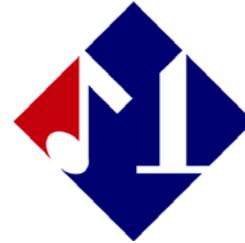


*Administration*  
MBE 148/45 Glenferrie Road  
Malvern, Vic 3144  
Phone: 03 9507 2315  
Fax: 03 9507 2316  
Email: admin@mca.org.au  
Website: www.mca.org.au  
ABN 85 070 619 608

*Executive Director*  
Tel: +61 (0)2 9251 3816  
Fax: +61 (0)2 9251 3817  
Email: mca@mca.org.au

*Music. Play for Life campaign*  
Tel: 02) 4454 3887 or 0439 022 257  
Email: tina.mpfl@mca.org.au  
Website: www.musicplayforlife.org

*Australia's representative to the International Music Council*



**Music Council of Australia**

Ms Kerryn Riseley, Executive Officer  
Education and Training Committee  
Parliament House  
East Melbourne  
By email: etc@parliament.vic.gov.au  
February 12, 2013

Dear Ms Riseley

**RE: An Inquiry into the Extent, Benefits and Potential of Music Education in Victorian Schools**

The Music Council of Australia, through you, thanks Mr David Southwell MP for the invitation to make this submission to the Victorian Parliament's 'Inquiry into the extent, benefits and potential of music education in Victorian schools'.

The initiation of this inquiry is commendable and encouraging and the Music Council expresses its appreciation to the Victorian Government.

The Music Council is the peak national music organisation for the music sector. It has a membership of 50 national music organisations and distinguished individuals representing the breadth of activity in the music sector – from early childhood education and community music development to computer-generated music, from country music to opera, from youth music to the record industry. The Music Council is Australia's affiliate to the International Music Council, based in UNESCO, Paris.

The Music Council is aware of some excellent public school music programs supported by state funds. These are a joy and a credit to the state. They demonstrate what is possible. However, as shown below, the picture overall is less gratifying.

The Music Council is aware of submissions in preparation by important and distinguished practitioners and researchers in Victoria. In particular, it supports the submission of the School Music Action Group. It will seek to complement, rather than repeat its statements.

All Australian governments have made commitments to deliver a music education as signatories to the Melbourne Declaration and to the formulation and delivery of the Australian Curriculum in music. This curriculum could serve as a benchmark for the minimum acceptable entitlement to a music education. The first draft was widely considered in the music education profession as in need of substantial improvement <sup>1</sup> and the Music Council is heartened to know that ACARA is responding. However, the outcome is not yet known in any detail. The Music Council's submission to the Inquiry is based upon the ability of the system to deliver the Australian Curriculum in Music or alternative credible curriculum decided by the Victorian Government.

### **Benefits of music education**

The objective must be the provision of universal opportunity for an effective music education for school children. <sup>2</sup> Core benefits should be self-evident but have been confirmed and much expanded over recent decades by voluminous research.

The benefits of music education are most pronounced through the activities of creating and performing music. There is abundant opportunity to listen to (or hear) music in the rest of life, but it is the school system that can provide the opportunity to learn to *make* music.

We know that other submissions will give detailed evidence of the intrinsic and instrumental benefits of music education. We note here only some matters that may not be otherwise raised.

*Benefits to the school.* An effective music program can contribute to the life and reputation of a school <sup>3</sup>:

- It can lift the spirit and morale of the school
- It can enhance the overall achievements of the student body
- It can draw students to enrol at the school. An attitudes survey shows that 87% of Australians aged over 12 believe that it should be mandatory that every child is offered the opportunity for a music education in school. <sup>4</sup> They gravitate to schools that provide this opportunity.
- Musical performance is a very effective means of presenting and promoting the school to its community
- Musical activity can be the basis for partnerships with community individuals and organisations.

*Sustain the culture.* It is self-evident that an effective music education supports the retention, transmission and further evolution of the national musical culture.

---

<sup>1</sup> For example, see the Music Council response to the draft curriculum, formulated by a national panel of experts. <http://www.mca.org.au/advocacy/2012-papers/20768-mcas-comments-on-acaras-draft-australian-arts-curriculum>

<sup>2</sup> Various United Nations declarations and conventions have relevant clauses: the right to an education, the right to participate in one's own culture. The International Music Council has a platform of five musical rights, of which one is the right to a music education. To have the right to an education could mean, in a very regressive society, that the state should not *obstruct* access to education. In countries such as Australia, it should be interpreted as a responsibility of the state to *provide* an education. In Australia, active participation in the musical culture is no longer passed on informally to the new generation. It will happen only through action through the education systems.

<sup>3</sup> See Bruce May: *Music Helps Me Live Inside My Head: A Longitudinal Ethnographic Case Study of a Group of Senior High School Music Students*. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Queensland University of Technology, Queensland, 2003.

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.mca.org.au/research/research-reports/other-research/107-australians-attitudes-to-music>

*The economy and career opportunities.* The size of the music sector is estimated at around AU\$7billion value-added.<sup>5</sup> This compares with, for instance:

- Forestry and fishing \$2.5 billion
- Electricity \$13.9 billion
- Gas \$1.4 billion
- Water supply, sewerage and draining services \$6.3 billion
- Manufacturing: textiles, footwear, clothing and leather \$2.7 billion
- Wood and paper products \$7.1 billion
- Printing, publishing and recorded media \$11.3 billion<sup>6</sup>

So the sector offers considerable opportunity for investment and employment for musicians and for those in related roles. In most of these roles, a music education either is essential or at the least an advantage.

The music sector could be regarded in a similar way to the tourist industry. The latter includes parts of a number of sectors such as hospitality, transport, entertainment but not the total activity in any of them. Statistics for the tourist industry must be assembled from many sources. For the ABS's purposes, the tourist industry is a "satellite account" and estimating its contribution to the economy is not simple.

Statistically, the music industry is often conceived as being the recording industry. In fact, it includes, for instance, live performance, that large part of the broadcasting industry that depends upon recorded music, aspects of publishing, education, the hospitality sector and more. When considering the career opportunities offered by the music sector, we must go beyond the careers for composing or performing music. The Music Council's Music Careers website lists more than 150 job categories for musical and music-related careers.<sup>7</sup>

*International projection.* Australian music is significant in the presentation of Australia internationally as a sophisticated, high-achieving culture and economy.

- The Commonwealth has long used high quality Australian musical performance as an enhancement to diplomacy.
- While Australia produces some brilliant artists, internationally, the balance of trade in music is severely against Australia: we import three to five times more than we export, as measured in royalty payments.<sup>8</sup>
- Research suggests that inadequate music education could be a strong contributor to this failing. Evidence of the inadequacy is given below: the great majority of Australian children appear to receive no music education in the crucial early years.
- Better music education could produce a more demanding local audience and a higher achieving profession, leading to more musicians having more long-standing international success. The exemplar is Sweden, one of very few countries with a positive trade balance in music and this despite its small size and the fact that English is not its first language. A study of its export success attributed this in large measure to the Swedish provision of free music education through the school system and through "municipal music schools" – local schools supported by national funding.<sup>9</sup> In

---

<sup>5</sup> Hans Hoegh-Guldberg: *The Value of the Music Sector*. Music Council of Australia Music in Australia Knowledge Base. [http://musicinaustralia.org.au/index.php/The\\_Value\\_of\\_the\\_Music\\_Sector](http://musicinaustralia.org.au/index.php/The_Value_of_the_Music_Sector)

<sup>6</sup> Hans Hoegh-Guldberg: *The Scale and Structure of the Music Sector and the Need for Better Data*. Music Council of Australia Music in Australia Knowledge Base  
[http://musicinaustralia.org.au/index.php/Scale\\_and\\_Structure\\_of\\_the\\_Music\\_Sector\\_and\\_the\\_Need\\_for\\_Better\\_Data#Scale](http://musicinaustralia.org.au/index.php/Scale_and_Structure_of_the_Music_Sector_and_the_Need_for_Better_Data#Scale)

<sup>7</sup> [http://www.musiccareer.com.au/index.php/Main\\_Page](http://www.musiccareer.com.au/index.php/Main_Page)

<sup>8</sup> [http://musicinaustralia.org.au/index.php/Cultural\\_Trade](http://musicinaustralia.org.au/index.php/Cultural_Trade)

<sup>9</sup> "Tuning in" - A Summary of a Study on the Swedish Music Export Successes

<http://www.regeringen.se/content/1/c4/38/79/170080fb.pdf> The report is in Swedish but there is an English

Victoria, the nearest example of an organisation akin to the municipal music school is the Dandenong Ranges Music Council, a highly successful program that merits emulation nationally.

### **Current provision of music education in Victorian schools**

The very specific issues around provision of music education in Victoria as detailed in the Terms of Reference are better addressed by those who have strong direct knowledge of the circumstances. Our observations are mostly more general although, we hope, relevant.

At secondary level music education is delivered by specialist music teachers and that takes care of problems which are barely addressed at the primary school level.

Our particular concern therefore is provision in primary schools.

#### ***Primary school music education***

*In 2014, the new Australian Curriculum in Music will be ready for implementation. It will not be taught in most Victorian primary schools because the teachers do not have the necessary competencies.*

Recent research finds that 63% of Australian primary schools offer no classroom music.<sup>10</sup> This study does not provide state breakdowns, but since virtually all government primary schools in Queensland and Tasmania and most independent schools employ specialist music teachers, the proportion in other states must exceed 80%. Extrapolation from another research report finds that only 23% of public schools, primary and secondary, offer a music education program that would meet the recommendations of the National Review of School Music Education (2005), as compared with 88% of independent schools.<sup>11</sup>

So it is probable that most Victorian primary schools do not have an effective state-funded music education program.

While principals may choose to hire a music teaching specialist, if they do not do so, the responsibility for music teaching passes to the classroom generalist teacher. Nationally, on average, these teachers have received 17 hours of mandatory music education in their undergraduate degree, or 10 hours for a qualifying postgraduate degree.<sup>12</sup> This does not equip them to deliver *any* credible music curriculum, including a national curriculum. In Finland, they would have received 270 hours of music education, in Korea 160 hours; in

---

language summary beginning on page 145. Sweden is a small country (population 9 million) but is one of only a few with a positive balance of trade in music (US, UK, Brazil, India). This study found four main reasons, two of which are about the success of the Swedish education system in reaching widely across the population to provide music education. The result is discerning audiences and very competent professionals.

<sup>10</sup> Dr Irina Petrova; *What Makes Good Music Programs in Schools?* Doctoral Thesis for the University of NSW, 2012.

[http://www.mca.org.au/images/pdf/research/other/IrinaPetrova\\_PhDThesisFinal.pdf](http://www.mca.org.au/images/pdf/research/other/IrinaPetrova_PhDThesisFinal.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> Ian Harvey; *Percentage of Students Receiving a Sequential, Continuous, Developmental Music Education in School.* Music Council of Australia.

<http://www.mca.org.au/images/pdf/MCAresearch/mcaRESEARCH%20competent%20music%20ed.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> Dr Rachel Hocking; *National Audit of Music Discipline and Music Education Mandatory Content Within Pre-Service Generalist Primary Teacher Education Courses.* Music Council of Australia.

<http://www.mca.org.au/research/research-reports/research-reports/659-national-audit-of-music-discipline-and-music-education-mandatory-content-within-pre-service-generalist-primary-teacher-education-courses-a-report>

our other PISA-ranked superiors Shanghai, Hong Kong and Singapore, music is taught to all children by specialists.<sup>13</sup>

It is reasonable to conjecture that the reported absence of music instruction in government primary schools is a consequence mainly of generalist teachers' lack of music education and therefore, competence and confidence.

*Inequity.* As noted, 88% of independent schools nationally have an effective music program. In the public schools, parents in affluent areas very often bypass the deficiencies of state provision by paying for an after-school music program which might include instrumental lessons and/or various types of performing ensemble. Music education becomes pay for play, a preserve of the affluent.

Provision is highly inequitable. Children from less affluent areas are denied the advantages of a music education, whether intrinsic or instrumental, recreational or career-bound.

The situation is no more than ameliorated by provision of music education in secondary school. In any case, Petrova found that 34% of secondary schools nationally do not offer classroom music and Lierse detailed the complicated situation in Victoria in her 1996 study.<sup>14</sup> It does not suffice to begin music education in secondary school any more than it would suffice to begin reading or mathematics there.

Further, the lack of any consistency in primary school music education means that the musical skills of students at secondary school admission vary from zero to virtuosic, making the structuring of the secondary school program extremely difficult.

*There are impossible demands on classroom teachers.* As already noted, all governments have agreed that there should be Australian Curricula taught in five art forms: dance, drama, media arts, music and visual arts.

If, in April, Australia's Ministers for Education accept the proposed Australian Curriculum for the Arts, with separate curricula for each of the five art forms including music, it will be tested in the latter half of the year and available for implementation beginning in 2014.

Under present arrangements, the primary school generalist teacher will be expected to deliver not only the music curriculum, but the curricula in the four other art forms. The writer is skilled in music but cannot imagine performing or teaching dance, or drawing or painting. He does not have those aptitudes or skills – they were not planted in his primary years, and were he a school teacher, he cannot conceive that he could gain them to a level that would help his students. Add knowledge and skills in literacy, numeracy, a number of sciences, history, geography, languages and physical education: what are we expecting of our primary school teachers?! The expectation is quite unrealistic.

---

<sup>13</sup> It is interesting that the countries with PISA scores most exceeding that of Australia also have music programs with much better trained teachers and greater commitment of time. See the Music Council of Australia's supplementary submission on teacher education to the Higher Education Base Funding Review, page 7.

<http://www.mca.org.au/images/pdf/Advocacy2011/mcaCLASSICAL11tertiary%20teacher%20training.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> Lierse, Anne. How Effective Is Your Music Program? Findings from Research into the Effectiveness of Music Programs in Victorian Schools [online]. In: Rosevear, Jenny (Editor); Bourne, Warren (Editor). Conference Proceedings: *A Musical Odyssey; a Journey of Discovery in Music Education*. Adelaide: Australian Society for Music Education, 2001: 142-151. Availability:

<http://search.informit.com.au/documentSummary;dn=043445809997153;res=IELHSS> ISBN: 0957741324. [cited 10 Feb 13].

It should be noted that, as Lierse demonstrates, the fact that a school figures in a statistic showing that it offers music education says nothing about which years it offers. Some secondary schools, for instance, may offer it only in years 7 and 8 – and possibly not offer it, even as an elective, in later years.

Teachers learning to teach the new history curriculum essentially will apply existing *literacy* skills to new content. There is a different problem faced in music and other arts. While they engage with literacy and mathematical skills, there are other fundamental skills that are not built upon literacy and numeracy: e.g. skills of listening, creation and performance – the division and assembly of time, pitch, timbre etc., skills of expressiveness, fine motor skills: skills collectively involving a large part of the brain and mind. Teachers uneducated in music learning to teach the new music curriculum cannot succeed by applying literacy skills to new content: they must learn the core musical skills from the ground up.

### **Future optimum provision of music education in Victorian schools**

The Terms of Reference refer to “optimum provision”. The Inquiry thereby presumably suggests that the government for financial reasons is not especially interested in the Rolls Royce scheme. But then, neither is its purpose to find a scheme that only pretends at a solution. It does not want a curriculum that purports to be mandatory but in fact, is not taught. Or is taught but is itself not sequential nor developmental, does not build core skills nor produce students who can for instance perform music at a level appropriate for their ages. Or is taught but by teachers who lack necessary competencies.

The Music Council suggests that the optimum scheme will see every child taught by a specialist music teacher. This may have something of a Rolls Royce-ish aura, but is in fact already the model in two states and in most independent schools. The obvious alternative is that music is taught by musically educated classroom teachers. But it is probable that even if they receive substantial inservice PD, a good number of classroom teachers will not have the ability to teach music well or in some cases, at all. After all, most of them are products of an education system that did not impart basic musical skills in the early developmental years. They themselves are good evidence of the need for change.

#### ***Option 1: Music is taught by specialist teachers***

The best solution at primary school level is therefore to build a system in which music is taught by specialist music teachers.<sup>15</sup> The greatest impediment to this solution is financial cost.

But that it is not an impossible cost is demonstrated by the fact that in both Queensland and Tasmania, the cost is already met by the governments. Indeed, in Queensland, not only is classroom music taught by music specialists but there is a free program of instrumental and vocal instruction reaching about 11% of students. All but 13% of Queensland public primary schools have specialist music teachers. The schools without specialists mostly are in the more remote areas.

*Following are three proposals for the systematic introduction of specialist music teachers to serve all primary school students: 1) the ‘Hong Kong’ solution to solve all the ills of the primary school system; 2) an introductory pilot project to introduce specialist music teachers; 3) progressive introduction of specialist teachers to all primary schools.*

*1) The ‘Hong Kong solution’.* There are complaints from within and without the education systems that teachers are not competent in the range of subjects they are supposed to deliver to students. Subject area inadequacies appear to be far wider than those identified in music and the arts. We here introduce a special possibility that we believe would bring benefit to the entire school system. Victoria could lead the country in its adoption.

---

<sup>15</sup> The ‘Henley Report’ to the British government on school music education says ‘All primary schools should have access to a specialist music teacher’ (p. 25). Recommendation 8 says that ‘The best model for Music Education includes a combination of classroom teaching, instrumental and vocal music tuition and input from professional musicians’ (p. 13)

In Hong Kong and Singapore, there is an overall move towards specialist teachers – in fact, in Hong Kong there are now no generalist primary school teachers. We extrapolate to suggest a solution for Australia.

In this scenario, teachers choose to specialise in three or four subjects. Undergraduate courses for primary school teachers offer options: say three complementary options, each of four subjects. (Some education could take place in specialist areas of the universities rather than in the Schools of Education. For instance, musical skills could be taught in Schools of Music, overcoming sometimes serious deficiencies reported in some Schools of Education.)

School students are taught by three teachers, between them delivering the entire curriculum. All subjects are taught competently by teachers who have chosen subject specialisations to match their own enthusiasms and talents.

Pastoral care is enhanced because it is divided among the team of teachers – no student is hostage to the relationship with a single personality. In Hong Kong, one of the teachers is assigned as the official class teacher for administrative purposes.

The operating cost for this system would remain essentially unchanged. The same number of students learn from the same number of teachers in the same amount of class time overall. The work is simply distributed differently. There would be a cost in teacher retraining to enhance existing skills in preferred subjects. The system could be introduced progressively over some years.

In Victoria, there would continue to be a need for some generalist teachers to serve in small country schools.

*2) A pilot project to test the use of specialist music teachers.* This is a recommendation of the Annual Assembly of the Music Council of Australia in 2012.

Form two clusters of primary schools. Each cluster is served by a group of highly competent specialist music teachers, at least three teachers per cluster. More teachers/larger clusters would reduce the probability of anomalous results. The teachers deliver a music program based upon the national curriculum, with characteristics and sufficient contact time to produce high quality student outcomes. The program would be capable of scaling up for introduction across the system.

In the second year, improvements could be introduced, based upon the experience of the first year.

Form two other clusters of primary schools, of similar characteristics to the experimental schools, to serve as a control group. They offer the music education programs currently normal in the Victorian system. (This could include a situation where in some or most schools, no music is offered.)

Mount an evaluation program, possibly in collaboration with a university or with researchers chosen by competitive tender, to evaluate both intrinsic and instrumental outcomes. Compare outcomes for experimental and control groups.

Assuming that the outcomes show the advantage of the experimental approach, modify the program for improvements and then progressively implement it across the system. Recommend strategies for the education of additional specialist teachers.

*3) Progressive introduction of specialist music teachers to all schools.* This solution probably would deliver the highest quality music education. It would be designed based upon an assessment of existing programs in Queensland, Tasmania, in Australian independent schools, and in school systems overseas. It could also take as its foundation

the learnings from the pilot project above. The program would deliver at a high level at least the content of the Australian Curriculum in Music.

From the point of view of cost, it would not be as optimal as proposal 1.

It would be introduced progressively because of the need to train sufficient specialist teachers. Strategies could include

- Attracting and training skilled musicians in pedagogy
- Supporting musically skilled classroom teachers in achieving specialist qualifications
- Increasing intake of relevant programs in university schools of music
- Mounting intensive programs organised by the Department of Education

Consideration could be given to basing teachers in external 'music services' modelled upon or adapted from those in England. These could maintain and develop teachers' skills, program innovations, and teacher enthusiasm and morale. There could be an option for teachers to teach less than full time in order to leave time to maintain performing careers – to the benefit of everyone.

A few observations about the Queensland model. It includes instrumental instruction for children who indicate an interest, at no charge. So equity is achieved. However, this reaches only 11% of children. It may be possible to reach a larger percentage through use of strategies such as whole-of-class instrumental instruction, trialled already in SA.

Classroom music sessions are 30 minutes long. In later primary grades, a longer class is desirable, say 45 minutes for argument's sake.

The visit of the music specialist is used to provide RFF for the classroom teacher. This means that the teacher misses the opportunity to gain music education skills by intention or at least, osmosis. Those skills could be used to introduce music into the class during the rest of the week, including using it to accelerate learning in academic subjects.

### ***Option 2: Music is taught by generalist teachers***

*There are two tasks: 1) to amend the undergraduate music education provision so that graduates are capable of teaching the curriculum; 2) to provide remedial music education to those tens of thousands of teachers already in service.*

*1) Preservice education.* Recall that the average number of hours of mandatory music education in Australian undergraduate courses for generalist primary school teachers is 17, or 10 hours in a qualifying graduate course.

As already noted, in South Korea, classroom teachers receive 160 hours of music education, in Finland at least 270 hours. Let us say that Australia can scrape by with 110 hours (about one hour for every week of the undergraduate course) in order to produce a teacher who can teach a credible primary school music curriculum.

In present circumstances, the decision about how much music is to be taught in the qualifying degree for primary school generalist teachers is entirely with each university. An inspection of the data in the Music Council research <sup>16</sup> shows enormous variation in provision, ranging from zero hours to 54 hours (the latter, to its credit, at Monash). This education is intended to equip teachers to teach music across seven or eight year levels. None of the programs are sufficient. With so little music education, graduates are highly unlikely to be able to deliver any credible music curriculum unless they bring musical skills acquired beyond the official course.

---

<sup>16</sup> Hocking, *ibid*

So far as we have discovered, the state accreditation authorities do not make *specific* requirements that graduates should know how to teach the subject curricula, nor do Education Departments make it a requirement of employment.

In verbal discussion, an AITSL officer informed the Music Council that AITSL does not intend to specify *discipline* content necessary for accreditation of teacher education courses, excepting for literacy and numeracy

What qualifies graduates for registration by the state authority as teachers is that they have completed a qualifying degree, but the content of that degree course is set by the university and seems to be taken on trust – this, in the case of music, even though music may have been totally absent from the curriculum.

*The Music Council strongly recommends that the state accreditation authority requires that university courses that provide qualifying degrees for primary school teachers should be obliged to demonstrate that graduates will be capable of delivering the approved curriculum, whether it is the national Australian Curriculum or a state curriculum, in the classroom.*

2) *Inservice education.* Petrova finds that 29% of primary school teachers nationally have no or few music skills.<sup>17</sup> There are 250,000 primary school teachers in Australia.  $0.29 \times 250,000 = 72,500$ . She finds that 63% of primary schools do not offer classroom music and we have hypothesised that the main reason might be a lack of teacher competence and/or confidence.  $0.63 \times 250,000 = 157,500$ . So we can conjecture that nationally, between 72,500 and 157,500 primary school teachers are not sufficiently educated to deliver the national curriculum in music. Victoria has one quarter of Australia's population. Extrapolating, roughly 18,000 to 39,000 Victorian primary school teachers may be unable to deliver the music curriculum.

If the Victorian government elects not to solve the primary school education problem through introduction of music specialist teachers, the next possibility is to upgrade the musical competence of the existing generalist classroom teacher workforce. We are suggesting that competence through undergraduate courses might be achieved with 110 contact hours of instruction. Logically, this sort of exposure is necessary also in inservice education and is much greater than the teachers would have received in their qualifying courses.

However, considering the number of teachers needing music education, this simply seems impracticable through normal methods of face to face instruction.

The Music Council has assembled an expert working group to devise solutions. Its work is not complete. However, it envisages the possibility of the use of interactive digital interactive instruction combined with some face to face instruction, whether physical or interactive online. Instructional packages are in preparation by some Australian organisations and others can be sourced internationally, although the latter will be disadvantaged by not fitting content with the Australian Curriculum.

There has been great popular interest over quite a long period in digitally delivered music instruction outside the school setting, as well as more formal practice and research in this area. These have placed music at the leading edge of digital delivery of education.

We will be able to propose more detail about this option shortly.

Referring to two of the terms of reference:

---

<sup>17</sup> Petrova, *ibid.* Petrova does not provide data broken down by state.

## **Governance and oversight**

Music is a serious study. Some of the greatest and most famous minds in history have made a lifetime commitment to music: composers and performers - and others including scientists such as Einstein. The education system should continue to enable students to choose music as a subject for high level study and for high school graduation while recognising that in the higher year levels, this is a path that only some will follow.

For students to be suitably prepared and enabled to make an informed choice, the curriculum offered in Victorian schools must be progressive and sequential throughout all preceding years. Student progress should be evaluated regularly, on the same basis and with the same level of central oversight as for other subjects. This implies that teacher effectiveness should also be evaluated.

## **Optimum balance of central mandates and supports**

The curriculum and options within it should be centrally mandated. The options would permit a variety of focuses and pedagogies depending upon the interests of students and skills of teachers. All students should have some engagement with art music – for many, school may be their only opportunity to enter this world.

In various states at various times, subject area advisors have been available on a state or regional basis to assist teachers with advice, curricular materials and professional development facilities. Often these services fall victim to budget cutbacks. On these occasions, the Music Council is flooded with expressions of dismay and regret. It seems to us a false economy with little financial benefit, especially if responsibility for music education lies with classroom teachers.

Victoria is fortunate in governmental decisions to provide support to music through the Association of Music Educators. This must be a highly cost-effective method of building teacher effectiveness and thus, service to students.

## **Input from professional musicians**

This is recommended by the Henley Report (see footnote 11). Milk comes from cows, not the supermarket. Music does not come from the radio or the screen, but from live people. From live performances by professional musicians, children can see the possibility that they too can make music at this level and they can be inspired to make the effort. They can get a sense of the ethos of music making. There are many professional musicians, ensembles, even orchestras and opera companies with special productions for children. A modest commitment of funds can put them in front of every child in the state.

## **In summary**

*Key recommendations are in bold type.*

- Research and experience demonstrate the intrinsic and the instrumental value of music education to children, the society and the economy.
- There should be universal opportunity, supported by the state, for school children to receive a high quality music education throughout their school years.
- A high quality national (or state) music curriculum can serve as a benchmark for the delivery of music education in schools.
- Teachers charged with the responsibility for music education in schools should be able to demonstrate their competence to deliver the approved curriculum.
- Provision is especially inadequate in public primary schools because responsibility for delivering the music curriculum is given to generalist classroom teachers, who are

mostly uneducated in music. At secondary school level music is taught by specialist music teachers and so their ability to deliver a music curriculum can be assumed.

- At this time, it seems likely that the great majority of public primary schools in Victoria offer no state supported instruction in music. It seems that overall, an adequate music education program is available mainly to the affluent and paid for by parents. This is inequitable and denies opportunity to the less affluent.
- In those countries which convincingly outperformed Australia in the PISA evaluations of outcomes of school education, all deliver music through teachers who are relatively highly educated in music and all devote more class time to music than even the best provisioned state music education program. Their music programs do not obstruct academic performance and may enhance it.
- **The Music Council's preferred strategy for the provision of a high quality music education to all students is that it should be delivered by music specialist teachers. Three possible models have been outlined.**
- If music education is to be the responsibility of generalist classroom teachers, they should be capable of delivering the national curriculum in music to a high standard.
- For this to be possible, 1) radical improvement is needed in the provision of mandatory music education in the qualifying courses and 2) inservice professional development is required for existing teachers.
- **The Music Council recommends that the state of Victoria should require, as a condition of accreditation of university qualifying courses for generalist primary classroom teachers, that their graduates are able to demonstrate the competence to deliver the national curriculum in music.**
- **The Music Council recommends that inservice education should be provided to the existing primary school teacher workforce so that each teacher is capable of delivering the national curriculum in music or an equivalent decided by the Victorian Government.**
- It is recognised that for logistical reasons, the latter objective will require a plan of progressive implementation over several years, probably through a combination of digital and face to face delivery.
- The Music Council recommends that the music curriculum offered in Victorian schools is progressive and sequential throughout. Student progress should be evaluated annually, on the same basis and with the same level of central oversight as for other subjects. This implies that teacher effectiveness should also be evaluated.
- The Music Council recommends that the curriculum and options within it should be centrally mandated. The options would permit a variety of focuses and pedagogies depending upon the interests of students and skills of teachers. All students should have some engagement with art music – for many, school may be their only opportunity to enter this world.
- The Music Council recommends that, especially if music education is the responsibility of generalist teachers, that subject area advisors should be available on a state or regional basis to assist teachers with advice, curricular materials and professional development facilities.
- The Music Council recommends that all students should have direct experience of professional musicians and their music-making.

The Music Council is working through further detail of these solutions with a view to proposing pilot implementation programs. We would welcome the Victorian Government's interest.

The Music Council is optimistic that the Inquiry will recommend exemplary developments in school music education in Victoria that will bring benefit to all school children and ultimately the culture and economy of the state.

Once again, thank you for the opportunity to make this submission. We are happy to follow through on any aspect of the submission on request.

Yours sincerely



Richard Letts AM, PhD  
Music Council of Australia  
Past President, International Music Council