

From: "Foley, Carissa E" [REDACTED]

To whom it may concern,

I wish to highlight the important of music education within public schools in Victoria. I am a product of the public schooling sector and am very proud to say that I am where I am today is because of the instrumental music program at my school. I was inspired by my music teachers to pursue my dream of becoming a teacher. They believed in me and eventually, in VCE, I did too. I loved playing music but I never thought I'd be good enough to go to Uni to study it. If it wasn't for these teachers and the opportunities given to me in the music program I wouldn't be in a job that I truly enjoy coming to each day.

I continued my music studies at University and also did an Education degree before choosing to move back to the country to teach. I elected to go to a small secondary school with barely any instrumental music program and was determined to build it up. Minimal funding has already impacted the degree of what I can do (purchasing instruments, paying for instrumental teachers, etc) and taking away this funding will cause major issues in the school's quest to have an instrumental music program.

I am proud to say that over the 3 years I've been at this school I have not only seen the music program grow but I have seen student confidence develop and friendships formed between students who may not have any other interest in common other than music.

There are students at the school who have learning/social difficulties (as in all schools). Those students who have taken up learning a musical instrument have shown remarkable improvement in their studies as well as had a huge boost in confidence. I have one story that has had a really big impact on me and it is one I would like to share with you. In my first year at this school I had a student in Yr 7 who wanted to learn the flute. She has Asperger's Syndrome and was a very shy person. She would barely talk to anyone in her class and was often left alone due to not have the social ability to make friends. Within the first term of her learning a musical instrument, her confidence exploded! She is now in Yr 10 and has been regularly performing in front of audiences of varying sizes for the past 3 years or so. If funding was removed from music education we would miss seeing developments like this and students would move through school as 'just another student' with the chance of falling through the cracks. There are so many more examples I could share with you, but this is the one that has stuck with me the most.

As for students who don't have difficulties, I think about students like myself. It worries me that there won't be music teachers to continue providing tuition in the future if funding is removed. If I didn't have the support and belief from my music teachers I wouldn't be working where I am today. I am a very passionate music teacher who is constantly seeing students who are happy and learning in an effective manner. Learning a musical instrument increases concentration levels in general and boosts student morale and friendships.

Taking away music education in schools is a bad choice. We should be encouraging students to be creative and think outside the square- music is one of the very rare subjects that genuinely allows for this to happen.

Thank you for your time,  
Carissa