

**Submission to the Committee for the Parliamentary Enquiry into the
Extent, Benefits and Potential of Music Education in Victorian
Schools**

**From Dr Anne Lierse on behalf of teachers from the Melbourne High
School Music Department**

A Music Education Program considered to be best practice



“The soul of Melbourne High School is expressed through its singing”
Principal Jeremy Ludowyke

The oldest High School in Victoria, this secular, selective-entry State Government school for 1380 boys in Years 9 -12 is regarded as a national leader of singing for boys, and is one of the few schools in Australia to run **massed singing as a core curriculum subject**. Although it is not formally a music specialist school, and music is not part of the entrance exam, the overall size, diversity and quality of the choral and instrumental programs, along with the size and breadth of the classroom music program, would match or surpass the work achieved in many specialist music schools in Australia. The quality of the program also matches those at our leading independent schools despite the enormous differences in the music budgets.

Flame Award

Melbourne High School was the national winner of the Music Play for Life and ABC FM ‘Flame’ award to the school with the most outstanding and inspiring music program which included singing.

As the judges of the national ‘Flame Award’ remarked after naming Melbourne High School as the National winner in 2011, “Over many decades, Melbourne High School has made a decision to harness the power of music and let it infuse the lives of these young men, for their lifelong benefit. However, it is the school’s *More than Just Marks* liberalist educational philosophy, the school’s administration, its dedicated staff, and, most importantly, the passion for music displayed by the students that allows this to happen”.

Section 1
Evidence supporting music education in schools

The benefits to students and the broader society of music education in schools.

1. Arts Minister Simon Crean recently said the federal government's National Cultural Policy looks at what the arts can do for the nation on a holistic level. "If we want to aspire to an innovative, creative, adaptive nation, if we want to keep that ranking that we have got as one of the best performing economies in the world we have to drive creativity."
2. Music study enables us to develop skills needed for the 21st century workforce, such as abstract thinking, problem-solving, self-discipline, creativity, collaboration and teamwork.
3. Musical participation requires the development of sensitivity to nuance, interpretation, team-mates views, emotions and conciliation. In so doing, musical endeavour develops emotional intelligences.

Extracts from- Music Education advocacy arguments. Richard Letts Music Council of Australia, Nov 2, 2012

4. **A universal phenomenon.** Music is a phenomenon found in all cultures. It is a highly developed art form, the form of expression chosen by some of humankind's great geniuses. All Australians should have the opportunity to learn and express themselves through music and the nation as a whole should seek achievement in this art form.
5. **A right** to an education, including an education in music, is supported by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and a number of other UN conventions.
6. **Universal access to music education.** It is only through provision of an effective music education via the public schools that Australia can provide in-principle universal opportunity.
7. **Contribution to national culture.** It is evident that an effective music education supports the retention, transmission and further evolution of a national music culture.
8. **Contribution to the economy.** The music sector in Australia contributes about \$7 billion, value added to GDP. It is therefore significant in the national economy as an employer. Music education prepares students to contribute to the economy.

Benefits to student academic performance as a result of music education.

Music is essential to the development of young brains, not an optional extra

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, team-work, 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
8. 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 out perform '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 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 12
9. 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.
10. 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
11. We know through research by the Australian Music Association that parents want their children to go to a school that offers music education (see Australian's attitudes to Music 2001)

General benefits to students as a result of music education

Intrinsic value. An effective music education is of intrinsic value to a person's well-being and richness in life (May, 2003).

MUSIC - AN ESSENTIAL COMPONENT OF THE CURRICULUM AT MELBOURNE HIGH SCHOOL

Melbourne High School's philosophical underpinnings embrace a 'more than just marks' liberalist educational philosophy, which goes back to Plato and is based on empirical research. Consequently, music, art, physical education and languages are serious studies for all students at Melbourne High School and regarded as essential to the physical, mental, emotional, and educational benefits of a child.

Development of aesthetic sensibility and cognitive meaning.

The power of music to develop aesthetic sensibility and cognitive meaning is perhaps the most powerful arguments for music education. Therefore it is imperative that we create an environment which can nurture and support boys' emotional development, many who have learned not to openly show their emotions and feelings. As expressed by former Principal Ray Willis (2005), to deny or bury feelings will result in their intellects growing while their emotional development remains stunted. This development delay is as true for gifted students, as for the less able students.

Educational, Personal and Musical Benefits

Apart from the development of a school culture that generates pride and identity, evidence supporting non-musical benefits of a competently delivered music education is documented in *Champions of Change* (Catterall & Walford, 1999). Its major findings are that music provides people with authentic learning experiences that engage the hearts, mind and body, engages multiple skills and abilities, and that music nurtures the integrated development of cognitive, affective, creative, motor, social, and personal competencies. Music's capacity to provide new challenges for those students already successful is a motivating force at Melbourne High School. This is in line with findings from the above study that found that students who performed in ensembles and choirs, and maintained involvement in music through to year 12, continued to demonstrate improved academic results.

Brain research has also revealed the positive benefits of performing music in the area of intelligence quotient (IQ) showing that the IQ of students having keyboard and voice lessons increased from their pre-lesson score more than students with no lessons (Schellenberg, 2004). Music also builds and modifies neural pathways related to spatial reasoning tasks that are crucial to high brain function (Rauscher, Shaw, Levine, Wright et al, (1997).

Breaking down constructs of masculinity

Research into the education of boys has also shown that singing together can have a positive impact on the engagement of boys in education, and offers a panacea for the trials of masculinity. Singing can motivate students' interest in learning, develop self-confidence and self-discipline, and most importantly, enrich their lives. It has also been found to be one of the greatest antidotes for depression with anxiety and loneliness is diminished helping the control of stress and aggression (Hanser, 1990; White, 1985; Moore and Schultz, 1983).

As Principal Ludowyke stated:

Massed Singing is a potent subversion of the strictures of masculinity because it compels young men to collaboratively and publicly transgress the boundaries of social power of gender identity that might otherwise deny emotional expression and interdependence.

But singing, especially in choirs or on mass, is not a common activity for boys. However, the development of a single sex choir has been described as a sanctuary for adolescent boys, a place of refuge where they can feel safe to explore 'their most authentic selves without fear of reprisal' (Adler, 2002, p. 269). The aim of the music department at Melbourne High School is to 'give permission' to a bunch of young men to sing alongside their peers where no talent or expertise is required, just the willingness to participate without potential humiliation from staff or peers. When critical mass occurs, singing turns from being an unacceptable pursuit to an acceptable and 'normal' activity. Gradually the barriers of restraint are lifted, and a strong collective sense of community, respect and pride is generated.

Section 2
Current provision of music Education in Victorian schools in (a) Victorian Schools
And (b) at Melbourne High School (see Appendix)

(4) Music education provided through specific funding for music education

The instrumental music program

- Payment to the school for the services of 11 (3.5 days) for instrumental teachers from the SE Region.

(5) Music education provided through non specific funding for education – school budget

The classroom music program

- Melbourne High School appoints four classroom music teachers to deliver the classroom music program and support the singing program. The school also made one of these appointments at Leading Teacher level, and another for the assistant director of music.
- The school also partly funds a music administrator and additional instrumental teachers. The balance of the funding is taken from the instrumental music levy.
- The school also covers the costs of running the House Music Competition held at Melbourne Town Hall, and Speech Night (has a large component of choral and instrumental music) at The Plenary Hall in Dockland.
- There is also a smaller classroom music levy which goes into the music budget.

(6) Music education provided through parent contribution

- An instrumental music levy of \$400 a year for instrumental/choral music lessons from the visiting instrumental teachers. The instrumental music levy funds administration of the music department, and the employment of additional instrumental teachers to teach French horn, oboe and bassoon, contemporary guitar, bagpipes and organ. A music administrator/accompanist is jointly funded by the school and from the music levies.

Friends of Music

The strength and success of the music program is greatly enhanced by dedicated parents who give up so much of their time to support the music department in the presentation of events and in fund-raising for resources needed by the music department. Indeed most of the instruments the school owns, including those hired out to students, have been purchased with money raised by the Friends of Music.

Support from the school community as a whole

Critical to the quality and success of the music program, is the high status it holds within the Melbourne High School community including the Alumni, parents and staff generally. This high status has been ongoing for the life of the school (more than 100 years). The school ethos is closely tied to the traditions of massed singing which is celebrated each year at Speech Night and the extremely competitive House instrumental and choral competition.

The Melbourne High School community has generously supported the music program in meeting the artistic needs of the students. This includes artists in residence, musical instruments, school tours, and subsidizing the employment of additional instrumental teachers. Donations are an important source of income along with prize money from

competitions and payment for services to the community such as providing music for private company events.

The formation of a Melbourne High School Arts Support Association assists the school to raise money to finance special projects such as the Artist in Resident. The MHS Old Boys Association offers scholarship and another alumni association generously donated a grand piano to the school.

This program has taken many decades to build but could be dismantled within a year if any of the support we receive is diminished.

7. The extent and quality of music education in (a) Victorian Schools (b) Melbourne High School (see Appendix)

Victorian Schools

(a) It is significant that the five most successful countries in the PISA ranking in reading, mathematics and science such as Shanghai, South Korea, Hong Kong, Singapore and Finland all have music programs far exceeding those in even the best Australian public school systems.

- In China, music classes are for 2 hours a week, compared with 30 minutes in Queensland and zero in the majority of Australian primary schools
- In most of these countries, at primary level music is taught by music specialists teachers. Finland, actually trains its generalist primary teachers to teach music and receive 270 hours of music education or more, not 17 hours as is the average in Australia.

Low status of music in Victorian schools

Raising the low status of music in Australian schools was a key recommendation in the National Review of School Music Education (2005)

It was also a key finding in all previous and recent reviews and studied on the quality and provision of music education in Victoria and Australia.

This is despite studies, such as conducted by the Australian Music Association that show that parents want their children to have music at their schools. Principals know this, and certainly independent schools recognize the added value of music education to the capacities of the child and offer music scholarships along with the academic to attract these students to their school.

Boys entering Melbourne High School come with little music

Statistics collected on students' prior school music experience before entering Year 9 at Melbourne High School give a very sad picture of what is happening in primary and secondary schools in Victoria. These statistics are important for our music program at Melbourne High School so we can take into account the boys' range of knowledge about music, instrumental experience and skills, and attitudes towards music education when developing curriculum. Boys entering Melbourne High School come from all over the greater Melbourne area and some country areas.

The survey of 127 of the 330 the boys entering Melbourne High School in 2011 showed that less than one out of 5 boys had sung either at their primary school or in years 7 & 8 at secondary school, or in the community. In line with findings from the National Review of School Music Education (2005), the quality of music education program they had received was variable, mostly token or non-existent. Although some students came from schools where there was an instrumental program and were reasonably competent performers, some even gifted and talented, most boys entering the school came with perceptions, that, in line with research into boys and singing, singing in choirs was a feminine pursuit (Scott Harrison, 2009).

Some interesting statistics:

- 2 out of 3 boys had no classroom music throughout their 7 years of primary school. The remainder had some classroom music in one or more years.
- 2 out of 3 had never sung at school before they came to Melbourne High School.
- 1 out of 6 had no classroom music lessons in Year 7 or 8
- 8 student had missed out on music lessons at both their primary and secondary schools.

Research relating to the current extent and quality provision and quality of music programs in Victorian schools

- Presently in Victoria there is gross inequality in the percentage of schools that offer a continuous, sequential and developmental music education
- Music is not a core subject in Victorian government schools, unlike Queensland and Tasmania at primary level, and at years 7 & 8 in NSW
- The national figure for the provision of class music in government schools is as low as 23% compared with 88% in independent schools even when taking these statistics into account. Although there are schools with excellent music programs, research shows that most music programs are of variable quality or tokenistic
- In Victoria, secondary level music education is delivered by specialist teachers. Some primary schools employ a specialist teacher, however, the majority of primary schools rely on the generalist classroom teacher to deliver music instruction, most of whom have been inadequately trained to do so, nor have the necessary music skills to do so.
- Limited time on the time-table given to music cannot provide an effective music education.
- Few students sing
- There is inequitable and inadequate distribution of instrumental music teachers in government secondary schools. Students who wish to take VCE music can only do so if there is a senior level program at the school with instrumental teachers to provide the performance elements of the VCE course. Many parents cannot afford to pay for the services of instrumental teachers at school or in the community.

(b) The status of music education at Melbourne High School

Along with its academic focus as a special entry school, Melbourne High School has one of the largest and most challenging music programs in the state and excels in VCE Music. Its ensembles are among the best in the state. However, its particular strength is its inclusive whole school singing program that has been passionately supported by the school administration and school community for over 100 years.

Indeed, the school recognises that music at Melbourne High School provides new challenges for all students including those already successful, and draws on the human virtues of imagination, discipline, determination, and teamwork. As we lead up to the introduction of an Australian Curriculum, it is to be hoped that the rhetoric expressed by education systems in documents is matched with the action needed to ensure all students in Australia benefit from a sequential and developmental music education. Melbourne High School is indeed in a unique situation, and the reputation of its massed singing program is now internationally recognised. (Taken from Speech Night Report 2011).

The support available for music education in Victorian Schools

1. Association of Music Educators (AMUSE)
2. Regional instrumental music coordinators
3. VCAA for VCE Music

With the closing of the Music Support centres in the 1990s there has been a big gap in this area. Unlike most other faculties, a great percentage of schools only employ one music teacher who does not have the support of colleagues and is in need to support.

Statistics from secondary schools collected in 2006 (which is still a reflection of the schools in 2013), found that 39% of schools with a music program did not employ a full-time music teacher, and only 11% of schools had an allotment of two or more full-time teachers. All but five of the schools with two or more full-time music teachers had an enrollment of over 1,000, and six of these were previously music specialist schools. There were a small number of schools with more than 1,000 students who had less than a full-time allotment for a class music teacher (Lierse, 1999).

Naturally many of these teachers would be beginning teachers who are in great need of support. Traditionally, there has been a high turn-over of classroom music teachers with the figure of five years frequently mooted. Teachers in remote and country areas find isolation extremely challenging.

Association of Music Educators (AMUSE): The work of the subject association AMUSE (whose budget has been recently cut) is doing a commendable job in running professional development, conferences, and providing a Web-site where teaching can interact and seek help from one another. They have recently trialed 'The Singing Classroom' to assist generalist primary teachers to develop their skills and confidence in delivering a singing program in their classroom. This project will die without some budget assistance. AMUSE also runs VCE workshops which, with the ongoing changes to VCE music courses, are highly valued by teachers. Because of budget cuts, AMUSE has been forced to reduce its time allocation which will affect their ability to support teachers this year. This service is also needed in country areas.

Regional music Coordinators, who are from either instrumental or class music fields, have the best insight into how programs are working and their needs, and are therefore in the best placed to make calls on which schools should gain or lose teachers. However, it is critical to understand the pressure of principals who want to take instrumental staff from successful programs in the name of equity. There are two issues here. Firstly, having one or two days provision of instrumental teachers does not create a music program and the program at the school will remain tokenistic and not achieve very much. Ensembles need a range of teachers of different instruments and takes years for students to reach proficiency. Secondly, the principal needs to support this program with a classroom music program which is sequential, continuous and developmental, and appoint a music coordinator. This will most likely mean employing extra staff. It is impossible to overemphasize the importance of team-work and school support in setting up, maintaining and improving instrumental music education over decades. It is really the regional music co-ordinator that has the knowledge of how to support instrumental programs and make call on provision.

VCAA also offers advice to VCE teachers with the development of appropriate materials online.

An important consideration is that most principals are not able to offer support to music teachers, and are generally not well informed about what makes a program effective, or how to advise new teachers.

What factors affect the quality of music education in Victorian schools?

An understanding of the distinction between classroom music and instrumental music is necessary to understand the optimum governance and oversight arrangements needed to run an effective music program.

1. Classroom music can give students an appreciation of music, theoretical knowledge and provide students the opportunity to create and recreate music at their current technical skill level. It cannot possibly give students individual instruction to further their individual level on any one particular instrument.
2. VCE music programs cannot be offered to students without individual lessons.
3. Instrumental music provides individual (even if taken in small groups) instruction for students to learn the technical requirements of playing an instrument. An instrumental program in a school also provides with the opportunity for students to further their skills by participating in larger groups such as concert bands and orchestras
4. The value of an instrumental program is highly recognised in private schools, hence the large emphasis and participation of students in their music programs.
5. The instrumental music program must go hand in hand with the classroom music program to offer students a meaningful music education and give them for life long music skills and a possible career in music. If the government does not continue to fund instrumental programs in state secondary schools with sufficient instrumental music teachers to maintain an effective program, (one of two days of their services is not effective and inhibits the development of ensembles, and limited students choice of instrument), it will create a climate in which learning an instrument is only for the rich, or for those who can afford it. It will jeopardise the integrity of our VCE music program in Victorian as well as standards. And it would restrict the overall curriculum offered in our schools.
6. Parents want their children to have the option of learning a music instrument and sing in a choir and listening and learning about music. Many look for a school that offers instrumental music
7. Schools use examples of students playing an instrument as promotional material for prospective parents even when their provision is token.

Section 3. Future optimum provision of music education in Victorian Schools.

The provision of music education at Victorian government secondary schools

Compared to independent schools, **state government schools are struggling to deliver effective music programs with their very limited resources.**

Classroom music programs have diminished significantly since the 1980s and early 1990s when students in years 7 & 8 had two music lessons a week in a greater number of schools. This provision can now be as low as one period a week for one term or semester in either year 7 or 8, or offered as an elective subject for a semester in year 7 or 8. The size of elective music classes in years 9 & 10 are variable and mostly quite small as a result of limited music options in years 7 & 8. This greatly disadvantages students' abilities to develop the skills to progress to VCE music or move to the next stage of their musical development.

This problem will likely get worse with the implementation of the Australian Curriculum with five arts to be taught at primary school, and schools needing to only choose one of the arts at secondary level. The future of school music education is seriously threatened. It is in the hands of educational authorities to make sure music education will not disappear.

Instrumental programs

The other critical issue is the future of the instrumental program. This service needs to remain free to students and to be audited. Independent schools are able to bill parents for the

cost of instrumental music lessons, and from the school fees are able to enhance the music program with purpose built facilities, quality instruments and resources, employ support staffing such as music program coordinators and secretaries, and give generous time allowances to the staff to direct and coordinate ensembles.

The importance of maintaining the regional instrumental program

The instrumental music program set up by the Department of Education set up in the 1970s is a life-line to music in government schools. Many of Australia's outstanding performers, teachers, and artistic directors went through this program.

The equitable distribution of this resource to school due to the ceiling placed on this resource remains the greatest challenge with which the regions have had to contend. If this resource was distributed equitably between all government schools, there would be no schools which would deliver a high quality music program in Victoria. This was the finding of a number of reviews over the years.

Without depleting the quality of the music programs of the few schools in Victoria that have outstanding programs, we need to come up with a way to offering all students in Victoria access to an instrumental music program.

As shown in this submission, schools such as Melbourne High School have over decades, made a substantial investment into their music program, and music is embedded into the culture of the school. Their contribution to the state has been significant with many of its alumni now leaders of music educational institutions, international performers, and leading music teachers in Victorian schools. This is also the case with schools such as Blackburn High School, Balwyn High School, McKinnon High School, MacRobertson Girls' High School and a small number of other schools. It is notable that this list of schools was amongst the leading VCE government schools in 2012. This is in keeping with the thesis that schools with high-level arts participation do out-perform 'arts poor' schools.

Factors relevant to the provision of a quality music program at Melbourne High School

1. Without the current provision of instrumental teachers whose salaries are paid for by the region, this program would diminish significantly. The leading flagship programs in the state would disappear affecting the future provision of professional musicians and music teachers in the state.
2. The majority of parents of the students at Melbourne High School could not afford a fee for service for music lessons and consequently our ensembles that cater for the range of abilities and experience of the students could not be maintained, and students would not be able to develop their instrumental skills.
3. Students would lose the opportunity to develop the essential skills necessary to progress to VCE music and a possible career in music, which is their education entitlement according to the Declaration of Human Rights. They would also not have an alternative school available to them if they wished to further their musical abilities.
4. Critical mass of instrumental music teachers is the secret to the success of the program in which the sum of the parts is far greater than the number of individuals employed. This is because music teachers have their specialist skills which together cover the development needs and aspirations of the students
5. With job satisfaction, the quality of work and dedication to the program is greatly enhanced.

Schools that run a highly effective music program they have shown to have the following characteristics:

- School policies and vision that supports music education
- Leadership – the school principal - visionary, and gives strong support to the program

- Leadership – The music coordinator – visionary, an educational leader, a personnel manager, curriculum manager, administrator of resources and facilities, timetables, assessment and reporting, curriculum developer, and most of all, a musician
- A strong classroom music program (vital to success), which includes singing, music literacy, composition, music styles and computer technology
- Classroom and instrumental staff work together
- Student access to the music program
- Time for learning. The more time the better the program
- Appropriate funding, staff, facilities and resources eg.musical instruments
- Staffing (professionally trained music teachers and educators)
- Support (from the administration, parents and school community)
- School culture which values music education (Lierse, 1999)

Also

- Philosophy of education which encompasses the arts as important to the total development of the child
- The music curriculum must be sequential, developmental and continuous from the earliest years (NRSME)
- Like the curricula in reading, mathematics, science, history, the music curriculum must prepare students for making an informed choice after Year 9 to choose music as an elective and possibly as a subject for high school graduation.

Recommendations

1. Maintain the current provision of instrumental music teacher to schools that are:
 - delivering a highly effective music education which is sequential, continuous and developmental
 - Providing music programs for students who want to take their music to the next level
 - Provides VCE and/or VET courses
 - Accommodate the needs of the gifted and talented.
 - Are prepared to offer support and professional development to surrounding schools or state-wide
 - Will share special professional events such as student workshops, visits from professional music companies and individual with interested students from surrounding schools
2. Create additional 'music schools' throughout Victoria staffed by instrumental music teachers that cover the range of instruments needed for the development of bands and orchestras
3. Adopt elements from the English National Plan for Music Education (The Importance of Music), such as the formation of clusters of schools with the host school accommodating a group of instrumental teachers from DEECD, and hosting instrumental and vocal ensembles. These clusters will provide support to surrounding school music programs, offer PD and organise performances. Staffing responsibilities should be done in order to achieve and maximise expertise in the subject area. The clusters could be administered by a manager, coordinator or financier with knowledge and understanding of music program implementation
4. Develop singing programs (such as the Singing Classroom) which can be implemented in every school
5. Provide additional funding for community providers who offer programs and enrichment such as MSO, Vic Opera
6. Increase funding for AMUSE for PD support
7. Investigate the expanding of Melbourne Youth Music into regional areas.
8. **There is a great need to again set up music support centres throughout Victoria. This could be done at a regional level, or more effectively administered though the cluster if this system is adopted.**
9. **We also recommend the appointment of a person from DEECD to take on the roll of overall administrator of music education in Victoria.**
10. **This person should be supported by a music reference group**

Conclusion:

Music is a rich part of adolescents' lives. They use it to make sense of the world, to build and assert their individuality and aesthetic taste, to reflect and to try and make sense of their complex emotional and physical states. It can form a safe barrier in which they can express their deep feelings and ideas with confidence and without fear of ridicule.

Music has rich cultural and historic significance in all cultures. The music of our time informs us, and future generations, about the nature of the people and the conditions in which they live. Music reflects the complexity of human spirituality, human emotions, human reflections, human observations and feelings of the world.

Music is an integral part of being human. Humans seek out music to enrich their lives. Without music education our society would be spiritually impoverished. Our inner being would be severely compromised. Victoria has a unique opportunity to take a leadership role in Australia to set up a world class music education program for its students.

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APPENDIX

The music program at Melbourne High School

All 1,384 boys at Melbourne High School students sing, over 900 boys elect to be a member of one of the 25+ ensembles, 320 take instrumental or voice lessons at school. Many students are composers and there are quite a number of student formed music groups and ensembles.

Indeed, Melbourne High School recognises that music provides new challenges for all students including those already successful, and draws on all human virtues: imagination, discipline, determination, and teamwork.

The program is inclusive and caters to students without prior music experience, as well as the highly gifted and talented musician. There are students who commence music studies in year 9 at Melbourne High School, along with the musically proficient students, go on to study VCE music and onto tertiary music institutions to become professional musicians and teachers.

The program is also continuous, sequential, and developmental in line with the recommendations from the National Review of School Music. Music is a core subject for all Year 9 students and singing is a core activity for the whole school.

The enthusiasm for music making and performance generated from students enjoyment and participation in the singing program flows through to the elective music program.

- Music is a core subject in Year 9 (340 students)
- More than 200 students elect to take music as a subject in year 10.
- Two VCE music subjects are offered at years 11 & 12 and MHS is one of the largest VCE providers in the state
- Over 900 students elect to participate in ensembles across years 9-12 out of school hours, and some of the fifty plus performances from the 34 ensembles. Some ensembles are student driven
- There are three choirs. The Chorale, which is an un-auditioned group, has a membership of more than 100 boys who turn up for rehearsal on a Friday morning at 7.45am. The Unicorns and Singers are auditioned choirs that sing challenging repertoire encompassing a number of styles.
- Flagship ensemble include; the symphony orchestra of 90 + members who perform professional repertoire, the Stage Band and the Tattam Ceremonial Band, and The MHS Singers.
- A large number of other ensembles, including bands, string ensembles, jazz, rock, composition and chamber groups provide for every level of experience and difficulty from beginner to advanced.
- Over 320 boys (limited by number of instrumental teachers and rooms available) take lessons at school on a range of orchestral, band, keyboard, instruments and voice.

Expert teachers

The school also demonstrates its commitment to the music department in the appointment of a director of music (leading teacher appointment) and an assistant director.

This very large music school is propelled along by a team of expert music teachers. These teachers not only give lessons and direct ensembles in school time, but also generously give up their own time to support the performance program, and inspire and encourage their individual development.

High status of music in the community

Critical to the quality and success of the music program at Melbourne High is the high status it holds in the Melbourne High School community including the alumni, parents, and staff generally. Based on the traditions of the school that go back 100 years, and in line with the educational philosophies of the school espoused by the school principal, a cultural ethos is firmly entrenched in the traditions of massed singing, which is celebrated at Speech Night each year to an audience of up to 5,000.

To ensure continued success, quality, as well as to preserve the historical importance of the ethos of singing in the school, a four-year Strategic Plan is developed and contains Artistic, management, financial and resource goals.

Strategic Plan for Music Education at Melbourne High School 2009- 2013

Vision, Mission, Goals, Aims and Objectives

Vision

To have every student choose to be actively involved in the classroom and instrumental music program from years 9 –12

To provide an exemplary whole school singing program, choral and ensemble program at an international standard.

To provide leadership in Australia for the music education of boys.

Mission

To enrich the culture of Melbourne High School, the wider Melbourne High School Community, and Australia, with its music program.

To provide a robust music program in which all students develop a love of music, develop competent and advanced level musical skills, and develop the knowledge and understanding needed to contribute significantly to the musical culture of Australia and beyond as performers, teachers, and as audience members.

To provide exceptional instrumental and voice training to an advanced level for students at entry level and for students aspiring to a career as a musician.

To provide quality teaching and quality facilities at the highest level.

The singing program

The tradition of massed singing at MHS is not only taken seriously by the present students at MHS, but also the MHS alumni, many of whom regularly attend Speech Night to again relive the experience of massed-singing. Re-unions at which songs from various Speech-Night years are again sung, is a manifestation of the importance of music in their lives at MHS.

Massed singing assumes special meaning to all students as they progress through the school. Meaning is especially evident at the House Music Competitions where the encouragement of peers and the senior students as role models has a profound effect on their attitudes towards singing. At the conclusion of adjudicating the House Music festival in 2007, Lynn Richardson, director of the Australian Girl's Choir, commented in amazement: "It was a celebration of striving forward towards a goal, that while it was competitive, it wasn't like sport, but all to do with the beauty of music making".

The Year 12 students report singing as an academic respite and cohort realignment, frequently mentioning singing as the catharsis from mounting exam and academic tension (Ludowyke, 2009).

Some comments collected from students during the presentation of the Flame award application include:

- Singing at Melbourne High is the best (Daniel Year 9)
- Melbourne High's singing program is what makes the school unique. (Henry Year 11)
- Singing at this school forms strong bonds within the community and between individuals at the school (Minto Year 12)
- I'm sure when I look back on my schooling life all I will remember are those long afternoons singing in the schools' stairwells, or belting out opera with 1380 other guys at speech night. (Jamal Year 12)
- I didn't realise how fun singing was until I came to Melbourne High (Jonathan Year 12)
- In year 9 massed singing quickly became the highlight of my week. Three years later I'm now in six groups ranging from choirs to quartets, three within the school, and 3 outside of school. I know singing will be a hobby of mine for the rest of my life! (Andrew Year 12)
- Everyone puts their hearts into massed singing, even if you don't have an ounce of musical talent in you. It's just what we do. (Christopher Year 11)
- Singing provides me with a fantastic distraction from my studies, I always return to my maths calm and rejuvenated after a good singing rehearsal. (Long Year 11).

MHS was invited to contribute a chapter titled "Singing Throughout Life at Melbourne High School" in Dr Scott Harrison book *Male Voices: Stories of Boys Learning Through Making Music* / ed ACER Press, 2009. Pp.135-155

There is also a summary of our practical approach by Dr K. Bennets in *Music in Action For Australian Educators* /ed A. Blore—Autumn 2009, Vol 6 Issue 4 pp. front cover & pp38-39.

Awards

Melbourne High School students receive high level awards and prizes in the area of music performance each year. These include VCE Awards such as Top Class, Top Sounds, Top Acts, Premiers Awards and university scholarships. Ensembles and individual students also regularly win prizes at Eisteddfods including the Royal South Street Ballarat at which the Symphony Orchestra is one of the prize winners each year, and the Melbourne High School Singers win their section when they compete. In other Eisteddfods, significant prizes have also been awarded to piano trios, solo performers, barber-shop quartets, and other chamber groups.

The school, therefore, caters for the range and experiences of all students in the school, but is also a provider of music for the gifted and talented, a provider of training for pre-service teachers, a centre for the professional development of teachers, and workshops for students in the Southern Region, and a leading school in boys singing and research.

Enrichment

Each year, students are enriched by visits, workshop, masterclasses and performance opportunities by top Australian and International musicians. Grants made it possible to engage two composers in residence in the last three years culminating in a large work for chorus and orchestra composed by the artist in collaboration with the students.

Partnerships and community music participation.

Victorian Opera

Under the guidance of our inspirational patron Richard Gill, students from Melbourne High School have performed in the orchestra for three of the Victorian Opera's youth productions and have taken part in a number of workshops. Richard Gill has given conducting classes to the students in preparation to conduct their House music ensemble, and also workshopped the Symphony Orchestra

Each year ensembles from Melbourne High School are invited to perform at venues such as Government House and at special community events. These include the Music Spectacular, the Melbourne Youth Music Jazz Festival, the Song Room, at conferences for four Australian Society for Music Education in a number of States, and the International Society for Music Education in Kuala Lumpur. The Tattam Ceremonial Band marches on ANZAC day and other important national occasions, and also plays at the Shine Legacy Service along with the choir from MHS and MacRobertson Girls' High School. These events are at no cost to the school, and teachers donate their time.

Leaders of music education in the community

Melbourne High School has always encouraged and supported the personal growth of its teachers, their professionalism and their involvement in the community. This has made it possible for the music staff to complete higher-level education, to continue with professional careers as music performers and take leading positions in educational endeavours.

Consequently, most of our music teachers are active in the community as performers, examiners, researchers, composers and members and leaders of music organizations. Many music education events are hosted by the school such as the 'Sounds Great Conference' run by the Association of Music Educators, 'Boys and Singing' conferences, the 'Victorian music workshop', and events organised by the Southern Region for choirs and string orchestras. Some teachers are authors of book chapters, and write papers which are presented in Australia and internationally. Music staff from MHS, along with former students, have a high profile as presenters at conferences.

For example, in January 2013 at two summer conferences, music teachers and former students presented at: The Victorian Music Teachers Association Summer Conference

- Hosted at Melbourne High School. – keynote address was given by a former student Professor Peter Tregear, Head of Music at the ANU in Canberra.
- Presenters included former director of music MHS Alwyn Mott – General Manager Australian Music Examinations Board Victoria, Gavin de Korte - head of classroom music presented lecture and workshops on music technology and Dr Anne Lierse, piano teachers and former Director of Music at MHS, presented a seminar on the VCE Music Investigation.

The Australian Choral Conductors Education and Training Summer School

- Key organisers and presenters included Curtis Bayliss – assistant director of Music at MHS and Robert Stewart – director of music at MHS.