



School Music Action Group
Teacher Training Working Party

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SUBMISSION TO THE Legal and Social Issues Committee of the 58th Parliament of Victoria.

The School Music Action Group Victoria.

Submitted: 13th April, 2017.

The School Music Action Group (sMAG) Victoria was formed in 2007 as an outcome of the Victorian Music Workshop held in April 2007, which was attended by over one hundred delegates representing all areas of state, Catholic and independent schools, tertiary institutions, community music providers, parent organizations and the music industry. The Workshop examined the recommendations from the 2005 report of the National Review of School Music Education¹ and the action points from the 2006 National Music Workshop², and considered them within the Victorian context.

sMAG (Vic) has continued advocacy and lobbying in the state of Victoria, and significantly contributed to the *Inquiry into the Extent, Benefits and Potential of Music Education*. www.parliament.vic.gov.au (2013). Members of the committee continue to take an active role, working along side projects specifically implemented and supported by the former Napthine government, and the current Andrew's government. We believe that every child in Victorian schools deserves access to a quality music education that is taught by professionally trained specialist teachers. We believe that only a specialist, tertiary trained professional can deliver a continuous, sequential and developmental curriculum from P – 12.

The sMAG lead writer with specific expertise in this area is Dr. Helen Farrell. Members of the sMAG (Vic) response writing team and reference group include:

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¹ Robin Pascoe, et al., *National Review of School Music Education: Augmenting the Diminished*. Canberra: Department of Education, Science and Training, 2005.

² See Ian Harvey, *Making the Progression: Report of the National Music Workshop, 27-28 August, 2006*. Melbourne: Australian Music Association, 2006.

³ Lierse, A. et al., *Victorian Music Workshop Report* Southbank, 2007.

sMAG (Vic) welcomes the opportunity to submit to the Legal and Social Issues Committee of the 58th Parliament of Victoria *Inquiry into Youth Justice Centres in Victoria*. The sMAG committee specifically restricts our submission to the Term of Reference: 6. the culture, policies, practices and reporting of management at the centres; As innovation in the sector, particularly to include Arts opportunities and education, may result in more positive outcomes than we are currently seeing in Victoria. Our professional specialisation is in music education. Discussion is focused on items specifically pertaining to this area of training, and outline the benefits of Music education during periods of youth rehabilitation.

1. Introduction. sMAG (Vic) acknowledges that the Legal and Social Issues Committee clearly understands that;

- the security and safety of staff, employees and young offenders in the juvenile justice system is paramount;
- there are significant reasons for, and effects of, the increase in the numbers of young people in remand; and
- that likelihood of reoffending, and implications of separating young people from their communities and cultures must be mitigated.

A “*Performing arts programs in juvenile justice in Victoria 2005-2015: mapping policy, research and programs*” community research program has recently completed <http://socialequity.unimelb.edu.au/research/projects/community-research-program/cfp-performing-arts-in-juvenile-justice> .

The research produced educational resources; undertook advocacy and leadership; and conducted workshops. The key target cohort was Indigenous young people in the juvenile justice system. The research involved mapping the policy, research and arts programs that have been conducted in the juvenile justice system in Victoria in the last decade; and building a tool kit for effectively evaluating programs in order to collect evidence of the impact of *The Arts* programs in these settings. Clear evidence was produced demonstrating increased social engagement from the detainees when a Music and/or Performing Arts program was present.

In “*Music and juvenile justice: A dynamic systems perspective*.” (Wolf, Dennie Palmer; Holochwost, Steven J 2016) clear evidence was produced showing the benefits of including music education as a part of a rehabilitation program during incarceration;

This study investigated whether participation in an ensemble-based music education program was associated with evidence of internal strengths, changes in perceptions of peers, or changes in behavior among incarcerated youth. Participants were 54 adolescents (63% male), held in 2 secure detention facilities, who elected to take part in a 2-week choral residency program. Rates of attendance at residency sessions, completion of the program for school credit, and engagement in musical activities outside of the residency session were high, while the results of a reflection exercise indicated that participants had more positive views of their self-esteem, engagement, and mood when they were engaged in musical activities than when they were not. A series of multilevel models revealed significant reductions in observed antisocial ($B = -1.06 (.300)$, $p < .001$) and staff-reported externalizing behaviors ($B = -9.59 (2.27)$, $p < .001$) for the program overall. However, additional modeling results indicated that reductions in antisocial behaviors were concentrated at one facility, $B = -1.73 (.387)$, $p < .001$, and that at this facility participants' perceptions of their peers were more positive following the program, $B = 19.1 (6.26)$, $p = .002$. These findings are interpreted from a dynamic systems perspective, with an emphasis how the environmental context of each facility may have fostered or constrained the efficacy of the music program. (PsycINFO Database Record (c) 2016 APA, all rights reserved)

The Australian Children’s Music Foundation (ACMF) consistently provide music education in juvenile justice systems throughout Australia and frequently publish evidence around the positive outcomes.

This seminal research has laid foundations to justify music education inclusion in juvenile justice institutions as a means of rehabilitation. An acute paucity of evidence based research regarding this profound complex adaptive challenge and societal problem is abundantly apparent (Australian Public Services Commission, 2007; Sterman, 2006). Yet, there is significant hope for young people who receive clear interventions.

It is incumbent upon the State to provide as much opportunity for rehabilitation and intervention for young people to reduce the likelihood of reoffending into adult life. Long term, investment into youth rehabilitation results in financial savings to the State over the lifetime. Society benefits from a fit and healthy rehabilitated youth, and we believe that Music plays a seminal role in that rehabilitation.

2. Discussion. The field of music psychology explores issues related to music, mind and wellbeing, including development and learning of musical skills at different life stages; the relationship between music and the brain; music and the body; and psychological, sociological and scientific research related to performing and creating music. The evidence base is of interest to music educators, music therapists, behavioural neuroscientists, neuropsychologists, experimental psychologists and more (Rickard & McFerran, 2011).

This evidence base has informed several inquiries and reviews into schools music education in the last fifteen years or so, e.g., Henley (2011); Parliament of Victoria (Education and Training Committee) (2013); Pascoe, et al., (2005). Inquiries and reviews acknowledge the benefits and potential of music education in schools. Submissions and surveys have revealed some fine examples of schools music programs. In equal measure, cycles of neglect

and inequity, together with patchiness of opportunities; significant variability in the quality of teaching and teacher education; and extensive reforms to music curriculum, assessment and reporting has been revealed. Inquiries and reviews acknowledge profound issues, challenges and opportunities in schools music education.

Inquiries and reviews into teaching and teacher education, e.g., *TEMAG Final Report: Action Now: Classroom Ready Teachers* (Australian Government, 2015); *Review of the Australian Curriculum* (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2014), *Australian Curriculum Materials for Students with Disability* (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2012a); *Consultation Draft Australian Curriculum The Arts* (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2012b); and *ACARA Consultation Students with Disability* (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2011) apparently commit to supporting equity and diversity for school aged children and young people including those:

- of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent;
- for whom English is an additional language or dialect;
- from rural and remote contexts;
- from low socio-economic communities;
- with complex special needs;
- with diverse personal or cultural backgrounds or religious affiliations; and
- with gifted and talented abilities.

Recognition of gender diversity in school aged children and young people is indeed of additional concern in recent years.

3. **Final Recommendations.** sMAG (Vic) recognises that it is difficult to clearly define this complex adaptive challenge faced in juvenile justice facilities. There are many interdependencies; and it may be difficult to separate causes from effects. The complex challenges may be managed through innovation in policy and procedures related to juvenile justice. To address youth rehabilitation in detention, new knowledge (innovation) and behavioural change is needed. We particularly are encouraged by the evidence of youth engagement in the ACMF music education programs, and believe the evidence points towards developing music education further in this sector. Studies have identified the positive dimensions of participating in music program in prisons. Findings suggest that prisoners who participate in music programs find them enjoyable and meaningful and results in improved self-esteem (Digard, von Sponeck, & Liebling, 2007; Silber, 2005; Wilson, Caulfield, & Atherton, 2008). A study by Anderson and Overy (2010) in which prisoners aged 16-21 participated in an arts intervention music program identified the positive psychosocial benefits of making music with others. Prisoners expressed feeling a sense of belonging, and increased feelings of educational engagement. At the completion of the arts learning program, it was found that the participants were more likely to join other classes and extend their own knowledge in other areas of learning.

sMAG (Vic) recommends that the Legal and Social Issues Committee takes courage to develop and implement an exemplary community of practice in the juvenile justice system in Victoria (Wenger & Snyder, 2000; Wenger, 2004; Wenger, McDermott & Snyder, 2002), e.g.,

- improved culture, policies, practices and reporting, specifically, policy and research relating to exemplary performing and visual arts programs;
- additional program options for keeping young people out of youth justice centres, specifically, exemplary performing and visual arts programs – such as DIG DEEP at The Arts Centre;
- a more clearly defined role for the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) in overseeing practices that this complex adaptive challenge be mitigated, specifically, improved health and wellbeing of school aged children and young people through exemplary performing and visual arts programs, i.e., Rickard & McFerran, 2011, op cit.

Security and safety of staff, employees and young offenders in the juvenile justice system in Victoria is likely improved. Likelihood of reoffending, and implications of separating young people from their communities and cultures is mitigated. So we recommend that a music education is included in all juvenile justice facilities throughout Victoria.

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