

A submission to the Parliamentary inquiry into music education in Victorian schools.

To the inquiry: I am a violin, viola and orchestra teacher with 30 yrs experience in several school and studio settings, primary & secondary, public & private. I currently teach 0.4 in a state secondary college. Music education delivered in a structured way, teaching the ability to sing and/or play an instrument, and the ability to read and write music, is known to improve children's ability to learn. There is a large amount of research proving this point. Of course musical training also helps personal development in artistic expression, empathy and cooperation.

Despite the well-researched evidence for the benefits of music education, I am frustrated by the fact that instrumental music education is not supported at all in primary schools in Victoria, and is poorly supported in secondary schools.

Starting at a young age is the best time to learn music. Starting at Year 7 level is almost too late. Yet there is no salary for instrumental music teachers in primary schools, and no career path. So music in primary schools, the best time to learn, is patchy, often delivered by young musicians with little experience or qualifications, doing this till something better comes along. You have to be an independent contractor with no holiday or sick pay and no security.

There are problems with the training that musicians receive to qualify them for teaching. It is presently impossible, I think, for a musician without educational qualifications currently teaching in a school to study part-time to gain the education qualification, there is no course on offer anywhere (if I am wrong, please publicize the courses available). The Diploma of Education in the teaching of music seems to have been discontinued everywhere, and even if it exists there is no support for teachers to do this part-time in a supported way (by, for example, having one day off a week to study). So musicians are being forced out of the education system if they want to earn a reasonable income/have a career path. VIT is refusing to register music teachers without Dip.Ed/B.Mus.Ed at present. This is a big problem for many of my colleagues who have taught for many years and have industry and teaching experience but have never been encouraged to gain educational qualifications and are now being squeezed out.

However there are not enough young music teachers coming along to replace them as so few tertiary ins

I hope this inquiry will investigate all this and result in improvements in music teaching in Victoria. Thank you for reading this submission.

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