

## **REASONS WHY INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC SHOULD CONTINUE IN SCHOOLS - Neil Lemmon**

### **Student development**

Much has been written and said about the benefits of music to students' cognitive development, including authors as diverse as scientists, neurologists, doctors, educators, economists, historians, and even prominent members of private enterprise. Music remains an important meta-language for students, along with literacy, numeracy, other languages, fine arts and physical education, disciplines of which enhance each other.

By experience I have found that music also develops students socially through interaction with others relating to various ensembles, orchestras, concert bands and popular bands. These activities contribute heavily to the student's emotional intelligence, social development, personal confidence, mental health and general happiness at school.

One very important reason for music continuation in schools is that recalcitrant students on the verge of quitting education altogether (prematurely) have been turned around and continued their education due to their participation and enjoyment of music.

At VCE level, I have personally assisted students of music so that they are accepted and prepared for tertiary education, (not necessarily studying music at university). Henceforth, music has assisted students to continue various disciplines of tertiary study.

### **Financial Implications**

Music programs, unlike other aspects of education, are already partially and substantially funded by parents. If state funding were to be reduced or finished, this would accrue a massive impact upon the finances of parents, resulting in the cancellation of music programs and hence lack of development for students.

Music in itself has generated my own personal finances long before I worked as an employee of the State Education System. This is generally the case with most Instrumental Instructors I have met with over the years. Generally we come from a private background, giving a musical education that goes far beyond student's experiences at school.

Hence the ambitious students can also do well financially as a result of their musical education. Students I have taught financed their own equipment through performing at various markets, festivals, concerts and events.

### **Political Implications**

With the advent of funding cuts for Instrumental teaching, the repercussions would be felt across the entire school system causing massive unpopularity and anger towards the State Government. This unpopular decision would affect roughly 30 percent of parents (if not, more) throughout just about every Secondary College throughout Victoria. I personally would not like to see any State Government become that unpopular as this would destabilise our political system.

### **In Conclusion**

Already statistics are indicating that Australia is lagging behind other countries in student education performance. Funding cuts to music education will not improve this outcome and everyone from students to politicians will be worse off as a result.