. I am currently studying at Narre Warren South P–12 College. What instruments do I play? I used to play the saxophone for about two years before I decided I was not that much into jazz anymore. Now that I am, I want to play it again, but I have sold my instrument. I have been playing guitar since I can remember. I think when I was five years old my dad chucked a guitar into my hands and I was ripping the strings apart, ripping them up, tearing them, having to buy my own strings and everything. I started properly learning how to play the guitar at 10. I have been playing it properly since I was 11. I have also played the ukulele. It is a cultural thing. We have a ukulele everywhere and we just play the ukulele whenever we can. At my school I am doing a VET course, which is tech production certificate III, which involves a lot of music. Basically I am the sound guy. I am the sound engineer, I am the audio technician, I am the guy that repairs broken equipment, like microphones or any sort of thing like that, and sets up equipment for gigs. I am also learning how to manage a stage, all that kind of stuff, so it is more the technical side of music. I used to be in the VCE music class before I went into VCAL, but other than that I have been involved in music almost all my life.

The CHAIR — Excellent.

CHRIS — I am Chris and I am from Ringwood Secondary College. I started learning French horn in Year 7, and then in Year 8 I picked up trumpet as well. I have stuck with both ever since, and I play classical French horn and jazz trumpet. In our school the music program is a very big thing. You know everyone in it, you are friends with everyone and you make a lot of new friends with everyone around school, pretty much. It is like a little family. We get to go around a lot of places. We went to Mount Gambier just this weekend — really good fun. Am I missing anything?

The CHAIR — What first inspired you to take up learning music?

CHRIS — In Year 7 we sort of have a bit of a concert from the seniors. It is promoted and we sort of thought, ‘Will we try it?’. There is actually a scholarship I got for the French horn.

The CHAIR — Did you have any primary school programs on offer?

CHRIS — We had classroom music, but it was not anything big.

The CHAIR — Good; thanks.

LIAM — Hi, I am Liam, I am from Ringwood Secondary College and I am in Year 11. I first started learning the piano when I was in Year 1 at my primary school. Although we did not really have a music program as such, we did do classroom music. However, my piano lessons were private music lessons but they were run through the school. I continue playing piano. In Year 7 when I went to Ringwood I decided to learn the trumpet and I have been playing that ever since. It is probably the most enjoyable thing I do.
Through the school we get to travel to a lot of places, as Chris said. This weekend we performed on a national level at Mount Gambier's Generations in Jazz. It is great fun. Is there any other thing?

The CHAIR — What first got you interested in learning music?

LIAM — I was first interested in learning music through my family. My dad used to play guitar and I always kind of grew up with it around me. I also had a real interest in learning piano from a young age because at our assemblies we used to have the national anthem played on the piano, and I always wanted to play that and then that kind of pushed me to try. Ever since then I have just loved it.

The CHAIR — Was there anything much offered at primary school for you?

LIAM — There were music classes and we did have productions and things, but there was no music program.

JOEL — I am Joel from Balwyn High School in Year 12. I did units 3 and 4 in music investigation last year and I have been doing music performance this year. I started learning the piano when I was about five — my mum being a piano teacher, a musician herself. I stopped the piano when I was about eight and then started singing in a children’s choir, and then I picked up the trumpet when I was about 11 because my mum thought I would be good at it. Since then playing trumpet has probably become the main thing in life that I enjoy, and I also play the bass guitar and the guitar which I have picked up in high school since then. At school I would say we are predominantly a classical school and I am a classical player myself, but we can play in lots of styles and we have great opportunities at Balwyn High School for that kind of thing.

The CHAIR — Was your inspiration to get involved in music in the first place from family?

JOEL — Yes, probably. I had a couple of years of my mum pushing me to get really stuck into music and since then it has become a great passion for me; so yes, it is probably my family.

The CHAIR — Did they play?

JOEL — My family?

The CHAIR — Yes.

JOEL — Yes, my mum is a musician and my dad has always played the guitar, so I have always been around music.

The CHAIR — Great; thank you.

LUKE — I am Luke, I am 18 and in Year 12 at Balwyn High School as well. I have been playing drums since I was, like, a baby. Our uncle just gave us this drum kit and my mum was also a music teacher, like Joel’s, and majored in percussion. So I have been around hitting stuff from saucepans to drum kits. I was playing in church when I was seven years old and started learning properly when I was 13. Then I also had piano lessons from about the age of four, maybe five years, saxophone for a year, and guitar for a year on a scholarship from school. I have also been getting into a lot of composing as well, so not just playing but also writing and arranging. I run a band at primary school and arranged The Simpsons and Pirates of the Caribbean. It has been a passion to not only be playing music but also putting my own imprint on the music world or onto other people’s music.

The CHAIR — And at primary school did you have much on offer?

LUKE — Yes, we had a choir and the classroom music, but that dwindled because our teacher left when I was in Year 2. Another one came in a year later but only stayed for a couple of years.

SUBI — I am Subi from Nossal High School. I am in Year 11, and I am one of the music captains at school. I do vocal lessons and I am also part of a band — a choir kind of band — at school. I did flute
lessons from Years 5 to 8. I think the thing that got me into music, and singing now, is that apart from the
fact that my family sing, in primary school they encouraged us to be part of a choir. The music program
was compulsory for a few years, which got me into flute and then got me thinking that I was really into
music. Both my family and school made me think I could do some lessons. I do Indian singing out of
school and at school I do western contemporary.

FLORA — I am Flora from Nossal High School. I am in Year 12, and I am also a music captain. I first
got into music when I was three and a half years when I was antique shopping with my mum. I just pointed
at a piano and said, ‘How cool would it be to have one of those in the house?’. Surprise, surprise, two
weeks later it showed up in my house!

Mr ELASMAR — You had no choice, no option.

FLORA — From three and a half to about four and a half I just banged around on the keys every now
and again, but when I was four and a half my parents got a piano teacher in. I have been with him since I
was four and a half. I have been playing piano for 14 years now. I have my AMus in piano, my diploma
and stuff. I did cello for six years as well, from about Year 4 to Year 10, and then I dropped it because I
needed to focus on my VCE stuff. From about Year 7 to 8 I also picked up percussion and guitar, but I had
to drop them because they interfered with my piano as well. Over my life my main focus musically has
been piano. I finished music VCE 3–4 performance last year. I got an all right score for that, I think; there
was always going to be crazy Asian competition, I guess, in piano.

I went to three primary schools. I cannot remember the first two very clearly, but I remember they did have
some sort of music program. The third one was a private school, and they had mandatory music lessons in
a string program for the primary school. I did cello then, and I continued it after I left that school. In the
senior school there are wind instruments to pick from as well.

The CHAIR — That is great, thank you.

GRACE — My name is Grace. I am in Year 9 and I am 14. I play a few instruments. My main
instrument would be guitar, but I play guitar, piano, violin, saxophone, clarinet and drums.

The CHAIR — I am tired!

GRACE — I also sing. I taught myself all the instruments, but I picked up my first instrument, the
guitar, when I was 10, and that is because of a traumatic experience. Since then I have had lessons in
Year 8. To be honest, my school does not have a very good music program. There are music classes,
which are reasonable, but the private lessons are really bad. We have one teacher who teaches four
students at a time, which does not really give that one-on-one thing. You really need to learn it and pick it
up.

The CHAIR — And primary school? Was there much on offer at primary school?

GRACE — I went to two primary schools. My first primary school was a Catholic primary school, and
it did not have any music program to it, but my second primary school had quite a strong musical
education.

The CHAIR — Where are you now?

GRACE — I am at Koonung Secondary College.

The CHAIR — And you are learning music?

GRACE — No. I decided to drop the private lessons with guitar because I find that I can teach myself a
lot better than what I was getting taught.

The CHAIR — Okay, great. Thanks for that.
ANTHONY — I am Anthony. I am in Year 11 at Hoppers Crossing Secondary College. I am 16. I take Year 12 music performance, units 3 and 4. I do not play 40 instruments. I play drums. I started playing drums when I was in Year 7, and I purely picked them because I thought that was the coolest instrument ever. It was between that and guitar, and too many people at our school were playing guitar at the time, so I decided to become a drummer. I played those for two years, and in Year 9 the Year 12 drummer dropped out of the band, so they came and selected me, as a Year 9, to play with the Year 12s, and that was probably one of the coolest things ever. Ever since Year 9 I have been playing in the Year 12 band at the end of year performance — the exam — and that has kept me going. Now I am in Year 11, taking Year 12, so this is the first time I am actually going to get assessed for a Year 12 performance, which is pretty cool. Yes, that is what I do.

The CHAIR — Primary school?

ANTHONY — I went to primary school in Yarraville, and the only instrument they offered was piano. I played that for two years, but it was just that my love of music kept me going.

The CHAIR — Thank you.

CHELSEA — I am Chelsea. I am in Year 12, and I am 17, at Hoppers Crossing Secondary College. I did keyboard lessons in primary school until about Year 3, when we had the option to pick up other instruments. I did clarinet from Year 3 until about Year 9, when I swapped over to bass guitar for VCE.

The CHAIR — Primary school?

CHELSEA — Yes, my primary school did have a really decent music department. They have piano lessons on offer through all years and choir as well. I was also in the school choir. I am doing the tech production music industry VET course, which has led me to do volunteer work with the FReeZA program and run shows.

The CHAIR — What prompted you to get involved in music in the first place?

CHELSEA — My parents play a little bit — not very well. I remember seeing a lady playing a violin on TV when I was maybe three years old, and I was like, ‘I want to do that’. I never learnt violin, but I wanted to do it.

The CHAIR — Fantastic. I just have one more question, and I will hand over to Gayle. Most of you mentioned that you had parents who had some form of influence in what you do. Is there anyone here who has parents who have no musical background whatsoever and had no influence whatsoever? If we can just elaborate from you four in terms of what you think was that prompt to get you into music.

MARLEE-ALICE — My family sing and stuff, but they are not very good at it at all, so I started playing because it made me happy. It made me feel involved with the school, and then I realised I was kind of good at it, and the more I learnt about it the more I wanted to do it. It made feel really happy, and it has given me an outlet for everything that I have experienced since I started.

CHRIS — It is sort of true. My parents both played. My dad played trumpet and my mum played saxophone, but it was in the first three years of their secondary school, and that was back in England. That was just sort of what they did at the time; it was not anything big, so they would not have gotten very far, and they dropped it and have not done anything since.

FLORA — My dad played violin for about three years when he was a kid, but other than that he did not do much at all, and my mum has no experience musically. When I started playing the piano — it turns out I was born with perfect pitch, so when I picked it up it was just much easier for me than it would be for another four-year-old, I guess. When I realised I was all right at piano and I was actually pretty good, I felt kind of proud, and that prompted me to keep going with it.

The CHAIR — Yes, okay. Great. Anthony.
ANTHONY — I come from a European background, so, for every single party and family gathering, music is a massive thing. My parents have never discouraged me from anything; they always push me to do anything. They have never played anything, but, as I say, music is a big part. So when I turned around and said, ‘Hey, Mum, want to buy me a $1000 drum kit?’, she said yes, which has kept me going. That is how I got into it.

The CHAIR — Good.

Ms TIERNEY — All right. Two questions: how do you think studying music has benefited you? And the second question is: what extent or role does music play in your life overall? Who would like to go first?

SUBI — Music has benefited me a lot recently because the school I go to is very academically focused, so it sometimes gets very stressful, and you are focusing a lot on just getting your work done. In that sense, music has always been like a form for me to vent — you know, go and do something other than work. It is also something that I choose to express myself with. What was the second question, sorry?

Ms TIERNEY — The role music plays in your life generally.

SUBI — Yes. It is always to something other than work for me to do and something I really enjoy, and it makes me feel happy doing it.

Ms TIERNEY — Okay, thank you. Marlee, you had your hand up.

MARLEE-ALICE — I do not know if any of you follow anything that was going on with beyondblue recently, but I am part of their campaign because I have suffered from depression and anxiety. I feel that music really got me through a lot of it because it gave me a healthier outlet to what I was feeling. So it is an outlet for me; it lets me express myself without hurting anyone, which is something really important. Studying music has gotten me a lot more engaged in my school. I did not have any friends before I started playing music, and music has really prompted me to start making friends, and it has made me realise that I can relate to people my own age and can have friends.

The CHAIR — Excellent.

CHELSEA — I know, especially in Year 8, I was not particularly motivated to do anything or go to school. I kind of just wanted to sit at home and talk to people on MySpace, but I would always go to school if I had music that day. So I guess it kind of kept me in school, and that is definitely a good thing.

GRACE — Going on from what Subi said, the self-expression — most people do not have any other way that they can express themselves, and when they sit themselves down and put their headphones on, that is where it takes them to a place where they can just relax.

LIAM — Through learning music, especially at the high school level and studying it so much, you get to meet a lot of people you would not usually interact with. I know with my school, Ringwood, we compete in several eisteddfods and competitions throughout Victoria and other states, and you get to interact with other musicians and musicians that you can learn a lot from. It is a great experience to always make new friends whenever you compete. Although we are competing against each other, you often make a lot of friendships and relationships throughout the music experience.

With my life as such, music has always been something that I could just do — that no-one had to tell me that I had to do and that no one told me I was doing wrong, although with technique and practical studies, for example, like your technical work and everything, obviously people are going to say it has to be correct or incorrect. But as for musical interpretation, it is up to the person. So in a way, music is structured but also free form. It is a bit different from other studies that we take at school. For example, with maths everything has to be to a certain standard or practice. With music you kind of have a bit more of a personal outlook on it.
FLORA — I started music when I was really little, and it helped my brain develop so I could become more intelligent in later life. It has been proven that children who are involved in music have higher IQs when they are older. I seriously doubt that I would be at a selective entry school if it were not for my musical background. Going to what Marlee said, I use music as an outlet for when I am feeling really bad, expressing myself through my keys or my strings or whatever. It is a way to get your feelings out without having to do something stupid to yourself or others around you. It was never really work for me, even though I took it as a subject. There was theory — homework and stuff — but it all contributed to something that was bigger. Music is a very specific but broad branch of knowledge. Knowledge for knowledge’s sake is something very valuable in life, no matter where you are or what your education level is. Knowledge for knowledge’s sake is a good thing.

ANTHONY — Regarding the role that music has played in my life, it has actually made me a better learner. I am always pushing myself to play different styles and genres. When you are playing something completely new and you do not get it, you get really frustrated. It does not matter how many times you play it or how fast you play it, it is always going to be wrong. I break it down and I feel that if I can overcome this crazy section in a song, then I can overcome something else just by breaking down and taking some time to think about the things that I am doing. Plus music has benefited me in that Chelsea and I got to perform in our Year 12 band at a new Coles, and the lady gave us free cookies. That is probably one of my highlights.

Mr ELASMAR — Thank you very much for coming. My daughter plays the piano. I used to sit outside and listen to her. My question is: how much practice and work do you put in to learn your musical instruments?

CHRIS — It was always encouraged that you practise at least once a night. To be perfectly honest, until after Year 8 I never really practised at all. When I started trumpet and got really involved with the music program I started to absolutely love the instrument and then I practised because I wanted to, not because I had to. I know you can do different stuff with different instruments, but with the trumpet you can get a mute so it makes it a bit more tolerable for the neighbours and parents. So I practise pretty much every day now just because I want to as opposed to because I have to.

JOEL — After Year 9 I got more involved in orchestras for trumpet, and now I practise whenever I can — and it is not because I have to. At lunchtimes or after school I get home and pick up the trumpet because it is so much fun. When you see the benefits of practising in your playing, it is the most rewarding thing. I probably practise trumpet for two to three hours a day. With guitar and other instruments it is more an occasional thing. I spend most of my free time and my weekends at orchestra rehearsals.

LIAM — With playing trumpet I always used to practise as everyone around you will tell you practising will get you better. Until about Year 8 or 9, whenever I practised at home I was not allowed to practise in the house. I had to practise outside in the garage. That motivated me to be able to practise inside. So I used to start practising a lot more, and when I was finally deemed to be allowed by my parents to practise inside I started practising a lot more. I practised the trumpet two to three hours a day, every day, not including band rehearsals. I recently got a keyboard in my room, so I practise piano any time I want. We have a piano in our lounge room. My brothers always used to get annoyed because it is near our television, and I always used to play when they wanted to watch TV. I never really had time to practise, even though I wanted to. So with the keyboard in my room I can practice any time I wish — late at night, anything. Going on from what Joel and Chris said, when you get to a certain level practising is not a chore — you just do it.

MICHAEL — I do not say I practise; I say I play. I always play an instrument, whether I am at school or at home. I always have something in my hands. I will either be tapping on the table or tapping my feet in class and making a beat in my head on the drums. Whenever I am just sitting in class and there is nothing better to do I will practise the guitar in my head. Okay; I did say ‘practise’. When I am at home I do practise the guitar and any instrument I can find in the house, if it is not being used by my brother. It is just there and it is accessible to me. I can just pick it up, play it, practise a song, learn a new song if I want to.
and release some tension that I have from school — some stress — and it is just getting away from everything. To play the guitar, to get to a pretty good level of proficiency, I would say I practise about five hours from when I get home to about when the sun goes down. I go out to the park nearby and just play my guitar and get compliments from people walking past. That is like an ego boost for me because I am not very good at school. Well, I am school captain, so I am good at school. But I don’t feel like I am being the best I can be, and getting a compliment from a random stranger is like, ‘Hey, someone recognised me for something that I am doing well. Cool, I’ll keep practising and see if I can fish for more’.

**The CHAIR** — You will have to stick your hat out next time!

**Mr ELASMAR** — There is also *The Voice*.

**Mr CRISP** — I would like to get some views on the delivery of classroom music, how well you think music is taught as a subject at school and what you would do to improve that.

**GRACE** — This is just in my opinion. I am not sure if any of you have different opinions. At my school I find it really hard to learn music because we have some students in our class who think music is just a bludge subject and who take advantage of the fact that they can get easy scores. When you have a small amount of students in that class who really have a passion for music and the other 90% of them are just in there bashing the drums and not paying attention to what they are doing, it is really hard to have that desire to continue what you are doing. If I had the choice to make the music at my school better, I would probably section off the people who really have that passion. I would maybe put them in a high-achievers music group and separate them from the group of students who like music but who are not that interested in it.

**CHELSEA** — My experience is definitely similar to Grace’s. I am really feeling it now in Year 12. I feel like I have wasted the past few years. With the theoretical stuff we are doing we are rehashing basics because people are picking it up as a bludge subject. I also know students at my school who have not been able to do music when they have legitimately been interested in it because a whole heap of people have picked it as a bludge subject and we only have so many spots in a class. They cannot do it because people are bludging and picking it. There is also a problem at our school with classrooms. Half of our music classes are not taught in the music buildings, so that makes it really hard for the teachers to deliver the content when all they have got is a whiteboard and some chairs.

**LUKE** — At Balwyn High School we have been pretty lucky with a really high proficiency and excellence level of students, especially in the senior levels. We have almost had a perfect score every year that I have been at school, and I am in Year 12 now — like in a music performance class or music styles and composition, and now music investigation.

I think the way it is taught at a senior level, a lot of it is for those who are achieving the best or the perfect scores and what not, and a lot of it is actually the student more than the teacher. From a level of excellence, to improve that teaching would be to have teachers who could enable the students to not feel held back by a class — like Grace and Chelsea were saying about other students treating it like a bludge or what not.

It has not been as much an issue for our senior performance classes; it is more in the junior level, which is going to happen with any subject that someone finds easier than someone else might find it. I think it would be more focused around enabling students to excel at their best. Say for me, I cannot do melodic dictation in music performance, because I am a drummer and that does not come naturally to me, but I sit next to the person next to me who can do it, but he cannot do the rhythmic dictation that I can do. If we are sitting in class and we just do rhythmic dictation for an hour each week, then that is not going to help me to excel at the areas that I need work on.

We have a performance class of six students, because our school is pretty lucky and they are happy to help fund that. It would be a matter of enabling the teachers and the classes to split so that the students can work to their focus, because it can be really easy to say, ‘You’re a music class, so everybody study the same thing’, but in actual fact — you have heard from most of us — everybody can play a different instrument,
so their background and their knowledge is going to be extremely different to each other. So the areas of strength are the difference between each knowledge area, which is so different, that it is not a case of learn a formula and apply the formula; it is going to be an ongoing learning thing that should be split up so that people can work to their strengths.

**MARLEE-ALICE** — I think music is very similar to a lot of subjects — this is from my experience as someone who is engaged in the class — in that if a teacher wants to teach, you can tell when a teacher is really interested in teaching. The number of teachers of music that I have met over the years — the past couple at least — that I have met have been, ‘I started teaching music because being a professional musician was not working for me and I just needed some money’, and I am finding that that is becoming a lot more of a common theme, particularly with the music teachers who are coming in. People are thinking it is easy money and that sort of thing, and they are not as interested in teaching the subject. But when you get a teacher who is, it completely changes everything.

**Ms TIERNEY** — So who is thinking about or considering a career in music? Wow! Fantastic. What, Marlee?

**MARLEE-ALICE** — A sound engineer of live music specialising in live a cappella.

**CHRIS** — I have got a lot of other areas that I could possibly go into, so it is really only a consideration. I also do a lot of lights and stuff, so possibly doing lights for bands. I am sort of enjoying it at the same time, and I have not got one particular aspect I am heading towards — I could be a musician, or I would not mind being a musician or doing this or doing that. It is quite a wide range of areas to go into.

**JOEL** — I want to be an orchestral trumpet player.

**CHELSEA** — In a perfect world I would get into education and music, but because my school is not a particularly high-achieving school in music and music courses are based on audition, it seems pretty unlikely, so probably sound engineering, because it is what I am good at.

**GRACE** — I do not know if there is a specific name for it, but event planning for gigs and stuff. I have had the opportunity to do something called FReeZA. We get the opportunity as youth to plan events. At the moment we are planning events such as Battle of the Bands and the film festival, so that is giving me a really good outlook on what it could be like in the future.

**LUKE** — I want to be a professional session musician, playing on recordings in a studio and touring with bands. Say you are a singer with a pop single, then you need a band to tour with you, I would be your band member.

**Ms TIERNEY** — Have you looked at the financial security or insecurity of your potential profession?

**CHELSEA** — I think that is part of thing that might have influenced my thought of teaching. It is something I would want to do, plus it would be stable, kind of 9 to 5. There is work there, whereas something like performing or even recording and engineering — —

It probably sounds too cynical, but if our economy goes the drain, we lose all the leisure things, like recording music and live music. Maybe I am just negative; I do not know.

**JOEL** — I think a lot of you will agree with me when I say that despite what people say about the money issue, I do not see myself doing something other than music for the rest of my life and loving it every single day.

**NICO** — I was going to add to that. I have got a very close family friend, and his father is a musician. He is in four bands, minimum, and they barely scrape through the day and put dinner on the table, so he has had to go into music education as well. He only does that part time. I asked him why. He said because he likes playing music too much. One of the things about music is that it is not a very highly paid
profession unless you are one of the lucky few, but, as you can see, we are all here and we all love it. That is one of the points for why people go into it, even if there is no money.

Ms MILLER — In relation to money, is money important to you?

CHELSEA — Food is important.

Ms MILLER — In some industries people are really financially conscious. Young people — I do not know about your experience — are working two jobs: a full-time job and then a part-time job. Hearing your passion for music, I wonder if money is important. Like Joel said, he will do it every day and the money will come kind of thing?

LIAM — In regard to money being important, of course you need to be able to provide for yourself and, looking to the future, possibly family. However, you need to be doing something that you love, that you are passionate about and that you are good at. Although I do agree that most musicians possibly do not make as much as other professions, if you do push yourself to get to an elite level, and if you are lucky enough to get into that — perhaps an orchestra or a touring band — you do have an opportunity to make substantial amounts of money. However, no-one is guaranteed that, but of course it is possible. While money is important, I do not think it is as important as following your dreams and doing what you really are passionate about.

GRACE — To be honest, looking at myself as a single without having a family behind me, I honestly would not care about the money side of it, as long as I am happy with where I am at with my music and happy to know that I may not be the richest person, but at least I am happy at where I am. That would get me through.

Ms MILLER — So following on from that, have any of you attended live musical performances with your school, like the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, and what do you see as the benefits?

FLORA — The VCE music classes are actually on that excursion right now.

Ms MILLER — Timely question.

FLORA — I went with them last year. We met at night and it was just a great experience. It was great fun. We got to learn quite a lot about orchestral instruments that we did not usually cover in class, so it was just a nice break from the typical work we have to do, like theory and aural work and stuff. I think making it fun is important because if you do not enjoy, then what is the point.

LUKE — At our school we can do a fair bit where we can. We went to a recording studio the other day as part of our performance class and recorded each other and listened to each other and attended a workshop with the sound engineer; so that is sort of it. But we also attend competitions and listen to other bands play and, like I mentioned earlier, we went to Mount Gambier yesterday, so that is Liam, Joel, Luke and I and maybe some others. There were actually about 3000 kids there watching and they had Gordon Goodwin’s Big Phat Band, which were an international, superstar, best of the jazz bands, along with many other high-end musicians. There was Megan Washington from *The voice* and James Morrison who is an Australian trumpet player and we got to watch them for three good concerts — absolutely amazing.

SUBI — I personally have not actually been taken by school to any live music concerts, but I see the benefit of it. I think, as someone who is really interested in music, that by going to these things you see the potential in the music field. Also it is fun and you get to see what you can do in it and you get even more interested in it. I think it is really beneficial.

LUKE — Our school, as part of, I think it is, Year 8 music goes to see a musical. So I went to see *Billy Elliot* when I was in Year 8. That is always really good to see, both from a music and performing arts perspective. It is learning what professional musicians can do, and it is also like a source of inspiration. My other private teacher brings me along to performances with him and at the moment I am in the process of
bringing in musicians to run master classes and whatnot with students at school, so Balwyn is pretty good at having talks from old students that have gone on to be professional. Sarah McKenzie has just gone to Berklee university in America, Dave Beck teaches at Monash and Will Hull-Brown from The Cat Empire has been doing that since he left school. It is kind of that past tradition of students that have gone on and we not only see them play at events that we go to with school but also when the school sometimes brings them in to speak with us. So there is that ongoing ‘Wow, I’m doing what this person did when he was at school; I’m getting that same opportunity’ and it is also a source of inspiration of ‘Wow, I could achieve that as well’.

**Ms MILLER** — It is good that alumni actually give back to the school that gave them the opportunity, too.

**NICO** — I would love to say yes, that we do go on excursions with our school, but it seems to me that there are a lot more excursions put into things like English or the humanities subjects. We have a half-decent music department. Our teachers have said to us that they would love to take us wherever, but they just do not have the time or the funding or the support from the school. However, they do encourage us as much as they can to go out and go see gigs and go see all those kinds of things.

**MARLEE** — A lot of those gigs that we would want to see are for over-18s as well.

**NICO** — Do you want to say that?

**The CHAIR** — Marlee, you can quickly pick that up.

**MARLEE** — I was just saying on the gigs thing, because our school is very jazz-like, a lot of the gigs are over 18 as well, so we do not get to see them.

**The CHAIR** — Good point.

**JOEL** — Despite what Luke said about our school, we do get people in and we have workshops and we have lots of opportunities like that, but personally I think the most beneficial thing, especially for my VCE music experience, was going with my family or by myself to see top acts, like seeing the MSO play and stuff. I think it is really important and should be encouraged more, especially the VCE Top Acts. You get to see the standard that is out there and what you should be aiming for. I found that really beneficial. I think my school should have done it anyway.

**The CHAIR** — We will take one more on this. While Chris is speaking I will welcome Ivy. I will ask you in a minute to tell us a little bit about where you are studying, what musical instruments you have studied, why you chose to study those instruments and what is your passion?

**CHRIS** — Just on what I said before, we also make a lot of friends in the music department and with people with similar interests, obviously in music. You also meet up with them and go to see bands that you all like, which probably would not happen without the music program. You have made that connection and you are friends for that reason, and you know you all like the same thing. We have been to see The Cat Empire as a trumpet section. We went to St Kilda for that day and things like that.

**The CHAIR** — Over to you, Ivy.

**IVY** — My name is Ivy, and I learn bass guitar at Princes Hill Secondary College. I was really inspired first by the music department at Princes Hill. Have any of you heard of the Cactus Channel?

**The CHAIR** — Tell us about it.

**IVY** — It was originally a school band at Princes Hill that has gone on to play overseas. They are in Singapore right now. They have supported The Cat Empire, which is why I brought it up.

**The CHAIR** — So they were formed at school?
IVY — Yes.

The CHAIR — And having a successful group inspired you to get involved?

IVY — Yes, they just really enjoyed it, and so they led on. They are in their second year of uni now.

The CHAIR — Can you tell us how often you practise, and what inspired you first to get involved in music? Do you have family who play, and if so, what?

IVY — I practise for about 10 hours a week. My dad Rob Craw was in a band called the Huxton Creepers in the 1980s. I am not sure if anybody has heard of them.

The CHAIR — Yes.

IVY — He taught me a lot of stuff on guitar, which then led to bass guitar, which really interests me. I really love being in the rhythm section. In my opinion it is probably the finest thing you can do — just keeping the solid beat of the band. I went to Princes Hill because of its music department really, and it is fantastic.

The CHAIR — What about at the primary school level? Was there much music programming for you at primary school, and what was it?

IVY — I went to school at Torquay. There was enough. There was not very much; we probably had one lesson a week of, maybe, guitar or the recorder. I would have appreciated more, because I really enjoy music; it is a really big passion of mine.

The CHAIR — One last question for you, and then you will have caught up to everyone else. Sorry to shine the limelight on you.

IVY — That is okay.

The CHAIR — In terms of your overall studies, what do you think music has done to benefit your overall education?

IVY — It is all about group participation. I have made a lot of friends, which contributes to other subjects, because we then go on to do study groups after school along with things like band rehearsals. It just helps ease people into high school and to fitting in. Everybody in the music department at our school is just like a big family — a big group of friends — because we all have this one, solid passion. Practising helps you to get in the mood for homework, to be honest, because you just get down and play, and it is for fun, and then you start practising what you need to practise. Then you go on to do your homework, and you are really enthusiastic about it.

The CHAIR — Excellent. Thank you, Ivy.

Mr CRISP — Does the cost of learning an instrument act as a barrier to some students, and what strategies could be put in place to address that issue?

LIAM — I definitely agree that the cost of learning an instrument could deter a lot of people. I know at our school that despite funding issues there are many scholarships available — for example, in Year 7 Chris was a scholar on the French horn. I would hope in the future, after we leave, that similar scholarships will continue to go on. I do know it is very hard for some families to offer their children extracurricular activities. At our school it is an extra cost to be involved in the music program, so it is on top of your original fees. There is also the cost of instruments. It is very expensive to get a high quality instrument and something that is going to last and conform to your needs as an instrumentalist. Certainly with younger students there is the cost of getting into schooling, and each year there are new textbooks, uniform, et cetera, so the added cost of an instrument might just be too much for the family budget. Of course with
the economy as it is, everyone is saving, and they might just not have the funds to offer their children the ability to choose an instrument.

**MARLEE-ALICE** — I come from a single-parent family, so I am on the lower socioeconomic side of things. This year because of my age I stopped getting EMA, and because of that my mum could not afford to pay for my trumpet lessons anymore. It was compulsory to get music lessons for the instrument that I was learning for VCE, so I had to drop my trumpet lessons, and I had to change all my teachers and everything to find a cheaper teacher who was not quite as good, so I could continue learning music, something compulsory for my subject.

**ANTHONY** — Our music lessons are fairly cheap. What is it, $100 a year or something?

**CHELSEA** — Yes.

**ANTHONY** — The way I look at it is that you could learn an instrument four times over or you could play a season of footy. That is the way I looked at it. Rather than playing soccer in Year 7, I decided to take up the drums and learn that just to see how I liked it. The reason I got into drums was that music was mandatory for us in Years 7 and 8, and I learnt that I could take these instruments. I think a lot more students would take guitar, drums or vocal lessons if they actually knew that they existed. I think the issue in our school is promotion of these programs.

**CHRIS** — I think promotion is a big one. I got the scholarship in Year 7 on the French horn, with no prior motivation to do music, and then that got better. I then started playing trumpet, which we paid for because I was interested in it, and last year I got a professional trumpet. That definitely would not have happened without the motivation beforehand, and that would have not have happened without the scholarship on the French horn to begin with.

**IVY** — Again with promotion, my school is very big on putting on recitals as often as possible. After each recital we see quite a big increase in people interested in music and people coming to the music department, and then more people come to the recitals. As they go to the recitals, there is usually a gold coin donation or a bake sale or something, which then gives us the funding to go on things like camp. I just came back from a camp in Mount Gambier called Generations in Jazz, and that was probably one of the most inspiring things I have ever been to in my life. We got the funding from that from getting more people interested in music and even from parents to come. So promotion is a really big part of it.

**Mr ELASMAR** — My question is about music and the curriculum. I have heard that some of you started early, some late, and some of you had a break and came back. My question is: do you think it should be mandatory for music to be taught from prep to Year 8?

**CHELSEA** — I think in primary school, yes. I think that is where the interest in music for a lot of us started. But I found especially in Years 7, 8 and 9 it was just the same thing over and over again, because people do not care, and they do not learn if they do not care and they do not listen. I was just bored in music in 7, 8 and 9, because I had heard it all a million times before, and I already knew what they were talking about. It was just annoying that people were there and they did not want to do it. I actually wanted to learn.

**Mr ELASMAR** — So what level in primary school do you believe it should start — Year 1 or 2?

**CHELSEA** — I think all through primary school it was definitely a good thing.

**ANTHONY** — I think primary schools should teach music to get kids either motivated or knowing straight out that they do not want to do it. For me, I was one of the kids that Chelsea hated — still probably am — and I did not pay much attention in Year 7 and 8. The only reason I did it was to get on the drums and play something, but then when I hit Year 10, because I took Year 11 music, I realised, wow, I actually needed to listen to this. I think if we taught it all the way through primary school, you would phase out that
immature stage of not listening in music because it is a bludge subject and people would be more interested and take it as a proper subject.

**GRACE** — I completely agree with Chelsea and Anthony. I think it should also be mandatory in high school up to maybe Year 10. When you are going through adolescence you go through experiences such as depression and all of those things. When you have music there it helps you through them. Despite what many of you might say, music puts you in a mood. If you are listening to, say, Screamo or something, it will put you in a mood where you do not want to listen to anyone and you want to ignore your parents, because that is where you want to be. If you listen to music such as Taylor Swift, you will be thinking about and crying about break-ups. If you are listening to happy music, you become happy. I think it is a big part of adolescence. When you have that music there it will either cheer you up or bring you down. I think it should be taught in high school.

**NICO** — I think music is a very important thing, especially in primary school. As I said before, I did Steiner in primary school, which is a very alternative way of learning. Instead of having music lessons, which I think is what you are trying to explain, where we sit down with four or five people, everyone in the school had to do it. There could be six people to one teacher. We did things like eurhythm. I am not sure if anyone knows what that is, but it is basically a mixture of music and movement. It all sounds very hippie — and it is, don’t get me wrong. From an outside point of view it sounds extremely stupid. I know when I was doing it I thought it was very stupid, but now looking back on that type of stuff, it really did help me out. It helped people focus on their schoolwork as well as what they were doing just then. Music is important, but I do not think it should be taught in set blocks. It should be spread out into different areas.

**JOEL** — I think it should be compulsory up until Year 8. The main problem is that I found in Year 7 no-one was really getting the full benefit of the music class, because you had the students that were way, way too advanced. The stuff that they were learning was six years ago for them, and then there were the rest of the students. As you were saying, it was not of interest to them. But in Year 8 at our school we split up the music class into the kids who did not play an instrument and the kids who did or were quite proficient at playing an instrument. I really benefited from that year. Being in that separated class made me want to choose music as an elective in the later years, so I think that might be a good way to combat that.

**LIAM** — I think it depends on whether you are thinking of theory or practical playing with music. In theory it should be taught through primary school, and that would eliminate what they were talking about before with the bludge subject kids. But then some people believe that practical music — playing an instrument like the trumpet, drums or whatever — should be started at a certain age, such as in primary school at a young age or in secondary school, so it is after primary school and you do not give it up. But with that one, I think it is more when you feel you are ready and when you have that motivation. You have to take it when you are there. My driving instructor’s kid was talking to me about wanting to play saxophone in primary school, and she was told that she was too young. I think that is probably going to stunt her motivation when she is actually allowed to.

**IVY** — I think that you can treat music like you can treat maths. There are a lot of calculators that can do practically any mathematical equation but it is about the learning progress of how you treat the equations. In music, learning to play an instrument, learning about theory, even just watching musicians really encourages certain ways of thinking and approaching things. For example, playing piano you learn to kind of think left hand and right hand really. It does put you in a mood.

I have been really encouraged from my instrument and from other instruments to listen to classical artists such as Debussy and Ravel and it does make you generally happier and a lot more optimistic — and it helps the studying. It is good listening to classical while you are studying. I do think it should be taught compulsorily up until Year 8 because in primary school it encourages participation, where a lot of other subjects can really dull that. In Year 7 and 8 our music class was less about learning the actual instrument and more about just participating with the entire class to build something that was really fantastic and a song that was really beautiful. I think we played a classical piece at a really young age and got the entire class to join in. It sounded absolutely fantastic and from then on we were really thoroughly inspired to
continue with it and to go on even outside of school with friends that we made in the class. It is the same with primary school.

**LUKE** — I just wanted to say briefly that it seemed very emotive and passion-based — everything that most people have been saying about why it should be mandatory. This is good for those of us who are very passionate about music but for everyone else who is like, ‘It just doesn’t make sense and I don’t really care about it’ — and it is not an overly good point to be making — Laura talked before about the research into the effects of learning and being involved in music later in life mostly in just general education but also its effect on life skills. Especially for me there is the ability and the teamwork.

Ivy brought up the point of a difference in thinking and using your creativity and different parts of your brain to overly stimulate the way you think about things and solve problems, not only in education at school but also in general life skills — how to interact socially with others and think about problem solving and whatnot.

I feel that music is not only good for its passion and inspiring people to do great things with other talents they have. For me, I do not like math; it just does not click with me. For those where music is like that for them it still gives them a valuable skill. If I did not do math — math I use a lot of the time, like 1 plus 1 equals 2, and I can figure out how much something costs. It is really good for me to know. It is the same for music; the life skills and whatnot that you learn from being involved in a music class is going to do things for those who choose to pursue music but also for those who choose to pursue other careers and whatnot.

**SUBI** — I agree with what everyone has been saying. Personally I feel that, if we are going to split music into theory and practical, I think what really got me into music was starting with practical. If you are in primary school and you just want to have fun and they sit you down and you have had maths and you have had English and then they try and teach you all these notes, sometimes it just does not motivate people. But then if they give you an instrument and say, ‘Have fun with this’, it really gets you into it and then later I think maybe as an option people should be allowed to explore theory rather than that always being mandatory.

**Ms TIERNEY** — At school, is technology used to assist in learning music? The second question is: do you use technology outside of school to assist you as a musician?

**GRACE** — At my school in both our music rooms we have little separated areas that are soundproof rooms with the average Mac computer, GarageBand, all that, which we have access to; but the majority of us do not use it because it is actually a lot more difficult than it looks to use it. It is a lot easier to sit down in a group and just say, ‘Okay, you play this’ instead of just putting it all onto a computer. At home, because I am self-taught, I get all my stuff just off YouTube and chord websites and tabs and stuff.

I think it is also that when you are learning a piece of music and your teacher is writing a tab on the board — I cannot focus on that; I need to have it on a sheet of paper in front of me so I can look down at my guitar and then play it as I read it.

**JOEL** — For us, since Year 7 we have had a classroom with keyboards and another classroom with keyboards connected to screens and we have been composing and doing stuff like that since Year 7, and I think that has been very beneficial for us. As for technology at home, I know that for last year for music investigations I had to compose something, and if I had not had Sibelius composing stuff at home to get me through — I relied on that a lot — it would not have been possible for me to do that.

**LIAM** — Going on from what Joel said, we were also encouraged to get the Sibelius program when doing our VCE music styles and composition studies. Although similar things can be done by using manuscript and pencil, the software does provide you with the ability to hear what you are actually writing and although it is obviously not as good as hearing a real orchestra or real instruments play it does give you the option to change things and make improvements to your works.
In other areas, with our music performance class, for example, last week we travelled to a recording studio in Upwey. Of course there were hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of equipment that enabled us to record the pieces we were planning to do for our upcoming VCE recitals. The ability to hear ourselves in such a quality recording studio gave us the opportunity to improve on our playing abilities and see what we need to improve for specific pieces. So I think that although we cannot rely on technology it does definitely help us.

**MICHAEL** — Our school recently renovated a couple of the rooms into a studio. We used to have one-on-one vocal lessons, drumming lessons and guitar lessons in those rooms but now we just have them in a classroom somewhere and we have renovated those rooms into a small studio. We use that studio to record songs that our students make or cover songs that they want to do as part of the music program and it is a lot of fun messing around with them. We tell them that they have to sing and just not record them, goof around with them a bit and kind of get them to go, ‘Hey, you need to start recording’ and keep going and mess around with all the stuff in there. It is a lot of fun to learn.

I can’t remember but we use Pro Tools, I think, Pro Tools 9 or 10, one of those, and there is a massive learning curve to it but we always have a computer available to learn how to use it. We have tutorials on the internet and a lot of those kinds of things so it is not that big of a deal when it comes to learning how to use the programs. For a lot of the equipment there is always a tutorial on YouTube or the internet. As for technology outside of school, I am a DJ, so I mix music on set. I have turntables. I have my mixer. I have everything I need to mix music and whatnot, and again the internet is a huge part of it. It helps me to learn new things. It helps me to find a way to mix a song that I do not know how to do properly or helps me to somehow connect to someone who knows how to mix the song or make my mixes better. Technology is a pretty big part of music.

**The CHAIR** — I am going to finish with the last question and finish on a fun question, hopefully. What do you think that television shows like *The voice* or *Glee* have done for music in general?

**MARLEE-ALICE** — Nico and I were actually talking about this on the way here. I am involved in the a cappella community quite a lot, and since *Glee* and *Pitch perfect* have become more mainstream and people have started watching them I have seen a huge spike in involvement of younger people in the a cappella scene. I do a bit of volunteer work with Vocal Australia, and they recently announced a school competition. We have had enough entries from each state to hold a competition in each state. There have been so many more young people getting involved in a cappella and I have seen this growing of the community. It is amazing.

**LIAM** — I think the programs have definitely brought music to a wider range of people, and that is fantastic. It is also quite enjoyable to see a lot of other people who probably would not normally be interested now taking an interest in what we have always thought of as being cool. It has been great. Although when you have been working together to become a classical or trained musician, it is kind of confrontational when people who have been watching think, ‘Oh, I can sing that’. Unfortunately not everyone is talented at music. It is great that they are taking an interest and wanting to learn and everything, but at the same time there are levels of competency.

**LUKE** — From the music industry perspective, there are many stories of musicians who have been on shows like *The voice* or *Australian idol* where it has ruined their career. Take Wes Carr, for instance — six months ago he was in the *Herald sun* with a new name and really long hair. What had happened was that people would go, ‘You have just been on *Australian idol*’. With all the associations with being on a show like that, in the music industry it is kind of frowned upon. It has been really hard for people like that. Matt Corby is also an example. He came second on *Australian idol*. He ran away to England and was going to do the same thing and change his name to try to escape that past image of being on a pop culture TV show and not really being a musician. You are seen as this fake thing. From the musical perspective, it is quite tough for those performers. But it is good to be public, and music is good and exciting as a competition. However, the musicians, especially the young people who go on, do not really understand the connotations it is going to have later for them.
ANTHONY — I think shows like *The voice*, *Australian idol* and *The X factor* — I do not watch them — bring together people you really would not expect to have any interest in music. You see a lot more people taking music, because they think, ‘I can be like Sarah De Bono’ — is she on *The voice*? Yes, that guy. People strive to be better. They may not be a good singer, but they have a backstage band and they have a lot of fun. You have more people taking a general interest in music with those shows. But then again, it is also a bit negative because people have unrealistic expectations of what music should be like — they have to hit the highest notes and then the lowest notes, and they try, and it is funny to watch.

IVY — I think shows like *The voice* and *Australian idol* are incredibly destructive. I have a good friend who was a finalist in *The X factor*. He has now dropped out of school. He has a restraining order against his mother. He is living out of home. A lot of this is from being on *The X factor* and from the sudden fame and ramifications of having this image on the show, he claims. I am not sure if this is true. As you see on shows like *The X factor* and *Australian idol*, everybody has a sad backstory. A lot of the time they make them up. My friend said on national television that he had autism and that he was severely bullied in school. As a result he had to move from about five different schools owing to bullying that was not present before.

Also those shows just create unrealistic expectations of what a voice should be like. I have just been in *Generations in Jazz* in a vocal ensemble. We have two a cappella groups at our school. Shows like *Glee* are really beneficial because they are so much fun. They might not be completely realistic, but at least they get people enjoying it. People from every single different demographic can come together and make this fantastic thing. But shows like *The voice*, *American idol* and *Australian idol* are destructive because they just put people down all the time, and they do not really have a good idea of what a good voice is, to be honest. They create this unrealistic expectation of what is good, and it destroys people’s careers.

The CHAIR — Thank you. We have completed all of our questions now. Well done for sitting through an hour and a half of questions from us. Thank you for being honest with us in terms of what you have presented. Thank you also for being so informative and, most importantly, passionate about what you do. We would like to wish you all well. I am sure all of you in this room have great futures ahead of you. It is great to have brought you together from different backgrounds and different schools and that you share a common passion for what you study and what you love. Thank you for that. You are probably the biggest group we have had in this inquiry in one go. We are inviting you to stick around for some lunch, to chat further and to network. We want to do a group photograph as well. We might do that just quickly. Thanks again, everybody — you were great.

Witnesses withdrew.