

Victorian Music Teachers' Association (VMTA),  
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14/02/13

## **Inquiry into the Extent, Benefits and Potential of Music Education in Victorian Schools.**

The Parliamentary Members of the Education and Training Committee, Mr. David Southwick (Committee Chair), Ms Kerry Riseley (Committee Executive Officer) Mr. Peter Crisp, Mr. Nazih Elasmr, Ms. Elizabeth Miller, Ms. Gayle Tierney.

Dear Members of the Education and Training Committee,

I write on behalf of the Victorian Music Teachers' Association (VMTA) representing a membership of 850 music teachers administered from a group of professional officers. This Association has had a strong influence upon music teaching since its establishment in 1928. The VMTA regularly publishes quarterly newsletters together with a biannual professional academic journal and the organization of a biennial Summer Music Conference. The VMTA fosters the ongoing recognition, importance and value of music education. The VMTA membership acts in a number of categories engaged actively within the pedagogy of music education in Victorian Schools.

1. Specialist instrumental and classroom music teachers in voice, pianoforte, woodwind, brass, strings, percussion, conducting, curricula, examination, assessment, adjudication, composition, improvisation, music policy and music administration, with active employment in Victorian Schools on a full or part-time basis.

2. Specialist instrumental and classroom music teachers uniting in direction for the presentation of music policy as governed by a constitution, election of office bearers, patrons (Richard Gill, Professor Warren Bebbington, Professor John Hopkins) and regular committee meetings.

3. Specialist instrumental and classroom music teachers implementing recommended fee remunerations for service. The fee structures represent instrumental teaching fees (in Victorian Schools), adjudication fees, music arranging fees, music performance fees and annual category membership fees. These fee structures are recommended as appropriate to the school setting and private

practice with extensions to the broader community in adjudication and assessment at eisteddfods and music festivals.

Many students from Victorian Schools present regularly at these eisteddfods and festivals. VMTA members, within the school setting, often teach these students. Many of these music students achieve high distinctions in music presentation, interpretation, performance and assessment. Similarly, VMTA members teach the Victorian Certificate of Education's (VCE) Music Solo Performance, Music Investigation, Music Group Performance and VCE Music Styles and Composition. School preparation for external assessment, such as certification within the Australian Music Examination Board, is also part of the daily duties for VMTA teachers, both within the private and school setting lesson. The Tertiary Sector is well represented with VMTA music teaching in VCAL, TAFE and accredited bachelors, masters and PhD degrees for music and music education.

4. The VMTA'S Professional Development days offer considerable assistance to the Victorian Schools' Music Communities of Students, Performers and Classroom/Instrumental Music Teachers. Specialist Instrumental and Classroom Music Teachers, Professors and Lectures, present Professional Development opportunities (with some presentation in Victorian Schools) for its members, with discussions related to insights into music performance, music presentation, aural discernment and awareness, analysis, composition, musicology, improvisation, sight reading, interpretation, style, posture, practice, breath control, pitch perception, cross cultural awareness and technique. The presenters for the Professional Development Days are highly experienced professionals with national and international recognition.

Broadly speaking, in summary, the VMTA has seven principal aims for its membership.

### **Aims of the VMTA**

1. To bring together persons associated with the music teaching profession
2. To encourage and assist in establishing and promoting high standards of music teaching in Victoria.
3. To encourage music teachers to improve the quality of their teaching.
4. To offer professional development opportunities for teachers and their students through lectures, performances, workshops and master classes.
5. To comment as appropriate on matters relating to or affecting music and music teacher training.

6. To protect and advance the professional interests of members of the Association without prejudice.

7. To foster and extend the appreciation of music in the community.

As such it is clear that the VMTA strongly advocates and endorses music education within all schools. In terms of the school setting within Victoria it needs to be said that music is essential to the development of young brains. It is not an optional extra. The benefits to student academic performance, as a result of music education, are:

1. Music is an academic subject with its own special body of knowledge, skills and unique ways of knowing and thinking.
2. Music intelligence is one of the seven different intelligences that need to be developed and nurtured (Howard Gardner, *Frames of Minds*).
3. Music is powerfully educative and has emotional, therapeutic and motivational benefits.
4. There are powerful transfer effects that benefit the development of the whole child in personal, social and intellectual domains. It benefits language development, literacy, numeracy, creativity, social skills, concentration, teamwork, fine motor coordination, self-confidence and emotional sensitivity.
5. Research strongly suggests that an effective music education accelerates brain development for both musical and non-musical skills and is responsible for a broad integration of brain functions.
6. As said by Richard Gill OAM who is one of Australia's best loved musical figures and leading advocate for music education, "Music, when properly taught, requires an extraordinary level of listening and concentration from the student. It requires the student to have the capacity to work in the abstract, the ability to work across all skill areas simultaneously and the ability to rationalize verbally. It gives every child the opportunity to think, dream, imagine, visualize, improvise, and explore."
7. Research supports the thesis that music plays a positive role in the development of creativity, confidence, cultural appreciation, and the intellect. It is therefore not surprising that there is a mountain of studies that show that "Music study makes you smart" and that students with high-level arts participation outperform 'arts poor' students by virtually every measure. There are 20 such studies reported in a volume edited by Bruce Pearson from Kjos Music Company. Significant is the longitudinal study in the US under the title of "Champions of Change". One of the findings from the Catterall & Waldorf studies in 1991 was that students who play an instrument and are involved in orchestra or band achieved significantly higher mathematical proficiency by Year 9.
8. Neuroscience links to music with well-being and shows how exposure to music changes the brain and the way it functions. It helps memory, vocabulary, reading and mathematics.
9. Evidence coming from brain research and quantitative and qualitative psychological educational studies shows that music study is the doorway to

academic success as experience in music sets up the brain and body to be able to learn more effectively in other areas.

**10.** Research by the Australian Music Association found that parents want their children to go to a school that offers music education (see Australian's attitudes to Music 2001).

**11.** Song Room Research: Of particular local relevance is the groundbreaking finding from an independent evaluation of an arts program conducted in disadvantaged schools conducted on behalf of the 'Song Room'. Findings included:

- Students engaged in the arts gained a full year in NAPLAN scores in reading.
- There was 65 percent less absenteeism on days when the long-term arts program was offered; students engaged in the arts had higher measures on every dimension of the Australian Council for Educational Research socio-economic well-being scale.

The VMTA unreservedly testifies to the extent, value, benefits and potential of music education within Victorian Schools. The VMTA, as a recommended fee setting body, strongly advocates the appropriate reimbursements for its members within the school setting. As such the recommended minimum fees for music teaching are per hour:

Private teaching: \$63.00

Group lessons: \$80.00

Accompaniment Rates: \$63.00

Adjudication and Accompaniment per 3 hours: \$200.00

The VMTA strongly advocates that music teachers are reimbursed these minimum rates (please note the word "minimum") together with additional employer superannuation, holiday pay, health and sickness benefits as well as leave entitlements. The VMTA strongly cautions any consideration of reducing music teachers' payment, employment conditions and status within the teaching profession. Music teachers in Victorian Schools are as well qualified as any other teacher and are entitled to equal rights and benefits in employment, as are all other teachers. In particular the specialist studio teacher who visits schools on a contract basis is entitled to all the benefits that full time ongoing employees enjoy. A reduction in recognition, remuneration, entitlements and professional status would be a regressive, unwarranted and harmful decision, if so enacted. The VMTA espouses the value of music teachers as highly trained specialists, worthy of high recognition, high value, high status and high standing within the working conditions of employment associated with Schools in Victoria.

In numerical terms, the value of the music industry to education and Australian Capital (and by extension, Victorian Capital), can be quantified:

**Contribution to the economy.** The music sector in Australia contributes about \$7 billion, value added, to GDP. It is significant in the national economy

as an employer. The music industry products industry has a total sales value of \$550 million and the Australian copyright council report on Music, Film and other copyright –based industries generated Aus \$93.2 in economic activity in 2011. Live performance reported \$1.3 billion in yearly revenue. Music education prepares students to contribute to the economy (Richard Letts, Australian Council, Nov 2,2012).

Further to this, music education is a national right enshrined within the UN principles of the Declaration of Human Rights. The importance of music education is also advocated with highly prioritized recommendations from the 2005 Australian Federal Government’s National Review of School Music Education. Similarly, the present ACARA recommendations within the National Arts Curriculum testify to the value and importance of music education. The right to an education, including music education, is a given. All humans have this right as music complements their spirituality. Without music our society and culture would be spiritually moribund. Our condition of humanity would be of little value. Our existence would be forever impoverished. The VMTA concludes this presentation with a quote from Shinichi Suzuki:

Teaching music is not my main purpose. I want to make good citizens. If children hear fine music from the day of their birth and learn to play it, they develop sensitivity, discipline and endurance. They get a beautiful heart.

#### References:

Catterall, J.S. & Waldorf, L. (1991). Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education, Executive Summary evaluation, in E. Fiske (ed.), *Champions of Change: The impact of the arts on learning*, pp, viii-x, Washington, DC: The Arts Partnerships and the Presidents Committee for the Arts and Humanities.

Howard Gardner – *Frames of Mind* 1983 <http://www.amazon.com/Frames-Mind-Theory-Multiple-Intelligences/dp/0465024335>

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The above submission was written by Mark Dipnall and presented on behalf of the VMTA 2012/2013 Council and Committee Members:

Dr. Julie Haskell, (President), Mr. Mark Dipnall (Vice – President), Mr. Glenn Riddle (Treasurer), Mr. Darryl Coote, Ms. Judy Dempster, Ms. Anne Lewitzka, Ms. Anne Lierse, Ms. Heather McKenzie, Ms. Elizabeth Mitchell, Ms. Daphne Proietto, Mr. Tom Sammut, Ms. Meta Santoso-Chien.

Yours sincerely,

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