

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

SUBMITTED BY: Name, Address, and Phone (email?) Date	PETER SHARP [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
<b>Job Title:</b>	Director, Instrumental Music and woodwind tutor
<b>SCHOOLS OF EMPLOYMENT:</b>	FRANKSTON HIGH SCHOOL
SCHOOL 1	NAME: FRANKSTON HIGH SCHOOL ADDRESS: FOOTE STREET FRANKSTON 3199 PHONE: 9783 7955 PRIVATE OR STATE: STATE
SCHOOL 2	
SCHOOL 3	
SCHOOL 4	
SCHOOL 5	

### 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

I have been Director of Instrumental Music and woodwind instructor at Frankston High School since 1994. In that time our instrumental program has grown from a single concert band of 30 students to close to 200 students and we now have 4 concert bands, 3 stage bands, choir and small ensembles. Lessons on musical instruments are provided on a group basis during class time. All rehearsals occur at the end of the school day.

Our ensembles perform at a variety of school and community functions throughout the year. They perform at music competitions, both in Victoria and interstate and have also performed overseas on occasion. Many of our students undertake AMEB examinations and a large number do VCE 1-4 music performance. Lessons are provided

There are 36 past students who have gone on to study music at a post secondary level. Of these, 11 become performers, 11 became teachers (5 classroom, 3 instrumental and 2 have their own businesses), 1 is employed as a music therapist, 1 is a freelance sound engineer, 10 are still studying. Only 2 did not pursue music as a career after completing their studies.

Two notable past students are Luke Hunter, musical director of professional productions such

as Shout, Jersey Boys and Rocky Horror Show, and Ryan Monroe, bass player with the group Cat Empire. I will also add that I myself am a product of the early days of the instrumental program in that I commenced learning the clarinet at technical school in the early seventies and went on to have a career as a musician with the Royal Australian Navy. I then went to university to study education on completion of my service with the navy.

Our students are encouraged to be involved in making music in the community whilst they are at school and many carry this over into their adult life, whether it is in a 'garage band', community concert band, brass band or solo playing, so their music making and learning can become a lifelong process. Many form friendships which are life long.

Our instrumental music program is an intergral and highly visible part of our school community. Students involved in the program perform often for the school community and earn the respect of teachers and students. Our bands often perform for the wider local community and have helped to foster the good name of the school in that community. Our program has a high reputation within the community and our students are regularly invited to perform at local functions. I also believe that by performing further afield in Melbourne and interstate our program has helped to dispel some of the negative perceptions that are held about the Frankston area.

Our program works closely with the local Japanese friendship society. We have had several trips to Japan representing our school and local community in the city of Susono and in 2005 performed at World Expo during Victoria Week.

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

While students involved in the band program enjoy their music making, and grow culturally and emotionally from this, they are also learning many other skills. Teamwork, confidence, respect for others work, perseverance, commitment and responsibility are all fostered in the band environment. A concert band of 70 students, all working together at the same time, is the biggest team event in the school.

The music program has a place for students of all abilities as music parts and participation are endlessly variable. In the past we have had students who have been blind, deaf, maimed (one of our students only had one arm), and autistic. We have worked with school refusers and other difficult students who may find that music is the only thing that will draw them to school and we have had students with little English.

Below are some responses from our past students who I have invited to reflect on what our music program gave them.

### **Kiri Griffin:**

Having access to instrumental music lessons during my high school years from 1996-2001 opened up the opportunity for me to join the various bands being run at my high school. During my six years of belonging to the various bands, I was able to learn how to cooperate, work as a team, and work toward a common goal with people of different groups and year levels at school, regardless of whether or not we would be compatible if given the choice to interact with each other in a regular school setting. This skill has proven invaluable to me in my current work environment in a Japanese government office. Through the countless concerts, performances and solos, I gained the confidence to speak and perform in front of large audiences, something which I am frequently asked to do in my current job. I will never

forget something said by musician James Morrison at a training seminar at the Mount Gambier Generations in Jazz Festival one year – if you practice and prepare enough for your performance, there is no reason you should be nervous on stage. When preparing for and giving presentations to large audiences, I always remember that advice to increase my confidence. In summary, **instrumental music programs are not just for teaching how to play an instrument.** Being part of the instrumental music program helped me develop confidence and discipline, and the ability to encourage, understand and respect others as well as form relationships, not only how to play an instrument, which, due to my family's financial situation and once timid personality, are qualities I may not have otherwise developed without access to the instrumental music program during my six years at high school.

Kiri Griffin  
Graduate of Frankston High School, 2001

**John Kingma:**

I was thoroughly involved in the Music Program at my High School (Frankston High School) from year 7 right through to year 12. The diversity of bands and ensembles on offer gave me unique opportunities to explore a wide variety of musical styles. I would never have been exposed to Jazz music, for example, if it wasn't for the school stage band, which became an important part of my school life, and helped shaped me into the musician I am today. Thanks to my High School music program, I gained an interest in the Arts early and I ended up studying Music at University and am now doing a Master of Teaching (Music, Secondary). I hope to be able to inspire the next generation of aspiring musicians the way I was inspired. Please don't cut funding to School Music Programs, they are so essential to young people's cultural well-being and fundamental for maintaining a well cultivated society.  
John Kingma.

Cheers - all the best with it!  
John

**James Carter:**

To Whom It May Concern:

I have recently become aware that the current Parliamentary inquiry into instrumental music in schools. My musical education at Frankston High School was the pinnacle of my secondary schooling, and provided a strong foundation for my career as a professional musician. Through music, I gained the confidence to pursue the other areas of my schooling, I established numerous friendships that I still maintain today, and I felt privileged to be a part of a larger group of people that were all working towards a common goal. Without it, I would not have discovered the passion and desire that has fueled my motivation to succeed in life. It has led me to become an in demand musician and music educator in Melbourne, allowed me to complete a B.Mus (Hons) at Monash University and undertake international study at New York University, and allowed me to release my multiple-award nominated debut album. I strongly support the continuation of music education in Victoria, which is and should continue to be a rounded, supportive system that fully caters to the needs of our next generation.

Sincerely,

James Carter

Hi,

My name is Sam Domain, I am a former Frankston High School student who during my time there participated in the music program. I was involved in several bands and undertook private tuition. Music has provided me with an amazing foundation which I believe has guided me through my Undergraduate and Masters University degrees. FHS Music program has opened my eyes musically, provided me with lifelong friendships, experiences, abilities and memories I will never forget.

Kind Regards

Sam Domain



**Nicholas Taylor:**

To Whom It May Concern,

I started learning the saxophone in Grade 5 at Mentone Grammar, having weekly lessons and playing in two bands. When I moved to Frankston High School in Year 8, I continued my instrumental lessons on saxophone, as well as being involved in the school band program. Music was, and still is, a huge part of my life. My time at Frankston High School was particularly rewarding. I became a competent solo performer, performed countless concerts with the school band program, toured overseas to Japan, toured to different parts of Victoria and South Australia, and made life long friends. I still remember my very last school concert. Head of Music Peter Sharp, who was also my saxophone teacher, asked all the graduating Year 12's up on stage and said (paraphrased)

*"This time of year is always really difficult, as we say goodbye to the Year 12 students who have come through the music program. Not many people realise this, but as instrumental teachers, we are some of the few teachers who are involved in their education all the way through secondary school, Year 7 to 12. We see them every week in lessons and band, go on camps, travel to festivals and competitions over the course of 6 years. We watch them grow up to be the young adults you see now. Not many teachers can say that."*

That statement blew me away. I'd never thought of that. The teachers in the music program had literally seen me grow up, been involved in my education more than any other teacher during my secondary schooling.

Their help and guidance has had a huge influence on my life. Instrumental music has taught me the importance of study and practice, how to study and practice effectively, refining learning techniques, how to analyse information, how to socially interact with others, it has given me the confidence to stand in front of 500 people and perform by myself, it has give me the confidence to perform in front of 5 people and be assessed and critiqued. There are so many ways studying instrumental music, and classroom music for that matter, have enriched my life I feel overwhelmed trying to contain it to a few hundred words. Perhaps the best way to show how important the music program at Frankston High School was to me is in my signature.

I hope you take the time to read this.

Regards,

Nick Taylor  
Bachelor of Music (Monash)  
Diploma of Education (VU)  
VCE Music and VET Teacher at Swinburne Senior Secondary College.  
[REDACTED]

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**Nick Taylor**  
VCE Music & VET Teacher  
*Swinburne Senior Secondary College*  
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[REDACTED]

**Kim Starr:**

My name is Kim Starr and am currently an instrumental music teacher at several primary and high schools on the Mornington Peninsula (including Frankston High School). My passion for teaching music stems from the many experiences I have had since I began piano lessons at the age of 5. It was the enthusiasm and support of my piano teacher of approximately 10 years that first inspired me to teach my own instrument to others. After taking up the flute and pursuing the instrument at Frankston High School through my heavy involvement in concert bands and wind ensembles, I knew there was only one route for me when it came to tertiary education - to undertake a Bachelor of Music at Monash University. Through Monash I was lucky enough to travel to Prato in Italy to study chamber music, an experience I will never forget. Of course, this wasn't my first overseas trip made possible by my involvement in a music program. Frankston High school took the Senior Stage Band to Japan when I was in year 12. I was asked to start playing piano in the stage bands when I hit year 11 and I am extremely grateful for this opportunity.

After teaching private lessons in schools for a few years after university, I decided to go back and undertake a Diploma of Education in secondary music teaching (Monash Uni). I am half-way through my studies as I am studying part-time, off campus. I desperately wanted to continue teaching in schools whilst learning more about music teaching so I could observe my students and start implementing ideas. I am looking forward to being qualified by the end of this year!

I am also heavily involved with a community band called the Westernport Regional Band - a group of musicians from primary school age and up (we have a trumpet player in his eighties!) It's interesting that a few other players in the band that came from the same high school (Frankston High) have commented on the way I conduct and run my portion of the rehearsal - that it reminds them of Mr Sharp, our director of music! I like to think that after many years of watching and learning I have picked up a few techniques that work, things that I do automatically when I lead a group of students.

When people ask me what else I am interested in or what else I applied for going into university, I simply say this: music has been a huge part of my life for as long as I remember and it has been the influence of my teachers along the way that led me down this path. I always knew I was going to be a music teacher. What could be better? I get to play my instrument all day and see the faces of my students light up when they achieve. I love imparting the knowledge I have gained on my instruments to my students. I think they know by now that I am a little passionate about the flute as I tend to go off topic and get carried away!

Thank you for taking the time to read about how my musical experiences through the education system have shaped my career.

Kind regards,  
Kim Starr

**Terms of reference 4,5 and 6:**

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

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

(6) music education provided through parent contribution

Instrumental music tuition at Frankston High School is provided through a combination of regional funding, school funding and parent contributions.

We have a total time fraction of 2.2 of instrumental teaching which is provided by the Southern Region. This is divided up into 1.0 of woodwind, 0.8 brass, 0.3 of percussion and 0.1 of guitar.

A further 0.2 of brass is provided for from the schools global budget

Parents pay a contribution of \$240.00pa which is used to provide a further 0.4 of woodwind tuition. This time is on a casual basis. The co-ordination of an instrumental music program takes considerable time and the employment of an extra woodwind teacher is done in part to provide myself with time to co-ordinate the subject.

Parents also contribute for concerts, ameb exams which can be as much as \$120.00, excursions and incursions and music camps which are usually around \$380.00.

Tuition is available on Clarinet, Flute, Alto Sax, Tenor Sax, Baritone Sax, Bassoon, Oboe, Trumpet, Trombone, French Horn, Euphonium, Tuba, Guitar, Bass Guitar, and Double Bass and percussion. The school has a large number of these instruments available for hire which costs \$160.00pa. The money raised from the hire of the instruments is used primarily for maintenance but also to replace worn instruments. The school provides a budget of \$6,000.00pa for instrumental music which is used to buy equipment and music, as well as providing capital grants for the purchase of larger or exotic instruments such as tubas, oboes, and French horns and large percussion instruments such as timpani, tubular bells and xylophone. Some of these instruments may cost as much as \$8,000.00.

Parents are encouraged to buy a musical instrument whenever possible, either new or second hand and instrumental staff assist with this. Prices may range from \$250.00 for a second hand flute to \$5,000.00 for a professional level saxophone. All students who undertake VCE 3 and 4 performance are encouraged to own a semi-professional or professional standard instrument.

Our facilities are extensive. There is a dedicated instrumental music centre which was paid for by school council. It has two large rehearsal studios capable of seating between 75 and 100 students, three individual practice rooms and ample storage. All instrumental lessons and rehearsals are held in this building. We also have a separate classroom for classroom music. All rooms are fully furnished and have a piano, sound equipment and professional quality music stands.

Our ensembles are; Senior, Intermediate, Junior and Training Concert Bands. Senior, Intermediate and Junior Stage Bands. Vocal Group, Clarinet Choir and percussion Ensemble. All rehearsals are after school except Clarinet Choir, Junior Stage Band and Vocal Group which run

at lunchtimes.

Frankston High School holds three major concerts a year; Winter Concert, Cabaret night and End of year concert, with many smaller concerts in between such as VCE recital night and year seven soiree. We also do many performances for the local community such as the Frankston Ladies Choir gala concert, Frankston Rotary Farmers Market and Jazz in the Park at Cruden Farm. We also attend all regional festivals, and usually have two or three students involved in the Joining the Chorus orchestra each year.

**Terms of Reference 7 - the extent and 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. Comparisons to provisions you have seen interstate or overseas can be made.

Frankston high school has two separate music departments, instrumental music and classroom music. Each department has its own co-ordinator and budget. Although separate subjects the two departments work very closely, especially in regard to performances and especially at the VCE level. In this regard instrumental music is considered to be a co-curricular subject.

Instrumental music is offered to all year levels at Frankston High School by specialist qualified teachers. Students in junior levels have their lessons on a group basis and depending on their instrument may be in groups of up to ten students. As they progress through the program and their music becomes more complex their class sizes are reduced until they are on a one to one basis when they get to VCE. As mentioned earlier the student's work is highly regarded by the school community. The schools administration is highly supportive of instrumental music as is evidenced by the provision of excellent facilities and equipment.

Class room music is a core subject for one semester in year 7. It is not provided in year 8 but 4 music subjects are offered in year 9 and 10 as an elective's. We also have separate classes for VCE 1 and 2 and VCE 3 and 4 music performance. We would like to see more continuity in classroom music in the junior level but understand that this is difficult given other curriculum requirements.

Our instrumental tuition time is at an adequate level but has not expanded for several years. This is due mainly to a lack of funding. We feel that parents are already contributing all they can and to ask for more money from them would be prohibitive. The only way to expand our program is to receive more funding from the region. There has been little or no increase in instrumental funding for some time and our region has grown considerably. There can be no denying that the quality of instrumental music in our region has suffered accordingly.

Assessment of instrumental music is not VELs based but is done using our own criteria. Many students undertake AMEB examinations, not as a means of assessment but as another level of the music making experience and as a preparation for VCE music performance.

**Terms of reference 8, 9, 10 and 11:**

Future optimum provision of music education in Victorian schools:

(8) optimum governance and oversight arrangements;

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Here are the other three terms listed: You can chose whether or not this is relevant to your concerns.

(9) optimum use of targeted funding;

(10) optimum balance of central mandates and supports;

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

For instrumental music to improve or possibly even survive in Victorian schools I feel that there needs to be an increase in funding for this subject. I think that a mix of regional and school/parent based funding works well. The majority of parents who have students involved in instrumental programs can see its value and understand the need to contribute towards the running costs. I do not think that they are able to carry all the costs however and there should be a substantial level of funding from the state government.

The work of the Southern region co-ordinators has in my opinion been excellent and I believe that regional co-ordination of instrumental music is essential, not only to organize band festivals and the like but professional development for teachers and to represent music to the government and interested bodies.

Instrumental teachers must most definitely have a degree on their specialist instrument but I think there is a need for education training geared specifically towards instrumental teaching and, most importantly, ensemble direction. The ensemble needs of schools are quite specific and little understood by current graduates.

FURTHER COMMENTS: