

Mr Bob Wijnschenk

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SUBMISSION CONTENT:

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Inquiry into the Extent, Benefits and Potential of Music Education in Victorian Schools

SUBMITTED BY:

Name, Address, and Phone (email?)

Date

Bob Wijnschenk

[REDACTED]

Job Title: Instrumental Tutor Guitar, bass guitar, double bass

SCHOOLS OF EMPLOYMENT:

SCHOOL 1 NAME: Berwick S.C.

ADDRESS: Manuka Road, Berwick

PHONE: 8768100

PRIVATE OR STATE: State

Head Of Music: Michael Couche

TIME FRACTION: .2

SCHOOL 2 NAME: Carrum Downs S.C.

ADDRESS: 5/2 Amayla Crescent, Carrum Downs. 3201

PHONE: 97764691

PRIVATE OR STATE: State

Head Of Music: Sam Rowe, Larrissa Maryanovski

TIME FRACTION: .2

SCHOOL 3 NAME: Dandenong H.S.

ADDRESS: 96-102 Princes Hwy Dandenong

PHONE: 97920561

PRIVATE OR STATE: State

Head Of Music: Sheridan Ford

TIME FRACTION: .4

SCHOOL 4 NAME: Frankston H.S.

ADDRESS: 56 Towerhill Rd, Frankston

PHONE: 97837955

PRIVATE OR STATE: State

Head Of Music: Peter Sharp

TIME FRACTION: .1

Terms of reference 1,2 and 3:

Evidence supporting music education in schools;

(1) benefits to society and to individual students wanting to pursue music as a career

Please consider:

- On average, one student in twenty that I have taught over the last twenty years have gone on to play professionally although this may not have be their primary source of income. Some have gone on to play in well known original/ cover bands.
- In the last five years three students achieved high musical achievements by way of procuring community awards scholarships and enrolment into prestigious music institutions. One of those students got the highest mark in the State for his VCE guitar exam in 2010 and was invited to study at the Mount Gambier Academy of Jazz in 2011.
- Our guitar ensembles over the years have always enjoyed occupying that special niche within the music department and school community. They often provide a mix contemporary and traditional styles of music that are ideal for art exhibitions, Information evenings, fetes and fund raisers. The easy portability of the acoustic guitar makes simply and quick to set in a performance space. Similarly the unplugged ambience of the music makes it unobtrusive and ideal as back ground ambience.
- Students take great pride in being in an ensemble. They love entertaining and being part of a group that is cohesive and collaborative. They find great fulfillment in representing their school and presenting to the wider community.
- Having worked in schools in low socio economic areas I have seen the positive transformational change that music had on many students who were deemed 'at risk'. These were students who were academically challenged and almost written off to lead a life on welfare with no goals or clear direction in life. The passion found in music turned that all around. It was like a new found friend who would always be there and would make them feel worthwhile`.
- Having lived in Japan during 2000 made me appreciate how special music education in Australia is. Our students get to come out of classes to attend instrumental music lessons- vastly different to schools across Europe and in Japan. Music lessons in these countries take place either after school or on Saturday morning.

(2) general benefits to students as a result of music education;

Please consider:

- Often I see students, especially those I have coached for a number of years, develop in their emotional intelligence. The growth in confidence and security over those years is remarkable. In the senior years they become self assured, committed and socially well integrated within the band and the school community. Their self respect and belief is a positive example to junior students. They become great ambassadors for the school and often become long term members of Past Student and Staff committee.
- Instrumental music study has always had a positive effect on students. At times it has been a tremendous healer and friend to some who have suffered some type of abuse at home. Student X approached me a number of years ago after having formed a trusting bond and disclosed to me that her father was sexually abusing her. Following my duty on mandatory reporting I contacted the appropriate channels and the matter of protection and prosecution began. This was an extremely difficult time for the victim, family and teachers. Through it all

student X found great comfort and solace in her music. She continued playing piano and wrote many songs dealing with her emotions and mental state. Together we recorded her first solo album months later which in itself was a remarkable achievement for her not to mention a cathartic experience. Today she has moved on and is still playing and writing original music.

- There are countless benefits to learning to play an instrument. Students develop a keen ability to listen not just to music but to people. They also learn to respond and negotiate with band/ensemble members and therefore work more efficiently as a team. These skills are taken into their working life and help to sustain successful careers additionally promoting opportunities and growth both professionally and personally.

Terms of reference 4,5 and 6:

Current provision of music education in Victoria:

(3) music education provided through specific funding for music education;

Please consider:

I work at four schools, and expected to participate in all concerts, hold ensemble rehearsals, attend and have students performing at Art Exhibitions, Information Evenings, fund-raisers, Award nights, and community events. At some schools I hold lessons and rehearsals during period "zero" (8am before school starts) or after school, conduct ensembles during lunch time (either having no lunch time myself or eating at 2pm for 20 - 30 mins). To reiterate, I am expected to participate in ALL of these activities across ALL 4 schools. I do not receive overtime or time in lieu for any of these activities.

At least once a year, I am asked to participate in School Productions including rehearsals out of school hours, often on weekends. I do not receive overtime or time in lieu for any of these activities.

I spend many hours at home devoted to lesson planning including sourcing and transcribing music for students, particularly ensembles and VCE students as it is very rare to have all scores subsidized by the school. I also spend considerable time networking with other guitar teachers to source/swap resources. I do not receive overtime or time in lieu for any of these activities.

I am a standard PAYE employee within the Government secondary system so receive standard employment conditions, however, the only reimbursement/recompense for any of the above activities I receive is in the form of not doing any yard duty or attending school meetings other than those directly related to performing arts.

Terms of Reference 7 - the extent and quality of music education provision in Victorian schools; Please describe your views particularly to the school you're in contact with. Comparisons to provisions you have seen interstate or overseas can be made.

Please consider:

- Is music highly valued in the school?

This question has no one answer as each school has varying value systems toward music. At one school I have never seen the Principal, or Acting Principals attend any Performing Arts Music Concert. On many occasions I have sent out emails to these administrators and they have indicated they may attend, but never do. When they don't attend it sends a message to students, parents and staff that the concerts are not high on their priority. However, at another school the Principal will always attend these concerts and will on occasion personally apologize to me for not attending when other circumstances take precedent.

Another point in specifying whether music is highly valued in schools is the fact of whether the school uses the funds it has been allocated for music education or not.

Departmental sources have indicated that two of my four schools fail to facilitate these funds toward music education and opt to reduce such allocated funding to a marginally smaller percentage.

- Not all schools offer classroom music education? Some only offer instrumental lessons.

Those that offer classroom music do so across all year levels but junior levels often only have one term or one semester per year. Seventy minutes, one period, per week? This is an insufficient amount of instruction and renders students unprepared for the theoretical and aural disciplines of senior music studies. At VCE level, Units 1 and 2, I see this all too often.

- In my instrumental teaching I generally follow a methodology. Within the contexts of Beginner, Intermediate and Advanced I have graded units of work that students must complete. Students are assessed regularly and progress through the units provided all practical/work requirements are satisfactorily completed. Reading, theory, performance, rhythm, aural, technical work are key assessment criteria that reflect VELS indicators.

- In terms of music training I have a Bachelor of Music with a Diploma in Education. Additionally I studied jazz guitar and theory with Bruce Clarke and other prominent jazz figures for a decade. Moreover, I have 30 years of industrial experience in live performance and recording.

- Depending on which school I'm at I always work collaboratively with other ensemble leaders for special events where possible? Every school has an appointed music coordinator

- There are opportunities to extend beyond the school to events for Brass, Woodwind and Strings such as the Victorian State Schools Spectacular, the Wakakirri, regional concerts, but more often than not such is not the case for guitar ensembles with the exception of rock bands. Usually guitar teachers must organise their own events and workshops and find the time out of school to facilitate the running of such initiatives. Battle of The Bands do offer some opportunities for small bands.

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