

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

Job Title: Principal

SUBMITTED BY: Name, Email and Phone	Rob Newton [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
Date	
SCHOOL	NAME: The University High School ADDRESS: Story Street, Parkville PHONE: 9347 2022 PRIVATE OR STATE: State REGION: Western Metropolitan SIZE OF SCHOOL: 1200 students MUSIC TEACHER TIME FRACTION: Instrumental - 3.8 from DEECD Classroom - 3.0

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

Music education develops creativity and different ways of thinking in students, which leads to a much broader range of problem solving skills in all areas of learning. **The skills that students develop are transferable to other studies, future occupations and other areas in life –co-operation, collaborative practices and high-order thinking are some of the skills developed in a music classroom. These skills once developed are maintained and are important in a productive work force.**

In relation to careers within music, music education provides a foundation for future employment within the music field; music education based at school provides a safe and supportive environment and allows students to study music without jeopardizing their other studies. Students are also extended and provided with opportunities to experience 'real-world' learning through involvement in ensembles and school orchestras. These experiences better prepare them for a future as a professional musician.

Students enroll in TUHS to study music, especially in Years 10 -12 (for VCE Music courses). Many students that complete the VCE Music Performance course go on to study Music at the tertiary level. Everybody listens to, and has an interest in, music, so it makes sense to develop an even better understanding of it through both performance and analysis. This also leads to a better connection between students, no matter what their socio-economic status in the local community.

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

Students that are involved in music reap extraordinary benefits. Perhaps the most rewarding is that of self-esteem that is developed through performance. Performance does not have to be competitive against others, as in sport. There is no winner or loser. A student that performs in the chorus of a musical develops their self-esteem through being able to achieve success with the help and support of many others. The feeling of collegiality and connection with students across years and ages is invaluable in building their ability to ultimately work and interact in society as a whole.

Other skills developed by studying music – especially a musical instrument – include: Motor skills and hand eye coordination; responsibility and discipline; leadership skills; social skills; and concentration.

(3) benefits to student academic performance as a result of music education;

Some skills developed by studying music include organizational, problem solving, reading and comprehension. All of these skills are essential in many learning areas and can lead to a more rewarding understanding and development across all subjects. Many of TUHS students that excel at different subjects at VCE level have music backgrounds. They do not necessarily go on to study music, but the broader range of experiences and skills is invaluable to their overall development and abilities.

Beyond this, students have to be highly organised in order to manage their various commitments within a music program and good organization skills are essential for success in the final years of secondary education. Students are also able to explore their creative side, to increase the creative capacity and to transfer their creative thinking to other concepts and subjects. Creative thinking enhances a student's capacity to interpret ideas broadly and to find alternative solutions to problems, this is why creativity is now the focus of many educational systems throughout the world.

Terms of reference 4,5 and 6:

Current provision of music education in Victoria:

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

Classroom Music teachers are employed through the student resource package, as experts in their field, to teach theory, composition and music appreciation/analysis.

Some teachers are employed by the DEECD to teach instrumental music. Other money is brought in to the school in the form of levies paid by students learning an instrument. This money is used to fund the employment of additional instrumental music teachers to further enhance the program. Students learning an instrument also incur the cost of providing their own instrument through either purchase or rental. Some students participate in the Orchestra Victoria mOVe program, which is organized as an excursion through the school. Other students, independently, perform with the State School Spectacular and with other music organisations such as MYM or community bands/orchestras.

(5) music education provided through non-specific funding, for example, general student resource package funding;

HUMAN RESOURCING

Classroom Music Provision through the student resource package:

3 x specialist Music classroom teachers

General Year 7 and 8 = 3 x 50 min music classes per week.

Year 7 accelerated students = 2 x 50 mins per week.

Year 9 elective = 3 x 50 min sessions for 25 students.

Year 10 elective = 4 x 50 mins for 25 students.

There is also a Music Performance class at both Year 11 and 12.

Instrumental Music Provision

There are sixteen Instrumental teachers. Eight are provided by the DEECD (total of 3.8) and 8 are on yearly contracts through the school Council and paid for by levies from all students that learn an instrument at the school. All instrumental teachers have an Education qualification and all have tertiary degrees in music performance.

Instruments offered are most orchestral instruments (strings, brass, woodwind and percussion) as well as piano, guitar, saxophone and voice.

In 2013 we have 20 ensembles. Rehearse at lunchtimes and after school (extra curricula).

Teachers employed directly by the school are paid an extra hour for rehearsals. Teachers with the department are not given any other remuneration for taking an ensemble. Classroom teachers that take a rehearsal are not given yard duty.

UHS has two major concerts per year, as well as soirees and assembly performances.

A major Musical is also run every year.

FACILITIES:

3 x Music classrooms (1 keyboard room, 1 computer room and 1 general classroom). Teachers move between the rooms.

7 x purpose built Instrumental teaching rooms plus 1 other room used. IMTs use the same room each week. Most rooms also have a piano.

Some instruments are available for hire from the school, but most students purchase or hire their own instrument.

OTHER:

The school has an overall PD fund provided through the student resource package that is available to all teachers. DEECD employed instrumental teachers are also offered PD through State and Regional Instrumental Music days.

(6) music education provided through parent contribution

All instrumental students pay an arrival levy to the school. This is not directly a per lesson charge. It goes towards the employment of extra IMTs that are employed directly by the School Council and not through the DEECD.

Music excursion costs are covered by the student.

Parents are not generally involved directly in the Music Program; however help out at concerts and the Musical.

Terms of Reference 7 - the extent quality of music education provision in Victorian schools; (This may be a mix of opinion and fact)

Please describe your views particularly to the school you're in contact with.

The teaching of music is not standard across the State. Many schools do not have music as a mandatory part of the curriculum; instead students are exposed to, or have to choose, one area of Performing Arts. Students do not have equal access to a music education. It is dependent on the focus of the school and its resources. Especially in Primary Schools, which often have to choose which Arts subjects to provide.

Classroom Music at UHS is compulsory for all year 7 and 8. They are given 3 x 50 min sessions per week. Other year levels have one class – three or four times per week, as an elective.

The curriculum looks at developing skills in theory, composition, listening and performance. Students have access to ICT, including the programs Sibelius, Sonar XP, Auralia and Musition.

Students are not from withdrawn. Classroom time is not generally used as rehearsal time as it affects the other curriculum areas.

A musical theatre production is put on each year. Rehearsals are after school, lunchtimes and during holidays.

The school community very much values the music program at UHS. Some students enroll at the school specifically to do music. All year 7 students are given an opportunity to learn an instrument and more than half take up the offer. This is due to the support offered by the school administration with the extra instrumental teachers that it employs.

Terms of reference 8, 9, 10 and 11:

Future optimum provision of music education in Victorian schools:

(8) optimum governance and oversight arrangements;

Music should be Mandatory for all primary students. Funding should be put in place to enable all primary schools to run music programs – both performance and appreciation classes. Funding for secondary music programs and instrumental teachers should also be increased so that all schools have the opportunity to develop their performance programs without having to resort to high levies imposed on parents. This would also enable schools to offer a range of instrument choices.

All primary teachers should be required to learn music skills to a level at which they can engage and confidently teach basic skills to primary aged students. This should include the ability to organize and run choir rehearsals and performances.

(9) optimum use of targeted funding;

All schools should be able to administer their own Music program. This provides for the differences that occur between individual schools and the different musical focuses that each school may have. An increase in the funding for instrumental music teachers is essential. Each school should have enough instrumental music funding allocated to make the learning/choice of an instrument as broad as possible. Resources, such as appropriate teaching spaces and accessibility to hiring of instruments through a music company.

(10) optimum balance of central mandates and supports;

Music should be a mandated subject for all Australian school children from prep to year 8. Classroom music teachers at primary schools should have some basic music skills. All school music teachers and instrumental music teachers should be suitably qualified.

There should be a teacher training course for instrumental teachers that gives them a teaching qualification for individual and small group tuition, as opposed to a Bachelor/Diploma of Education that requires classroom teaching and is often irrelevant to Instrumental teachers, who generally teach one on one or in small groups.

(11) optimum balance of music specific funding, non-music specific funding and parent contribution.

Music Education should not be dependent on parents or local organisations. This becomes an issue in different socio-economic areas. The government should provide resources and music education for all students, just as it does in all other curriculum areas.

FURTHER COMMENTS:

The University High School has an outstanding Music Education program due to the historic and current support of its instrumental and classroom music. It offers an extensive range of instruments that are taught, and is therefore a much sort after school by parents of children that want to achieve in music. Many of the students take up the opportunity to be involved in the music program.

It is compulsory for all students in years 7 and 8 to take music classes.

The teaching of Music is essential to give all students the opportunity to develop different skills that would enhance their abilities in all curriculum areas.