

Ms Kerry Riseley, Executive Officer

Karen and Robert Coller

Education and Training Committee

Parliament House

Spring Street

East Melbourne VIC 3002

RE: Submission for Parliamentary Enquiry into Music Education

Dear Kerry,

We and our four children, have been associated with Wantirna College, Melbourne since 2003.

Our sons Joshua and Christopher each joined the Music Program in Year 7 and actively took part for the six years of their secondary schooling. Josh learned Percussion, Chris learned Voice and Trumpet. Both sons developed a great rapport with their respective instrument and classroom music teachers that greatly enhanced their whole education. As it was compulsory to be an ensemble member to be part of the Music Program, values such as responsibility, respect and encouraging others was instilled alongside music skills. Teamwork, valuing others' contribution and honesty was also integral to learning together.

Our daughters, Claire who learns Flute and Eliane, who learns Flute and Voice are still at Wantirna College in Year 12 and Year 9 respectively. Once again, we see their music education as a vital part of their schooling. Not only are their social skills enhanced but their place in the music community at school gives them a sense of belonging. As with our sons, this gives them greater security at school and promotes their wellbeing and ability to learn.

We believe a music education also teaches them that effort, persistence and practise make a difference. There is much research that shows that learning music enhances academic skills. We believe a music education encourages their study in other areas and teaches them a universal language with no borders. They have all belonged to several ensembles and have experienced the joy of making music together with many different people.

However, as members of the Music Parents Association we are also aware of the many needs of the Music Program, for which we are constantly fundraising and organising. Needs such as; paying for replacement teachers, instruments, coaches, buses, entry fees to competitions, subsidising camps, paying visiting conductors and other specialists. Our children miss other classes to come out for music lessons (except VCE students) as the general music program doesn't cover individual or group lessons. The financial cost to parents to learn music unfortunately can exclude many students from the Music Program. We would like to see funding increased to schools, especially at the secondary level when we are trying to keep students engaged at school, so that more students can benefit from a music education.

Sincerely,

Robert and Karen Coller