

From: [REDACTED]

Dear Sirs,

I understand that a review is being undertaken into funding for Instrumental Music in schools. As a parent of two students who have both participated in this program at their schools- Eltham North Primary School and St Helena Secondary College I wish to draw your attention to the enormous difference it has made to their academic and social wellbeing. Both children started learning a musical instrument in primary school- one learned the piano and the other guitar. As parents we felt it was important to bring music into their lives as a means of learning something new and as something they could take with them throughout their lives. Since starting to learn to play these instruments they have both blossomed so much and they love having the ability to play them in school events and for pleasure at home.

My eldest son has taken exams in piano since primary school and has found such a love for playing the piano that he wishes to study music once he leaves school this year. In fact, since starting Secondary School he has also learned to play the clarinet, which he has taken exams in, and saxophone, both of which he plays in the school bands. The instrumental lessons are taught extremely well and the costs are very reasonable compared to private lessons - he has private lessons for piano as unfortunately the school are unable to provide piano lessons. He has lessons at school for both clarinet and saxophone which he especially enjoys because the teachers are so proficient at bringing out the best in him. He actually said to me the other day that he is enjoying playing the clarinet more than the piano this year because his teacher is making it so interesting and enjoyable and she is so good at teaching it. I never thought I would hear him say that!

My other son had guitar lessons at Primary school and loved being able to learn in an instrument. He has private guitar lessons now as these are not available at Secondary School but plays guitar in the school band. Obviously the cost of them both having private lessons is much higher than they would be at school, but we feel it such an important part of their lives we are willing to make that sacrifice financially for them. Obviously if it could be available through the school it would be even better. One of the other advantages of learning an instrument is the way it helps them academically as well. Both have improved academically and are achieving really good results in their other subjects and we are sure that their love of playing music has helped in this as it is known to improve their maths especially. Also it gives them something they can do to relax especially when dealing with the stresses of exams and homework etc. There is nothing better than hearing your children playing music for pleasure and not necessarily because they have to. It makes us realise that music has become an integral part of their lives.

If these programs had not been available in primary and secondary school then my children may not have had the opportunity to even start to learn to play an instrument. Their lives would have been the poorer for it! The teachers are extremely dedicated to teaching them to the highest standard and love seeing them appreciate what they are teaching them. We cannot give the music teachers enough thanks for what they have brought to our sons' lives and we would love for all students to have the opportunity to learn an instrument without the worry of cost or availability of it in their school.

We hope you take note of the difference these programs make in peoples' lives not just in the short term but as a life-long love.

Yours,

Moira and Colin Wilkins