

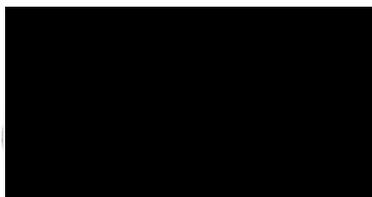
INQUIRY INTO THE EXTENT, BENEFITS AND POTENTIAL OF MUSIC EDUCATION IN VICTORIAN SCHOOLS

SUBMISSION FROM MACLEOD COLLEGE

SUBMITTED TO

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BY



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Thank you for the opportunity to provide this submission to the Parliamentary inquiry group. I imagine, and hope that you will receive many submissions that discuss about how music is an important learning tool and is proven to improve learning in all academic areas. Whilst this is true and I agree totally, I will use this submission to provide an overview of the impact of music at Macleod college, how it operates and it's importance to students and the community. This is not just in a musical sense, but also in terms of social and emotional wellbeing. In putting together this response I have drawn on our own survey and academic result data and input provided by staff, students and parents. All quotes used in this document are from students who are part of the Macleod College Music Academy. If there are any points that you would like to discuss further, I would be more than happy to provide more information for group.

**Jason Ziino
Music Director
Macleod College**

Music Education Currently Offered at Macleod College

Macleod College is co-educational P-12 school of 600+ students. It has a strong history of music education. It was established as one of four specialist music schools in the 1970's and continues to maintain high standards of music performance, creativity and innovation. 1 in 5 students at Macleod are currently involved in the performance program. In 2010, Macleod College relaunched itself as the Macleod College Music Academy.

Students enrolled in the Macleod College Music Academy are provided with access to:

- Tuition in all areas of Strings, wind, brass, percussion and voice with highly experienced and practicing musicians.
- a wide range of performance ensembles
- individualised learning plans
- study of a second instrument
- programs in leadership and teamwork
- regular performance opportunities
- an enjoyable and fulfilling school experience

Amongst our many achievements, Macleod students regularly:

- are among the top VCE Music students in the state, consistently achieving scores of 40+ and receiving invites to perform at Top Class
- receive their first preference at tertiary institutions such as Victorian College of the Arts(VCA), West Australian Performing Arts (WAPA), Monash University and Ballarat Academy of Performing Arts.
- participate in many quality performances
- perform at competitions and festivals such as Generations in Jazz and Royal South Street Eisteddfod

All of these outcomes are achieved despite Macleod having a SFO (School Family Occupation index) of 0.5376 and school fee payment levels of 30% that indicate a much lower level of achievement.

Classroom music education.

Students are provided with specialist music tuition in years P - 12. Years 5-6 receive 75 minutes a fortnight, whilst years 7 & 8 receive 75 minutes a week. Students in years 9-12 may elect to undertake music classes. Both music performance (group and solo) and music investigation are offered at VCE level. Music in years P - 10 is designed in accordance to the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS) and covers a range of approaches to the learning of music fundamentals through creation and evaluation.

Instrumental music education.

Macleod offers tuition in the following instruments

- Flute
- Clarinet
- Oboe
- Bassoon
- Saxophone
- Trumpet
- French Horn
- Trombone
- Tuba
- Violin
- Viola
- Cello
- Double Bass
- Electric Bass
- Drum Kit
- Tuned and Orchestral Percussion
- Contemporary voice
- Tuition is not offered for piano or guitar, but these instruments are included in the ensemble program and covered in the class program.



The following ensembles were run in 2012

- Symphony Orchestra
- Senior Jazz ensemble
- Intermediate Jazz ensemble
- Senior string orchestra
- Junior string orchestra
- Senior concert band
- Year 8 ensemble
- Year 7 ensemble
- Soul band
- Street band
- Choir
- Improvisors ensemble
- Primary winds
- Primary strings
- Primary choir

Who teaches music at Macleod College?

Macleod College has a diverse and highly skilled teaching staff of 14 teachers covering 1.2 EFT classroom music (6 days per week) and 3.6 Instrumental (18 days p/w). This group spends time not only teaching students in individual and group settings and running ensembles, but also meeting with each other to discuss and plan new methods in teaching and how to get the best out of students.

What factors affect the quality of music education at Macleod College?

Teaching staff

When asked this question, students listed this and peer attitudes as their top responses. They link a teachers attitude, approach, knowledge, passion and professionalism directly to their motivation and ability to learn. This is especially so in the early years of learning an instrument when it can be difficult and the lure of giving up is often at its strongest.

It is important that the people who provide this education are highly trained musicians and teachers, that they have an understanding of music as an art form, the mechanics of playing their instrument and how to teach different learning styles.

There is an alarming trend taking place at the moment that appears to be reducing the status in which instrumental teachers are held. The VIT no longer requires IMT's to be fully qualified or have full registration and views them more as coaches than teachers. This diminishes their role and compromises the ongoing effectiveness of programs. Students and parents should expect and be provided with the best possible teachers in all facets of their education.

“The music teachers and students are like family to me...it relaxes me from the many stresses of my home life and year 12”

Culture of the school and peer cohort

“Music is important to me because of the connections it creates between people and how it brings people together. It makes me feel like I belong”

As evidenced by the need for this inquiry, the arts often struggle to remain accepted as an important part of the curriculum at a state wide level. When programs such as instrumental music are co-curricular, they are automatically working to prove to a wide range of people that they are valuable and worthy of students time away from other classes and activities. Often the students involved are the last people that need to be convinced of this, but they do need to be supported.

College level

Macleod College has a strong cultural acceptance of music as an integral part of school life. Students and staff who are part of it know that they are valued and supported in their work. It is understood within the school that students in the music program are developing abilities that complement and enhance their skills in other subjects, regularly leading to better results in a wide range of subjects.

Peer and program level

Music is a team activity as much as a solo pursuit and it is how that team works together that can determine individual outcomes. Music programs are unique in that they are cross age and allow students access based on ability not age. This allows a positive culture to be built and nourished across a school over years more successfully than any other area of a school can.

In 2010, we initiated a program amongst staff and students that created structures based on student led learning, values, behaviors and how we hold each other accountable. This was as a result of student perception data that showed the music students had a belief that they could achieve more.

The cross age and team nature meant that we could work through this process together and involve everyone. We found that students expectations were raised, they challenged each other to improve and they challenged staff to improve. The results have shown a marked increase in students connectivity data as well as their musical output.

The adage *"it takes a village to raise a child"* rings true here. Students cannot and should not be expected to thrive in a vacuum.

Performance opportunities

"music is a selfless art, it is made for you and you make it for others"

Macleod music academy provides students with around 50 performances a year. They provide students with opportunities that are artistically relevant and model a vocational pathway. They are designed to reflect the types of performances that would be undertaken by professional musicians and cater for a wide range of styles and interests.

Equally, performances are a service to our community by providing valuable entertainment for a wide range of organisations. These include;

- Primary School fetes, visits and workshops.
- Local and state government events.
- Community dinners and awards ceremonies.
- Aged care facilities.

Facilities

Macleod has a well resourced music department that accommodates a wide range of musical activities to take place (see below). This allows students access to a wide range of musical opportunities.



What facilities and support is available for music education?

The academy facilities comprise of 4 instrumental teaching rooms, 2 classrooms, a rehearsal room and performance hall. All rooms contain a piano or keyboard. These are used throughout the day for timetabled lessons and students practicing. They are also used out of hours for school community groups to rehearse and perform in.

Equipment is available for all orchestral instruments. Large equipment such as drum kits, grand piano and orchestral percussion are provided for ensembles as well as a large range of instruments for students to hire. Many cannot afford to purchase their own instruments and must hire, fees from this go into repairs and purchasing new instruments.

The current extent of professional development for music education

Most of the professional development is provided through Statewide music PD days and those provided by aMuse and community music victoria.

External music programs

Macleod works with a number of external organisations, not just musical providers to help provide students with the opportunity to improve their musical education. This might take the form of workshops, activities or providing performance opportunities.

These do and have included

- Australian Army School of Music
- Melbourne Symphony Orchestra
- Musica Viva
- Metro trains
- A federation of local schools that provide musical opportunities to students and staff that they may not have otherwise had. This has been developed and led from our program.
- The local community are heavily involved in working with the program offering support and providing performance opportunities for our students.
- Jets Studios/Banyule Council
- Community Music Victoria



View of current funding arrangements for music education in Victorian schools

Funding of music in Victorian schools, deals essentially with the employment of specialist instrumental music teachers or specialist music teachers in primary schools. Music class teachers are provided through school global budgets and is driven by their curriculum needs.

In my opinion, there are two points here;

1) Funding is not enough

There has not been an increase in funding in real terms in at least the last 30 years in the allocation of SRP funded instrumental tuition. This is despite an increase in students numbers across the state. If anything there is a feeling at the moment that the current government would like to cut this funding even further, if not all together.

2) Placement of funding

In my experience there have been two schools of thought from government on how this is approached.

- 1) Create centers of specialism where there are significant amounts of funding provided.
- 2) Spread the funding across as many schools as possible providing a small amount of music tuition in each school.

I have experienced both of these models and have found that at a secondary school level whilst the second model may appear to be a way of providing best access to students, in reality it actually marginalises programs and provides mediocrity. It should be recognised that *"moving funding to other areas"* in the education system is more realistically *"moving a teacher, often an underperforming one, to another school"* often with little regard to whether that teacher is appropriate for the needs and environment they are heading to.

Macleod exists as a music program that was one of the original schools set up as music centers. A significant amount (around 2.4 EFT/9 staff) of our instrumental music teachers (IMT'S) are payed through general student resource package (SRP) funding. The remaining 1.2 EFT (4 staff) are provided through parent contribution. As all students are charged fees, this also allows for us to maintain an affordable program. Without this, a number of students would not be able to access the program in a meaningful way. I can say with certainty a number of former students who are now professional musicians would not have achieved this if the program was financially out of reach. A school such as Macleod must retain a balance that provides quality tuition at financially realistic cost.

Macleod's SRP funding has been higher in the past, but has been reduced by 0.4 in the last 10 years when state governments decided to move funding to other schools. In the next 12 months we will again be forced to remove 0.4 as the government asks us to become fiscally responsible. This is due to a drop in school numbers despite no real drop in music numbers.

It is my opinion that whilst it is important to provide music education in as many places as possible, especially in years P-6, there must be enough schools available for students to access programs of '**Critical mass**'. Students who wish to undertake music as a career need access to the resources that will allow them to grow as musicians and that best model such a career. They need to be exposed to a range of styles and experiences that allow them to understand the range of options available to them. There has to be enough like minded students in the same place to allow this to happen.

From a vocational point of view it is vital to provide these types of programs. It is important to listen to music and undertake class activities, but skills learnt must be able to be applied in a structured instrumental way that challenges students. Through this structure, students can best prepare for tertiary studies and a professional career.

Current status of music education in Victorian schools

To be perfectly honest the fact that the arts in general and music in particular has to justify itself through terms such as '*how it improves academic performance*' is troublesome if not offensive in regards to its status. It should be enough that studying music improves students performance in music and cultural understanding of their place in the world.

Despite this, Victoria still has one of the best state provided music education programs in Australia.

VCE students who receive 40+ study scores are still largely from government schools such as Macleod, Blackburn, Balwyn, Melbourne High, MacRobertson, Ringwood, Eltham and VCASS.

Representation in festivals such as Generations in jazz and Melbourne Bands Festival are usually dominated by these and other schools. We have a very robust and strong program in our state that whilst could be improved, could also be damaged if not treated properly.

"Because if there were'nt (sic) any music, there'll be no songs"

Conclusion

Music and the arts exist so that we can express ourselves and learn how to better interact with others and the world. It is a unique art form that speaks to our souls and crosses cultural, ethnic and political borders. Whether it exists as an accompaniment to or the focus of our lives, it is omnipresent.

Physical wellbeing has long been an issue for our children and action was taken to arrest this by mandating time be dedicated to PE. When Australia began to slide in world rankings in numeracy and literacy this became an improvement focus.

And yet, music is asked to justify itself through a parliamentary inquiry.

It is harder to measure and identify emotional wellbeing and the things that make a well rounded person.

If we don't provide well resourced programs to all, especially those who need it the most, we are doing our children and society a disservice. One day we will wonder why our emotional and cultural capital isn't what it should be.

"It gives me a chance to express myself and it helps me with my learning and gives me a beneficial life experience"