

From: [REDACTED]

Dear Sir/Madam

I am the mother of three children with an Autism Spectrum Disorder. Music is pivotal to their successful academic outcomes. There is documented evidence of the benefits of music therapy and how it assists with the challenges of learning for such children.

My eldest daughter was fortunate enough to attend Mentone Girls Secondary College even though we lived 25 km out of the MGSC school boundaries. The local schools in the suburb of Skye where we lived had no significant music program. It is a huge financial burden for private instrumental lessons and all other associated costs on a single income. This child achieved an ATAR of 85 in year 12 and is AMEB grade 8. Currently she is at Monash University doing a double degree in Music/Teaching. Music education enabled her to overcome and better manage the challenges she faced socially, academically, behaviourally, and psychologically.

With my second child a son, out of necessity we had to move house and become renters in Glen Waverley as I can not afford to buy a house in this area in order for him to attend a school that he could participate in a Music program. As per his older sister he too has private instrumental lessons. His autism is more significant than his sisters. His behaviour and social skills have been very challenging. However music has changed that. He is a savant when it comes to playing his instrument. At his previous schools in Skye his musical ability was not recognised because music education was not a priority or high on the list for funds allocation. My son is now a Music Leader and performs within two school bands. Music education has enabled him to be an independent, autonomous, responsible, co-operative young man in all subjects and areas of his life.

The youngest child another son has learning difficulties. This year he too is learning an instrument privately because I believe that music education is important to children with an ASD. It is helping with his comprehension, memory retention and auditory receptiveness. He is learning and able to better manage his academic outcomes in other subjects.

Music should not be the privilege of the wealthy. We all should have a right to music education that is of a high standard. Music is just as important as English, Math, Science or Sport. Please adequately fund music in all schools, have dedicated music buildings and professional university educated teachers who study music and teach it full time. Thank you.

Sincerely

Anna Chomppff