

Response to Education and Training Committee

“To consider whether school music education is hitting the right note.”

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School of Employment	McKinnon Secondary College McKinnon Road, McKinnon 3204 8520 9000 Head of Classroom Music (TF 1.0) and Head of Instrumental Music (TF 1.0)

Terms of Reference 1, 2 and 3:

1. Benefits to students and the broader society of music education

from Tim Lautzenheiser “ Music Advocacy and Student Leadership” (2005) pp 51 - 52

The study of music encourages:

Creativity. ... Music opens new horizons and new possibilities through expanded thinking.

Communication. Music is a language unto itself. Music can only be explained by music. If we do not expose our students to music, we are depriving them of an array of personal understandings that cannot be found in any other part of the school curriculum.

Critical Assessment. Intelligence is the ability to process facts and respond according to the given situation. Emotional stability stems from the capacity to deal with life’s many inconsistencies. Music is one of the few academic disciplines that develops this ability and reinforces learning patterns to allow for greater critical assessment.

Commitment. Success is not measured by what we start but by what we complete. In music classes, students are required to perform the entire composition from beginning to end, to complete the given task. The important qualities of tenacity and persistence establish habits for positive, productive living that are applicable in every situation.

- Students who have been taught music through McKinnon Secondary College have been high achieving academically, and many have worked hard to make a space for themselves as professional musicians. Past music students are now making a name for themselves within the industry.

Some examples of recent students for McKinnon Secondary College

- Danielle Matthews performing the National anthem at the one day cricket.
 - Harry Angus - lead singer/song writer with Cat Empire
 - Andrew Seymour - principal clarinet Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra
 - McKinnon past students are currently undertaking tertiary music courses at over 12 different institutions in Australia
- Community groups often call upon the music department to provide young musicians to help support their activities. Recently local Carols by Candlelight have had students perform, and the upcoming World Day of Prayer.
 - Each assembly (General, sub school) held within the school always has a music item to help draw the community together and become focused on the celebrations that the assembly will bring.
 - Munch then Music concert series is a celebration of the talents of the music students within the school. There is a high level of participation in the audition process and the attendance at the concerts is quite high.

2. General benefits to students as a result of music education

- 2012 saw two students who had challenges with emotional development (aspergers) complete VCE Music Performance. Both students had the challenge of connecting with the music emotionally, and presenting that connection to an audience convincingly. Studying music allowed them to develop their understanding of emotional intelligence, within a safe environment. Formal music study provides students with the opportunity to gain insight into wider range of emotions and connect with those emotions and how they impact on a wider community.
- Each year all music classrooms present students with the challenge of developing their ability to negotiate tasks, standards and teams to complete musical compositions. Whether this be through the composition tasks within the classroom, or the ensemble room by understanding the desires of the composer or arranger to make the music come alive.

- The yearly House Music Festival is a showcase of this. Students select, arrange, lead and perform their own musical choices with confidence. Little, if any, teacher involvement is used to prepare for this event. The night is a culmination and celebration of the success of the music students who have been educated in both the instrumental and classroom music areas.
- The ensemble performance program at the junior level allows access the benefits of music education to a very large number of students in areas such as:
 - Acquiring discipline and enhanced teamwork skills through participation in ensemble rehearsals
 - Development of artistic discrimination and an understanding of the processes and resources required to achieve excellence
 - Increased knowledge and understanding of cultures and environments outside their immediate context
 - Providing a means of self expression and an avenue for exploring risk-taking and dealing with anxiety.

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

- The last two school dux have both been students of the instrumental music program. They have demonstrated an ability, through their learning of instrumental music, a dedication to pursue the highest levels they possibly could. These students have demonstrated the fundamentals of music education:
 - Playing music increases memory and reasoning capacity, time management skills and eloquence
 - Playing music improves concentration, memory and self expression
 - Playing music improves the ability to think
 - Music training improves verbal memory
- There are many times when there are collaborative tasks within the busy school curriculum between music and other subjects. At year 8 both English and German teachers work with the music department to help develop poetry units, often delivered in rap style. This interaction helps the development of rhythm and rhyme within language.

Terms of Reference 4, 5 and 6

4. Music education provided through specific funding for music education;

- This school received a specific allocation of funds in 2012 for providing Instrumental Music staff from the then SMR of approx. \$400,000 which is %75 of the current Instrumental staff cost.
- Note that the level of staffing is considered inadequate to provide fully effective tuition to the nearly 400 students undertaking instrumental music due to the large class sizes (up to 8 students) and the small size and number of teaching facilities.
- The above amount has not increased in 9 years and in fact has been progressively reduced in the last 2 years.
- The local school council does make specific grants available for specific purposes such as a particularly expensive instrument or project.

5. Music education provided through non-specific funding, for example, general student resource package funding;

- Classroom music is funded through the SRP and a significant portion of the shortfall in instrumental music funds has been covered from the SRP.
- The school has been experiencing a reduction in funds allocated through the SRP and is unable to continue funding Instrumental Music in this method.

6. Music education provided through parent contribution;

- The classroom music cost for parents ranges from \$28 at year 7 to over \$110 at year 12
- The charge for instrumental music tuition ranges from nearly \$300 at year 7 to \$400 at year 12
- The amount generated through parent contribution for instrumental music in 2013 is expected to cover the shortfall in funds allocated from the SEVR so no funds will be allocated from the school SRP to instrumental music.
- Note that recent increases in the expected parental contribution are having a noticeable effect on the numbers of students undertaking Instrumental Music tuition. There is a notable increase in students discontinuing tuition who cite cost as the primary reason.

Terms of reference 7 - the extent of music education provision in Victorian schools

- All year 7 and 8 students have access to classroom music education. Generalist classroom is on average 46 minutes per week, whilst there is an ensemble component also to 46 minutes per week. Beyond year 8, students can elect to take part in the classroom music program.
- Students coming into the school have the opportunity to take part in the

instrumental program, again for approximately 46 minutes per week training in small groups. Access to instrumental teachers is often limited to the days that they are working at the school.

- All classroom music teachers in the school have specific tertiary training for Music Education. The classroom teachers are enhancing their performance skills through a wide range of performance opportunities within both the amateur and professional circles.
- 95% of instrumental teachers have specific tertiary training for Music education. All instrumental teachers are practicing musicians in the professional area.
- Classroom music education at McKinnon Secondary College uses a combination of Kodaly, Orff, Suzuki and Dalcroze methodologies.
- Incursions of performing artists come to the school to enhance the curriculum, e.g. African Drum and Dance to Year 8 students; percussion and vocal specialists for specific instruments; Alexander Technique to VCE performance students.
- Class rehearsal time, especially with the junior string and band ensembles, is used to prepare students for many performing opportunities. There are a minimum of 4 performances (1 per term) for the junior ensembles. Class time is also used in preparation for the Annual Concert. These performance opportunities give the students the sense of fulfilment as they have an end point for hard work, and a chance to demonstrate to their parents the ongoing work that has occurred. Each concert is a celebration of the capacity of the students.
- The biennial school production draws a wide range of students, often students who are not actively engaged in the instrumental program, into the performance realm. Students discover the joys of commitment, collaboration and teamwork to stage an amazing production. Administration and parental support for this event is quite obvious.
- Music is highly valued at the McKinnon Secondary College. The principal and administration recognise the level of work and commitment that is shown by the entire department. Extra time for rehearsals, outside of regular rehearsal time is given in preparation for performances. The Senior Stage Band are currently preparing for an international tour, and the administration, parental and wider community support is extremely high.
- There are 15 instrumental teachers that come to McKinnon Secondary College each week. All these teachers run at least one ensemble at the school. Both class teachers and instrumental teachers work collaboratively to teach a balanced music program, supporting the curriculum across the board.
- The ensemble performance program at McKinnon Secondary College is exceptional in that it is the largest and most comprehensive of any non-selective government school in the SEVR. There are nearly 20 regularly rehearsing ensembles plus 5 or more occasional groups involving over 600 students.
- Instrumental ensemble performances average more one per week throughout the

year and take place in a multitude of differing contexts from school assemblies to state-wide competitions and school concerts to international performance tours.

- VELS - is fully implemented at the school. Students are assessed vertically, not horizontally. This allows students to access the higher levels of education as their skills dictate, and not according to the year level that they are in. VELS allows all students to achieve at every level.

Terms of reference 8, 9, 10 and 11:

8. Optimum governance and oversight arrangements

- Considering the increasing requests to take up instruments, a larger music learning space would be beneficial. Specifically a larger number of instrumental teaching rooms, AND spaces for students to be able to rehearse. An understanding in any upcoming construction that storage space (especially for large instruments) is required.
- AusVELS demonstrates a wider range for the higher achieving students to access. A closer link between AusVELS level 10 and VCE or VET programs should be developed, so that students (and teachers alike) can see the skill development needed to achieve higher levels.

9. Optimum use of targeted funding:

- Allow schools that choose to specialise in music education and music performance access to funding for appropriate facilities and staff to support the program.

10. Optimum balance of central mandates and supports:

- Music should continue to be a stand alone subject and not be amalgamated with other Arts based subjects. Having worked in schools where this has occurred, one art form often is sacrificed as the expertise of the teacher is questioned. If we are attempting to achieve a higher standard of music performers and composers within the wider community, music education needs to be fully supported within schools.

11. Optimum balance of music specific funding, non-music specific funding and parent contribution:

- At present there is no minimum level of funding for instrumental music tuition in Victorian government schools, hence it is not available at any level in many schools.
- Staffing for Music Education, both class and instrumental, should be provided as a matter of course at some minimum level for other access to all students.
- Facilities for music tuition should also be provided in all schools.
- The currently inadequate school SRP does not provide a significant level of funding to enable the school to offer specialisation in programs. The school is forced to charge a disproportionately high parent contribution to enable the music program to run at McKinnon Secondary College.