



PARLIAMENT OF NEW SOUTH WALES

JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON ARTS AND MUSIC EDUCATION AND  
TRAINING IN NEW SOUTH WALES

# Arts and music education and training in New South Wales

Report 1

December 2024



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Joint Select Committee on Arts and Music Education and  
Training in New South Wales

# **Arts and music education and training in New South Wales**

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Joint Select Committee on Arts and Music Education and Training in New South Wales

"December 2024"

Chair: Ms Julia Finn MP



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# Terms of reference

## Inquiry into arts and music education and training in New South Wales

### TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. That a joint select committee be established to inquire into and report on arts and music education and training in New South Wales, and in particular:
  - (a) the quality and effectiveness of arts and creative industries education, including:
    - (i) progress towards a long-term goal of quality arts and creative industries education
    - (ii) the present level and status of formal arts and creative industries education across all levels, including primary, secondary, and tertiary levels
    - (iii) robust and evidence-based arts and creative industries education in initial teacher education courses in the tertiary sector
    - (iv) the role of arts organisations and creative professionals in education and the development of creative skills across the arts
    - (v) the contribution of the national performing arts training organisations in New South Wales and the adequacy of the support they receive
    - (vi) the efficacy of the current primary and secondary school curriculum in delivering learning outcomes in arts and creative industry-related subjects
    - (vii) the availability of support for teachers and principals in delivering quality arts education, and ensuring that an inclusive approach is taken towards resource allocation for regional schools across New South Wales
    - (viii) the most effective approach for the arts, culture, and creative industries to co-ordinate with the education system to support the development of creative skills
    - (ix) ways that students can learn entrepreneurial skills and gain industry experience to ensure they are job-ready
    - (x) measures of success in arts education
    - (xi) factors influencing student decisions to pursue further arts education, including but not limited to course choice, course location and the method of study
    - (xii) notable approaches to arts and creative industries education in other jurisdictions
  - (b) the quality and effectiveness of music education and training, including:
    - (i) progress towards a long-term goal of quality music education, including actions to address identified barriers
    - (ii) the present level and status of formal music education across all levels, including primary, secondary, and tertiary levels
    - (iii) robust and evidence-based music education in initial teacher education courses in the tertiary sector
    - (iv) the role of regional conservatoriums and creative professionals in music education
    - (v) the efficacy of the current primary and secondary school curriculum in delivering learning outcomes in music related subjects



- (vi) the availability of support for teachers and principals in delivering quality music education and ensuring that an inclusive approach is taken towards resource allocation for regional schools across New South Wales
- (vii) the most effective approach for the music and the creative industries to co-ordinate with the education system to support the development of creative skills
- (viii) ways that students can learn entrepreneurial skills and gain industry experience to ensure they are job ready
- (ix) measures of success in music education
- (x) factors influencing student decisions to pursue further music education, including but not limited to course choice, course location and the method of study
- (xi) notable approaches to music education in other jurisdictions, and

(c) any other related matters.

2. That the committee report by 13 December 2024.<sup>1</sup>

The terms of reference for the inquiry were referred to the committee by the Legislative Council on 15 May 2024.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The original reporting date was 29 November 2024 (*Minutes*, NSW Legislative Council, 15 May 2024, pp 1158-1160). The reporting date was later extended to 13 December 2024 (*Minutes*, NSW Legislative Council, 24 September 2024, pp 1543).

<sup>2</sup> *Minutes*, NSW Legislative Council, 15 May 2024, pp 1158-1160.

## Committee details

### Committee membership

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<b>Ms Julia Finn MP</b>	Australian Labor Party	<i>Chair</i>
<b>Dr Joe McGirr MP</b>	Independent	<i>Deputy Chair</i>
<b>Mr Kevin Anderson MP</b>	The Nationals	
<b>Ms Abigail Boyd MLC</b>	The Greens	
<b>Ms Liza Butler MP</b>	Australian Labor Party	
<b>Hon Anthony D'Adam MLC</b>	Australian Labor Party	
<b>Ms Judy Hannan MP</b>	Independent	
<b>Hon Jacqui Munro MLC</b>	Liberal Party	
<b>Hon Emily Suvaal MLC</b>	Australian Labor Party	

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### Secretariat

Holly Rivas, Principal Council Officer  
Gareth Perkins, Administration Officer  
Katie Pollock, Administration Officer  
Kate Mihaljek, Director

## Chair's foreword

I am pleased to deliver the report into arts and music education and training in New South Wales.

Creative arts are a cornerstone of human expression and cultural identity. Quality arts and music education provides an opportunity for young people to explore their creative skills and significantly impacts their cognitive and social development. Moreover, arts and music also shape culture and foster a truly innovative and creative New South Wales.

During this inquiry we heard directly from students, their families, educators and industry representatives about how we can ensure that quality arts and music education is available to everyone, as well as investigate how we can better support our arts and music sectors.

The committee found that every child in New South Wales deserves the benefits of a high-quality, richly complex creative arts education. However, due to a range of socio-cultural factors, including a focus on STEM subjects and standardised testing such as NAPLAN, arts and music education is undervalued, leading to broader and systemic neglect in investment. In addition, economic, geographic, cultural and social barriers prevent equal access to a quality arts and music education in New South Wales. Further, we heard of the significant disparity in the delivery of creative education, particularly in music, across school systems.

This report makes recommendations that address these gaps in service delivery in the New South Wales education system from primary to tertiary levels, through policy changes and greater investment. These recommendations support a fundamental shift to reprioritise arts and music not only within schools and creative industries, but within society as a whole.

Exceptional arts and music education in schools relies upon the quality training and support of the teachers. Teachers play a vital role in 'lighting the spark' in students and instilling a passion for arts and music. However, stakeholders identified barriers for those wanting to pursue qualifications as an arts or music teacher, including limited study options and opportunities for long-term employment.

We also heard that public primary school teachers lack confidence to teach creative arts subjects, particularly music. To rectify this concern, the committee has made recommendations to enhance creative arts subjects in Initial Teacher Education and to increase funding and support for professional development in this area.

The committee also made recommendations to improve the creative arts curriculum in New South Wales schools. In particular, fast tracking the provision of training material to facilitate the delivery of the new K-6 Creative Arts Syllabus, considering the development of a Music Education Plan for New South Wales, and supporting initiatives that encourage students to enrol in Stage 6 arts and music courses. We also recommended that the NSW Government review opportunities to embed First Nations music in the curriculum.

Arts and music organisations and the live entertainment sector are a key aspect of the creative ecosystem in New South Wales. While recent NSW Government initiatives, such as the Creative Communities policy, are a step in the right direction, we have made recommendations that address the acute skills shortage in creative industries as well strengthening formal tertiary education and training pathways for those wanting to pursue their passion for arts and music.

Regional conservatoriums are vital to providing music education in regional communities. The committee has recommended that the NSW Government increase funding to these organisations and explore opportunities to formalise and strengthen their relationship with the NSW Department of Education.

We have also made recommendations to support a vibrant and skilled creative arts sector in Western Sydney, including exploring opportunities to open a Music Hub in the region.

On behalf of the committee, I extend our deepest gratitude to all who contributed to this inquiry. Thank you to all the teachers, musicians and artists, students, philanthropic organisations and industry professionals for sharing their expertise and experiences. Your contributions have been extremely valuable and have informed our comments and recommendations.

I thank my fellow committee members for their diligence, enthusiasm and collegiate approach throughout this inquiry.

Finally, I would like to thank the committee staff for their work throughout the inquiry, and in the preparation of this report.

Ms Julia Finn MP  
**Committee Chair**

## Findings

- Finding 1** 18  
Every child in New South Wales deserves the benefits of a high-quality, richly complex creative arts education.
- Finding 2** 19  
That creative arts are undervalued in education, leading to broader and systemic neglect in investment.
- Finding 3** 43  
The limited availability of specialist arts and music teaching degrees in tertiary institutions has diminished pathways for students wanting to become creative arts teachers.
- Finding 4** 62  
That it is essential for all students in New South Wales primary schools to receive quality, sequential and ongoing music learning.
- Finding 5** 87  
Practical exams and assessment for performing arts students has long been the hallmark of achieving excellence in their subject areas.
- Finding 6** 87  
That the draft Stage 6 Drama Syllabus does not meet community expectations and needs extensive revision.
- Finding 7** 88  
That the draft Stage 6 Music 1, Music 2 and Extension Music syllabuses do not meet community expectations and need extensive revision.
- Finding 8** 103  
The creative arts landscape in New South Wales is dynamic and multi-faceted. Recent NSW Government initiatives, such as the *Creative Communities* policy, have been essential to invigorating this space. However, it is vital to address the acute skills shortage in the creative industry.
- Finding 9** 104  
Formal pathways for tertiary arts and music education and training in New South Wales are diminishing making it harder and more expensive for students to pursue their passion for arts and music.
- Finding 10** 126  
Economic, geographic, cultural and social barriers prevent equal access to a quality arts and music education for students as well as prospective teachers in New South Wales.
- Finding 11** 127  
Regional conservatoriums provide excellent music education and services and foster creativity and connectedness in regional communities in New South Wales.

## Recommendations

- Recommendation 1** 44  
That the NSW Government explore opportunities to build further partnerships between artists and musicians and external arts organisations and schools.
- Recommendation 2** 44  
That the NSW Government require initial teacher education to include at least two units of mandatory study in Visual Arts, Music, Drama and Dance education.
- Recommendation 3** 44  
That the NSW Government explore introducing arts and music as areas of primary specialisation in initial teacher education courses to allow primary teachers to specialise in individual creative arts subjects and strengthen employment pathways for specialist music teachers.
- Recommendation 4** 45  
That the NSW Government consider introducing a teaching area code for primary music teachers to assist with the long term employment of music teachers in primary schools.
- Recommendation 5** 45  
That the NSW Government increase incentives and support including teacher release provisions for relevant professional development in the creative arts.
- Recommendation 6** 45  
That the NSW Government fund and expand arts and music professional development programs to enhance teachers' confidence to teach music in primary schools.
- Recommendation 7** 46  
That the NSW Government consider opportunities to increase dedicated funding for organisations that deliver arts and music education and training, with additional consideration of those providing specialist programs to vulnerable cohorts of young people including youth-at-risk, young people from low-socio-economic backgrounds, young people with disability, those living in regional and rural areas and First Nations young people.
- Recommendation 8** 46  
That the NSW Government develop an engagement framework for organisations delivering arts and music educational programs that streamlines processes and includes evaluation measures.
- Recommendation 9** 46  
That the NSW Government conduct a state-wide audit or assessment to identify areas where arts and music programs are not being delivered.
- Recommendation 10** 47  
That the NSW Government seek to work with the Music Teachers' Association of NSW to consider opportunities to provide adequate regulation of the industry, including that the standards of regulation should take into consideration the ability of non-accredited tutors to deliver basic music tuition where appropriate.

- Recommendation 11** **62**  
That the NSW Government fast track the development of training and guidance materials for primary school teachers to facilitate the effective delivery of the new K-6 Creative Arts Syllabus.
- Recommendation 12** **63**  
That the NSW Government consider developing a Music Education Plan for New South Wales to support the delivery of quality, sequential and ongoing music education in New South Wales primary schools, but is not limited to:
- setting an explicit standard as to what constitutes quality, sequential and ongoing music education
  - mandating a minimum amount of music education per week up to Stage 4 with a teacher (generalist or specialist) confident and capable of delivering quality music learning
  - setting ambitious targets for statewide access to primary music education
  - mandatory reporting and data collection of the delivery of music education
  - mandatory biennial reporting on progress in implementing the quality music education plan.
- Recommendation 13** **64**  
That the NSW Government work with University Admissions Centre to develop a 'myth-busting' awareness campaign targeted at students, parents and schools to provide accurate information about HSC creative arts subjects in relation to the ATAR and scaling.
- Recommendation 14** **64**  
That the NSW Government explore funding the Intensive Studio Study course at the National Art School to allow students the opportunity to expand and enhance their skills in visual arts.
- Recommendation 15** **64**  
That the NSW Education Standards Authority consider the reintroduction of Visual Arts Extension in their upcoming review of the Stage 6 Visual Arts curriculum.
- Recommendation 16** **65**  
That the NSW Government explore opportunities to incorporate the VET Music Industry course, particularly its music creation and sound production components, into the Stage 6 Music 1 and Music 2 courses.
- Recommendation 17** **65**  
That the NSW Government look for ways to further integrate Media Arts into the existing curriculum.
- Recommendation 18** **88**  
That during curriculum reviews and reforms, the NSW Education Standards Authority:
- publish all public submissions
  - provide detailed reasoning when releasing second drafts for consultation.
- Recommendation 19** **89**  
That the NSW Government and the NSW Education Standards Authority ensures the Stage 6 Drama and Music syllabuses are reflective of community expectations and incorporates the

feedback provided by community members of the Technical Advisory Groups, Targeted Assessment Consultations and the wider public through the Have Your Say period.

- Recommendation 20** **103**  
That the NSW Government fund industry-based placements and traineeships including for school experience placements to help performing arts organisations address current skills shortages and build their future workforce.
- Recommendation 21** **104**  
That the NSW Government make representations to the Australian Government to address the cuts to university courses in the arts and music and increase HESC-HELP and FEE-HELP support for students studying courses in these areas.
- Recommendation 22** **104**  
That the NSW Government review the courses on the NSW Smart & Skilled List and reduce the course fees in the Vocational Education and Training sector for courses in arts and music, including consideration of expanding access to courses with a focus on building business and financial skills relevant to a career in the creative industries.
- Recommendation 23** **105**  
That the NSW Government explore opportunities for exemplary private providers, such as the National Art School, National Institute of Dramatic Art and the Australian Film Television and Radio School, to be considered for core operational and per-head support, as part of a broader strategy towards lowering fees for students.
- Recommendation 24** **105**  
That the NSW Government establish a working group of a diverse range of relevant stakeholders, including young people, on flexible arts learning including micro-credits, badging and online learning for practical courses.
- Recommendation 25** **106**  
That the NSW Government consider opportunities to subsidise accommodation for Sydney-based arts training organisations to alleviate the pressures on these students.
- Recommendation 26** **127**  
That the NSW Government increase funding to regional conservatoriums and review key performance measures and service gaps, especially around engagement with schools, under the Regional Conservatorium Grants Program, to ensure sustainable future growth.
- Recommendation 27** **127**  
That the NSW Government formalise and strengthen the partnership between the NSW Department of Education and regional conservatoriums and establish innovative models to support and enhance the role of regional conservatoriums, including in conjunction with Create NSW and the NSW Department of Education.
- Recommendation 28** **128**  
That the NSW Government implement targeted funding programs to small and medium arts and music organisations to deliver training and mentorship programs that will build a vibrant and skilled creative arts sector in Western Sydney.



**Recommendation 29**

**128**

That the NSW Government explore opening a Music Hub in Western Sydney, based on the conservatorium model, to provide culturally diverse music education in the region.

**Recommendation 30**

**129**

That the NSW Government review ways in which First Nations music can be embedded in the New South Wales Curriculum and provide funding and incentives to schools to connect with First Nations creative artists to provide music education in schools.

## Conduct of inquiry

The terms of reference for the inquiry were referred to the committee by the Legislative Council on 15 May 2024.

The committee received 125 submissions and three supplementary submissions.

The committee held four public hearings at Parliament House in Sydney.

The committee also conducted 11 site visits to the following locations:

On 29 July 2024:

- Australian Film Television and Radio School in Moore Park
- the National Institute of Dramatic Art in Kensington
- the National Arts School in Darlinghurst
- the Australian Institute of Music in The Rocks

On 22 August 2024:

- Bowral High School in Bowral
- Hume Conservatorium of Music in Goulburn

On 2 September 2024:

- Merrylands Public School in Merrylands
- St Marys North Public School in St Marys

On 18 November 2024:

- Sydney Conservatorium of Music in Sydney
- TAFE NSW Eora in Darlington
- Bulli High School in Bulli
- Wollongong Conservatorium of Music in Keiraville.

Inquiry related documents are available on the committee's website, including submissions, hearing transcripts, tabled documents, answers to questions on notice and the online questionnaire report.

# Chapter 1 Background

This chapter overviews the provision of arts and music education and training in New South Wales.<sup>3</sup> Initially, the chapter sets out the key national and state cultural and creative policies. It then outlines the delivery of arts and music education across primary, secondary and tertiary education in New South Wales. The chapter concludes by detailing the role of arts and music organisations in providing education and training.

## Key cultural and creative policies

1.1 Recent cultural and creative policies at the federal and state level set the direction for the arts sector for the coming decade. The Australian Government's National Cultural Policy *Revive* and the NSW Government's *Creative Communities NSW Arts, Culture and Creative Industries Policy 2024-2033*, both emphasise the importance of fostering creativity, inclusion and cultural participation through the arts and provide the backdrop for the establishment of this inquiry. These policies are outlined in turn below.

### *Revive*

1.2 The Australian Government's National Cultural Policy *Revive* was released in January 2023. *Revive* is a five-year plan to renew and revive the arts, entertainment and cultural sector in Australia.<sup>4</sup> It focuses on fostering creative expression, supporting First Nations cultures, improving industry sustainability and ensuring equitable access to cultural experiences across Australia.<sup>5</sup>

1.3 *Revive* established a new body, Creative Australia, to provide greater strategic oversight and engagement across the creative sectors.<sup>6</sup>

1.4 The following new bodies were also introduced within Creative Australia:

- a First Nations-led Board
- Music Australia
- Writers Australia
- Centre for Arts and Entertainment Workplaces.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Noting the terms of reference of the inquiry distinguish between 'arts' and 'music', for consistency purposes in the report, arts will refer to visual arts, drama, and dance. However, it is noted that when inquiry participants reference 'arts' it may be to the distinct subject of visual arts.

<sup>4</sup> Commonwealth of Australia *Revive: a place for every story, a story for every place – Australia's cultural policy for the next five years*, 2023, p 16.

<sup>5</sup> Commonwealth of Australia *Revive: a place for every story, a story for every place – Australia's cultural policy for the next five years*, 2023, p 16.

<sup>6</sup> Commonwealth of Australia *Revive: a place for every story, a story for every place – Australia's cultural policy for the next five years*, 2023, p 17.

<sup>7</sup> Commonwealth of Australia *Revive: a place for every story, a story for every place – Australia's cultural policy for the next five years*, 2023, p 17.

- 1.5 *Revive* has ten principles for guiding government action and investment over the next five years, including:
- Australian students have the opportunity to receive an education that includes culture, creativity, humanities and the arts.
  - All Australians, regardless of language, literacy, geography, age or education, have the opportunity to access and participate in arts and culture.
  - Artists and arts workers have career structures that are long-term and sustainable, supported by vocational pathways.<sup>8</sup>
- 1.6 *Revive* also includes an action to undertake a scoping study to understand current and emerging workforce challenges and skills needs for cultural and creative workers.<sup>9</sup>

### ***Creative Communities***

- 1.7 In December 2023, the NSW Government released *Creative Communities*, a 10-year whole-of-government inclusive arts, culture and creative industries policy.<sup>10</sup> *Creative Communities* aims to:
- grow creative industries throughout New South Wales
  - ensure all New South Wales citizens have the opportunity to contribute and experience arts and culture
  - ensure equitable access to sustainable career pathways and employment opportunities for New South Wales creatives.<sup>11</sup>
- 1.8 *Creative Communities* is designed to complement *Revive*.<sup>12</sup> *Creative Communities* focuses on implementing 'Revive' by supporting and investing in the cultural ecosystem in New South Wales.<sup>13</sup>
- 1.9 *Creative Communities* emphasises the role of arts in enhancing community wellbeing, social cohesion and economic development.<sup>14</sup> It recognises that 'young children who participate in cultural and creative activities are much more likely to do well at school, find connections and thrive in later life'.<sup>15</sup>
- 1.10 *Creative Communities* recognises that the creative industries are economically impactful and are a critical segment of the New South Wales economy, particularly in relation to jobs, export

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<sup>8</sup> Commonwealth of Australia *Revive: a place for every story, a story for every place – Australia's cultural policy for the next five years*, 2023, p 19.

<sup>9</sup> Submission 33, Creative Australia, p 3-4.

<sup>10</sup> Submission 92, NSW Government, p 4.

<sup>11</sup> Submission 92, NSW Government, p 4.

<sup>12</sup> NSW Government, *Creative Communities: NSW Arts, Culture and Creative Industries Policy*, 2023, p 9.

<sup>13</sup> NSW Government, *Creative Communities: NSW Arts, Culture and Creative Industries Policy*, 2023, p 37.

<sup>14</sup> NSW Government, *Creative Communities: NSW Arts, Culture and Creative Industries Policy*, 2023, p 11.

<sup>15</sup> NSW Government, *Creative Communities: NSW Arts, Culture and Creative Industries Policy*, 2023, p 12.

revenue, pace of growth, opportunity and trade.<sup>16</sup> It is estimated that in 2019-20, the creative industries contributed \$55.1 billion to the New South Wales economy, representing around 9 per cent of Gross State Product.<sup>17</sup>

- 1.11** Creative industries education and training reform is a priority under the policy.<sup>18</sup> *Creative Communities* first objective of 'People' commits the NSW Government to 'Reform arts education and creative industries training in NSW to give young people, career-changers and current creative workers access to training and skills to support sustainable careers and businesses right across NSW'.<sup>19</sup>
- 1.12** The NSW Government committed to a range of actions to meet these obligations, including a creative industries skills audit, ensuring the health and sustainable growth of the sector, and referring arts and music education to a parliamentary inquiry. Consequently, on 15 May 2024 the NSW Parliament established the Joint Select Committee to inquire into and report on arts and music education and training in New South Wales.<sup>20</sup>

## The provision of arts and music education and training in New South Wales

- 1.13** This section discusses the delivery and promotion of arts and music education and training in and outside of schools. Firstly, it examines the school system and the relevant curriculums from Kindergarten to Year 12 and then briefly details tertiary pathways for further arts and music education.
- 1.14** The delivery of arts and music education also relies upon various organisations, including national training organisations, regional conservatoriums and cultural institutions.

### Australian curriculum

- 1.15** The Australian Curriculum sets out the 'essential knowledge, understanding and skills students need to learn, and the quality of learning that is expected of the students as they progress through the first 11 years of schooling'.<sup>21</sup>
- 1.16** The Australian Curriculum: The Arts covers each of the following five arts subjects:
- Dance
  - Drama
  - Media Arts

<sup>16</sup> Submission 92, NSW Government, p 5.

<sup>17</sup> Submission 92, NSW Government, p 4.

<sup>18</sup> Submission 92, NSW Government, p 5.

<sup>19</sup> Submission 92, NSW Government, p 5.

<sup>20</sup> *Minutes*, NSW Legislative Council, 15 May 2024, pp 1158-1160.

<sup>21</sup> Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), Why do we have an Australian Curriculum? (2024), <https://v9.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/f-10-curriculum-overview/background>

- Music
- Visual Arts.<sup>22</sup>

- 1.17** The curriculum is based on the assumption that all students will study the five arts subjects from Foundation to the end of primary school. Schools determine how these subjects are delivered.<sup>23</sup>
- 1.18** From Year 7 or 8, students have the opportunity to study one or more arts subjects in depth. In Years 9 and 10, students are able to specialise in one or more arts subject. State and territory school authorities or individual schools determine which subjects are offered.<sup>24</sup>
- 1.19** The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) coordinates the development and monitoring of the Australian Curriculum.<sup>25</sup>
- 1.20** States and territories are responsible for the implementation of the Australian Curriculum.<sup>26</sup> In New South Wales, creative arts subjects have not yet been updated to align with the Australian Curriculum.<sup>27</sup>

### **NSW Creative Arts syllabuses from Kindergarten to Year 12**

- 1.21** The *Education Act 1990* outlines the minimum curriculum requirements for arts and creative industries education in New South Wales.<sup>28</sup> The NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) sets and monitors the Kindergarten to Year 12 curriculum for schools across the state in accordance with the *Education Act 1990*.<sup>29</sup> NESA is currently undertaking the NSW Curriculum Reform which entails redrafting all Kindergarten to Year 12 syllabuses. The syllabuses are briefly set out below and are examined in Chapters 4 and 5.

<sup>22</sup> Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), The Arts – Structure <https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/the-arts/structure/>

<sup>23</sup> Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), The Arts – Structure <https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/the-arts/structure/>

<sup>24</sup> Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), The Arts – Structure <https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/the-arts/structure/>

<sup>25</sup> NSW Education Standards Authority, NSW and the Australian Curriculum <https://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/11-12/Understanding-the-curriculum/nsw-curriculum-syllabuses/nsw-and-the-australian-curriculum>

<sup>26</sup> NSW Education Standards Authority, NSW and the Australian Curriculum <https://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/11-12/Understanding-the-curriculum/nsw-curriculum-syllabuses/nsw-and-the-australian-curriculum>

<sup>27</sup> NSW Education Standards Authority, NSW and the Australian Curriculum <https://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/11-12/Understanding-the-curriculum/nsw-curriculum-syllabuses/nsw-and-the-australian-curriculum>

<sup>28</sup> Submission 92, NSW Government, p 6.

<sup>29</sup> NSW Education Standards Authority, NSW and the Australian Curriculum <https://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/11-12/Understanding-the-curriculum/nsw-curriculum-syllabuses/nsw-and-the-australian-curriculum>

**1.22** Aside from in-class lessons, some schools in New South Wales offer a range of creative arts opportunities, such as musical theatre productions, choir, and user-pays individual or group music tutoring lessons.<sup>30</sup>

**1.23** In New South Wales there are also selective government secondary schools, and streams within comprehensive secondary schools, that focus on the arts. Creative and performing arts schools provide additional opportunities for students to pursue excellence within these fields while also studying the core curriculum. These schools also provide potential pathways into industry and tertiary training.<sup>31</sup>

### *Creative Arts K-6 Syllabus*

**1.24** The NSW Creative Arts K-6 Syllabus is mandatory for students from Kindergarten to Year 6 (Early Stage 1 – Stage 3) and includes the following subjects:

- Dance
- Drama
- Music
- Visual Arts.<sup>32</sup>

**1.25** There are no mandatory minimum hours for this syllabus, and it is most often delivered by a classroom teacher rather than a creative arts specialist.<sup>33</sup>

**1.26** As part of NESA's curriculum reform package, the new Creative Arts K-6 Syllabus was published in 2024 with mandatory implementation from 2027.<sup>34</sup>

### *Years 7-10 syllabuses*

**1.27** New South Wales has mandatory syllabuses for Music and Visual Arts in Years 7-8 (Stage 4). Students must study 200 hours, comprising the 100-hour mandatory courses in both Visual Arts and Music.<sup>35</sup>

**1.28** In public secondary schools, the content of the Years 7-10 Music courses is largely taught by a specialist music teacher. However, in some schools it is delivered by a non-specialist teacher.<sup>36</sup>

**1.29** Elective syllabuses are also available for the following subjects with 100- or 200-hour options:

- Dance

<sup>30</sup> Submission 12, NSW Department of Education, p 3; Submission 60, Australian Society for Music Education - NSW Chapter, p 4.

<sup>31</sup> Submission 5, National Advocates for Arts Education (NAAE), p 2.

<sup>32</sup> Submission 92, NSW Government, p 6.

<sup>33</sup> Evidence, Mr Martin Graham, Deputy Secretary, Teaching, Learning and Student Wellbeing, NSW Department of Education, 23 Augst 2024, p 56, Submission 69, Kodály NSW, p 3, Submission 94, Australian Education Union - NSW Teachers Federation Branch, p 2.

<sup>34</sup> Submission 92, NSW Government, p 6.

<sup>35</sup> Submission 92, NSW Government, p 6.

<sup>36</sup> Submission 92, NSW Government, p 14.

- Drama
- Photographic and Digital Media Visual Design.<sup>37</sup>

**1.30** The NSW Department of Education has developed two elective courses, Design and Media Studies and Performing Arts, for students in Years 9-10 that focus on arts industry practices.<sup>38</sup>

**1.31** Students also have the opportunity to engage in creative design and production activities through NSW Technology and Applied Studies syllabuses. In Years 7-8 students must study 200 hours of Technology Mandatory. Technology and Applied Studies electives are also available to students in Years 7-10 and 11-12.<sup>39</sup>

**1.32** As of November 2024, NESA's review of the Years 7-10 creative arts syllabuses is at various stages:

- New syllabuses for Music, Dance and Drama have been finalised and will be implemented from 2026.
- A new syllabus for Visual Arts has been finalised and will be implemented from 2027.
- Other elective 7-10 syllabuses are currently being reviewed.<sup>40</sup>

#### *Years 11-12 syllabuses*

**1.33** In Years 11-12 (Stage 6), New South Wales has NESA board-developed courses in Dance, Drama and Visual Arts. There are also content endorsed courses available for Visual Design, Ceramics and Photography, Video and Digital Imaging.<sup>41</sup>

**1.34** Stage 6 NESA board-developed Music courses include Music 1, Music 2 and Music Extension.<sup>42</sup>

**1.35** Students may submit their HSC exam works, projects and performances showcased in the following events:

- OnSTAGE (Drama)
- CALLBACK (Dance)
- ARTEXPRESS (Visual Arts)
- Encore (Music).<sup>43</sup>

**1.36** Vocational education and training (VET) courses are also available to students in Years 11-12 to learn entrepreneurial skills and gain industry experience in the arts. These include Assistant

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<sup>37</sup> Submission 92, NSW Government, p 6.

<sup>38</sup> Submission 92, NSW Government, p 7.

<sup>39</sup> Submission 92, NSW Government, p 6.

<sup>40</sup> NSW Government, Syllabus development for Creative Arts, <https://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/k-10/learning-areas/creative-arts/syllabus-development>; Submission 92, NSW Government, p 6.

<sup>41</sup> Submission 92, NSW Government, p 6.

<sup>42</sup> Submission 92, NSW Government, p 14.

<sup>43</sup> Submission 92, NSW Government, p 7.



Dance Teaching, Music Industry, Entertainment Industry, Visual arts and Contemporary craft and Screen and Media. These VET courses have both optional and mandatory work placements as part of the course.<sup>44</sup>

**1.37** Students in Years 9-12 VET courses can receive 'recognition towards their school qualification (Record of School Achievement or HSC) as well as a nationally recognised VET qualification.'<sup>45</sup>

**1.38** The draft Stage 6 syllabuses for Music 1, Music 2, and Music Extension were released for consultation in 2024, with implementation from 2027.<sup>46</sup> The new syllabuses for 11-12 Dance, Drama and Music are expected to be released in 2025 and Visual Arts will be released in 2026.<sup>47</sup>

### **The Arts Unit, NSW Department of Education**

**1.39** The Arts Unit is a specialist directorate within the NSW Department of Education which provides teachers and students with teaching, learning and performance opportunities in the creative arts. The unit promotes 'growth, connection and inclusion through the arts in a variety of settings, providing inspiring co-curricular arts opportunities for every student in NSW.'<sup>48</sup>

**1.40** The Art Unit's programs engage industry partnerships to support students' post-school pathways in the arts. The unit also provides targeted professional learning to support teachers' delivery of high-quality arts education.<sup>49</sup>

**1.41** The NSW Department of Education funds the Talent Development Project (TDP), a free program for students in Years 9–12 designed for young musicians, singers and songwriters. Through the TDP students are mentored by arts industry professionals who provide guidance on creative industry career pathways.<sup>50</sup>

### **Tertiary arts and music education in New South Wales**

**1.42** In New South Wales, tertiary level formal arts and creative education is provided by various providers, including universities, TAFE NSW, and specialist educational institutions.<sup>51</sup>

**1.43** Available qualifications range from Certificate through to degree-level qualifications. Non-qualification courses are also offered through different providers, such as Adult and Community Education.<sup>52</sup>

**1.44** The tertiary sector is examined in Chapters 3 and 6.

<sup>44</sup> Submission 92, NSW Government, p 13.

<sup>45</sup> Submission 92, NSW Government, p 13.

<sup>46</sup> Submission 92, NSW Government, p 14.

<sup>47</sup> Submission 92, NSW Government, p 6.

<sup>48</sup> Submission 92, NSW Government, p 17.

<sup>49</sup> Submission 92, NSW Government, p 17.

<sup>50</sup> Submission 12, The NSW Department of Education, p 4.

<sup>51</sup> Submission 92, NSW Government, p 7.

<sup>52</sup> Submission 92, NSW Government, p 7.

*University arts and music qualifications*

- 1.45 New South Wales universities offer a variety of arts degrees, including Arts, Fine Arts, Performing Arts, Secondary Arts and Music.
- 1.46 The availability of pathways to these courses is examined Chapter 6.

*Initial teacher education*

- 1.47 Creative arts university courses can be taken in combination with initial teacher education (ITE) programs. These are generally seen as dual qualifications.<sup>53</sup>
- 1.48 ITE is an approved program of teacher preparation that all teachers must undertake to graduate and begin teaching in New South Wales.<sup>54</sup> These programs, delivered by universities and other accredited providers, combine theoretical knowledge with practical teaching experience to ensure graduates meet the professional standards required to teach in a school.
- 1.49 NESA is responsible for accrediting ITE programs in New South Wales and ensuring that programs enable graduates to meet all the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers. NESA's Subject Content Knowledge Requirements Policy outlines the requirements for the accreditation of initial teacher education courses relating to the arts and creative industries.
- 1.50 ITE courses in New South Wales, including the time allocation and training requirements for arts and music examined in Chapter 3.

*Independent tertiary education providers*

- 1.51 Independent tertiary education providers can also provide creative arts education in New South Wales.
- 1.52 In particular, the National Arts School (NAS), an independent tertiary level art school, provides three Visual Arts degrees including: Bachelor of Fine Art, Master of Fine Art and Doctor of Fine Art.<sup>55</sup> NAS also offers a range of other courses including NAS HSC Intensive Studio Practice Program and postgraduate studies.
- 1.53 The Australian Institute for Music (AIM) is an Australian Public Company, Limited by Shares. AIM offers undergraduate and postgraduate courses across various creative endeavours, including Arts and Entertainment Management, Music (Composition) and Music Theatre.<sup>56</sup>
- 1.54 Independent tertiary education providers are discussed in Chapters 3 and 6.

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<sup>53</sup> Submission 92, NSW Government, p 8.

<sup>54</sup> Submission 92, NSW Government, p 9.

<sup>55</sup> Submission 92, NSW Government, p 9.

<sup>56</sup> Australian Institute of Music, Our Courses (2024), <https://aim.edu.au/courses/>

### *Vocational Education and Training*

- 1.55** The Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector is supported by government and industry, offering qualifications from TAFE NSW, as well as private institutions.<sup>57</sup>
- 1.56** Creative arts and music education in VET is predominantly delivered through the CUA - Creative Arts & Culture Training Package.<sup>58</sup> The CUA Training Package includes 54 qualifications and 56 skills sets. There are four levels of certificates (Certificate I, II, III and IV), as well as diploma courses and advanced diploma courses.<sup>59</sup>
- 1.57** Most Diploma and higher qualifications are delivered fee for service, with some Certificate II, III and IV level qualifications delivered under government funded programs. There are also 21 qualifications in arts and music that are eligible for government subsidy under the NSW Skills List, of which eight are available via traineeship pathways.<sup>60</sup>
- 1.58** VET courses and TAFE NSW are discussed in Chapter 6.

### **Arts and music organisations**

- 1.59** The NSW Department of Education engages with a range of arts organisations, conservatoriums, institutions and creative professionals to support the development of students' creative skills. These partnerships are outlined below.

### *Creative organisations and not-for profits*

- 1.60** Many external creative organisations and not-for profits also play a role in supporting the delivery of arts and music education in schools, some of which include the following:
- Australian Chamber Orchestra Foundation Program – an in-school program which uses music to improve the developmental and education outcomes of children in low-socio economic status schools.<sup>61</sup>
  - Music in Me – an in-school professional learning program delivered in collaboration with the Australian Youth Orchestra.<sup>62</sup>
  - Australian Children's Music Foundation – delivers long term sequential music education and instruments to children in schools with high levels of disadvantage.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Study NSW, Vocational Education and Training (2024) <https://www.study.nsw.gov.au/future-student/types-of-study/vocational-education-and-training/>

<sup>58</sup> Submission 92, NSW Government, p 8.

<sup>59</sup> Study NSW, Vocational Education and Training (2024) <https://www.study.nsw.gov.au/future-student/types-of-study/vocational-education-and-training/>

<sup>60</sup> Submission 92, NSW Government, p 8.

<sup>61</sup> Submission 92, NSW Government, p 16.

<sup>62</sup> Submission 12, The NSW Department of Education, p 3.

<sup>63</sup> Submission 51, The Australian Children's Music Foundation, p 1.

***National arts training organisations***

- 1.61** National arts training organisations offer dance, theatre, music and visual arts training. There are eight national training organisations, five of which are located in New South Wales, specifically:
- The National Institute of Dramatic Art
  - The Australian Film Television and Radio School
  - NAISDA Dance College
  - The Australian Youth Orchestra
  - Flying Fruit Fly Circus.<sup>64</sup>
- 1.62** These national training organisations are funded by the Australian Government.<sup>65</sup>
- 1.63** Funding from Creative Australia in partnership with Create NSW, is also available to performing arts organisations under the National Performing Arts Partnership Framework.<sup>66</sup> There are 13 National Performing Arts Partnership Organisations based in Sydney, including Bell Shakespeare, Bangarra, MusicaViva and Sydney Dance Company.
- 1.64** National Performing Arts Partnership Organisations provide education resources, such as comprehensive resources for students and teachers and school incursion programs, alongside their programming.<sup>67</sup>

***Regional conservatoriums***

- 1.65** There are 17 regional conservatoriums in New South Wales which deliver music education to children and adults on a fee-paying basis.<sup>68</sup> Regional conservatoriums are independent, not-for-profit charitable organisations, working both within and outside the formal education system in regional areas.<sup>69</sup>
- 1.66** Regional conservatoriums receive some funding from NSW Treasury that is administered by the NSW Department of Education through its Regional Conservatorium Grants Program.<sup>70</sup> The remainder of their funding is largely derived from private funding sources and individuals.<sup>71</sup>
- 1.67** Regional conservatoriums offer music programs in a range of settings, from early childhood music groups to in-school classroom programs and private tuition on specific instruments. Some also offer industry-relevant technical units, such as live sound and music production.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Submission 92, NSW Government, p 9.

<sup>65</sup> Submission 92, NSW Government, p 9.

<sup>66</sup> Submission 92, NSW Government, p 10.

<sup>67</sup> Submission 92, NSW Government, p 10.

<sup>68</sup> Submission 92, NSW Government, p 15.

<sup>69</sup> Submission 47, Association of NSW Regional Conservatoriums, p 4.

<sup>70</sup> Submission 47, Association of NSW Regional Conservatoriums, p 5.

<sup>71</sup> Submission 47, Association of NSW Regional Conservatoriums, p 3.

<sup>72</sup> Submission 92, NSW Government, p 16.

**1.68** Regional conservatoriums are examined in Chapter 7.

***Cultural institutions***

**1.69** New South Wales has six state cultural institutions, which play a significant role in arts education and enrichment, particularly supporting curriculum outcomes at the K-12 level through incursions and excursions. These institutions are:

- The Art Gallery of NSW
- Australian Museum
- Museums of History NSW
- Powerhouse Museum
- State Library of NSW
- Sydney Opera House.<sup>73</sup>

**1.70** Along with on-site and online learning opportunities for students, most of the institutions also offer professional learning opportunities for teachers. These organisations play a critical role in preserving and presenting First Nations arts and culture, which is vital to teaching students about First Nations histories and cultures.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Submission 92, NSW Government, p 9.

<sup>74</sup> Submission 92, NSW Government, p 9-10.



## Chapter 2 Celebrating arts and music education

This chapter explores the importance of providing a rich and fulfilling creative arts education to children and young people. First, it discusses the benefits of arts and music for children and young people. It concludes with concerns raised by stakeholders that the creative arts are not sufficiently valued in the New South Wales education and training systems.

### Benefits for children and young people

**2.1** Arts and music education have significant impacts for children and young people. For many inquiry participants, the foremost importance of arts and music education and training was the opportunity it presented for creative expression. For example:

- Mr Ricky Kradolfer, Co-Founder and Head Educator, Amplify Music Education, observed that music '... promotes creativity and [supports] students to think differently, to celebrate their uniqueness and individuality, to celebrate imagination, collaboration and working together in groups and just fostering creativity.'<sup>75</sup>
- The Visual Arts and Design Educators Association stated that visual arts offer a 'safe space' for personal expression.<sup>76</sup>
- Ms Lesley Graham, Ausdance Representative on National Advocates for Arts Education, Ausdance National, said that dance education is a part of creating the foundation of every person's lifelong learning and connection to culture.<sup>77</sup>
- Drama Australia and Drama NSW commented that drama involves an act of the imagination that relies on a learner's ability to empathise and understand others.<sup>78</sup>

**2.2** There was consensus amongst stakeholders that a high-quality creative arts education has many other positive social, emotional and academic outcomes for children and young people and the broader community, including:

- enriches and deepens the quality of an engaged creative life
- provides an avenue for self-expression and exploration, which is especially beneficial for those who find verbal and written communication challenging
- facilitates more positive self-concepts, higher self-esteem and greater life satisfaction
- cultivates self-awareness, discovering and defining identities, and fosters empathy and understanding of others
- enhances resilience and ability to adapt

<sup>75</sup> Evidence, Mr Ricky Kradolfer, Co-Founder and Head Educator, Amplify Music Education, 23 August 2024, p 16. Also see, Evidence, Ms Catriona Turnbull, Branch President, Kodály NSW, 23 August 2024, p 15.

<sup>76</sup> Submission 44, Visual Arts and Design Educators Association, pp 1-2.

<sup>77</sup> Evidence, Ms Lesley Graham, Ausdance Representative on National Advocates for Arts Education, Ausdance National, 30 July 2024, p 20.

<sup>78</sup> Submission 40, Drama Australia and Drama NSW, p 5.

- enhances cultural awareness
- encourages intellectual curiosity
- supports the development of professional ethics, global citizenship, entrepreneurship and the courage to take risks
- improves motivation to learn, the likelihood of staying in school, school engagement and attendance rates
- increases higher order thinking capabilities and skills, such as critical thinking and problem-solving skills
- enhances ability to critique and make informed judgements across different contexts
- enhances verbal and non-verbal communication, collaboration, design thinking, digital literacy, project management, creative thinking and innovation
- deepens interpersonal connections and provides opportunities to increase connections across school, the community and peers
- improves grades and overall test scores, particularly literacy and numeracy outcomes
- increases likelihood of participating in democracy as adults.<sup>79</sup>

**2.3** Arts and music education, training and mentorships provide unique benefits to specific cohorts of vulnerable children and young people, including youth-at-risk, young people from low-socio-economic backgrounds, young people with disability, those living in regional and rural areas and First Nations young people.<sup>80</sup> Programs and initiatives which are specialised for specific vulnerable cohorts fill a gap that general programs often cannot.<sup>81</sup> Stakeholders who spoke about the benefits to these cohorts also emphasised the need for increased funding for specialist programs and initiatives carried out by organisations.<sup>82</sup>

**2.4** Many of these benefits are discussed in the case studies below.

#### **Case study - Bowral High School<sup>83</sup>**

Bowral High School is a comprehensive coeducational secondary school in the Southern Highlands. Approximately 680 students attend the school, including young people from low socio-economic backgrounds and other disadvantaged groups.

Bowral High School's Creative and Performing Arts (CAPA) education program encompasses:

<sup>79</sup> Evidence, Dr John Nicholas Suanders, Chair, National Advocates for Arts Education, 30 July 2024, p 10; Submission 40, Drama Australia and Drama NSW, pp 5-6; Evidence, Ms Eva Spata, Supervisor, Performing and Visual Arts Curriculum, Sydney Catholic Girls Schools, 23 August 2024, p 19; Submission 37, Association of Independent Schools, pp 4-7; Submission 53, NAVA, p 2.

<sup>80</sup> Submission 51, The Australian Children's Music Foundation, p 3.

<sup>81</sup> Submission 23 Museums and Galleries of NSW, p 3; Submission 67, Accessible Arts, p 1.

<sup>82</sup> Evidence, Ms Elizabeth Martin, Chief Executive Officer, Accessible Arts NSW, 23 August 2024, p 9; Submission 36, Musica Viva Australia, p 1; Submission 67, Accessible Arts, p 4.

<sup>83</sup> Appendix 1, Site visit report, Bowral High School, p 128-129.



- the delivery of mandatory units of Visual Arts and Music and elective units of Music, Visual Arts and Visual Design delivered by the school's CAPA staff
- a partnership with the Hume Conservatorium of Music and Vocal Muster to offer students the opportunity to pay for private instrumental and voice lessons during school hours
- extracurricular activities such as lunchtime performances and school musicals to promote and engage students in the performing arts.

Staff and students shared that the CAPA program, particularly the performance opportunities, such as a musical theatre production, had numerous positive outcomes, such as:

- improving students' academic performance, including increased NAPLAN results
- increasing students' confidence
- enhancing students' wellbeing, engagement with school and sense of community
- supporting students to 'shine' outside of the classroom
- fostering positive connections with the local community
- attracting students who may have otherwise attended local private schools and thereby stabilising enrolment numbers.

#### **Case study - The impact of music education on childhood development<sup>84</sup>**

The committee received a great deal of evidence that dealt specifically with the impact of high-quality music education on the development of children and young people. Discussion about this issue often cited neuromusical research and noted the 'profound' benefits of music learning.

Dr Anita Collins, Music Educator, Director, Muse Consulting, and Founder, Bigger Better Brains and LearnGauge, told the committee that high quality music education has significant impacts on children, including:

- improving brain function, particularly the ability to work consistently and maintain attention
- assisting with synchronisation—the ability for the brain to work in a synchronised way to pass messages around—which helps memory formation
- improving immunity
- enhancing emotional regulation.

Dr Collins observed that music learning at the earliest stages of child development enhances these outcomes. Overall, Dr Collins emphasised that music learning improves academic achievements and feelings of self-worth for all children, including those with a disability and children who are neurodiverse.

Similarly, Ms Louise Barkl, National Education Adviser, Music in Me, detailed the non-vocational benefits of music education: '... music is a unique way for young people to learn about themselves, to be able to express themselves—perhaps in non-verbal ways— what they learn about themselves, how they interact with their peers, and how they build team-building skills, empathy and their sense of wellbeing'.

<sup>84</sup> Evidence, Ms Debra Batley, NSW Chair, Australian Society for Music Education, 30 July 2024, p 31; Evidence, Dr Anita Collins, Music Educator, Director, Muse Consulting, and Founder, Bigger Better Brains and LearnGauge, 30 July 2024, pp 2-3; Evidence, Ms Louise Barkl, National Education Adviser, Music in Me, 30 July 2024, p 3.

## Lack of perceived value in the creative arts

2.5 Stakeholders told the committee that, in general, creative arts education is not valued. According to inquiry participants, a number of socio-cultural factors contribute to the undervaluing of arts and music. Overall, the consequence of this situation is a weakening of the creative arts ecosystem.

### **Socio-cultural factors that contribute to undervaluing of arts and music education and training**

2.6 Inquiry participants argued that socio-cultural factors such as a focus on Science, Technology, English and Mathematics (STEM) subjects, job readiness and assessments, parental expectations, and a focus on sport has contributed to the devaluing of creative arts. This was evident in the following responses to a question in the online questionnaire which asked respondents to identify barriers to students pursuing further arts and music:

- 'Prioritisation of STEM or Sport by parents'
- 'Lack of prestige [for arts and music] in the broader community'
- 'Pressure to take other courses that will result in high salary'
- 'Lack of appreciation of the arts from their parents, lack of post training jobs within the arts fields'
- 'Perception of what is valued in schools which generally does not include arts education'.<sup>85</sup>

2.7 Likewise, in submissions and during oral evidence, stakeholders observed:

- Principals face significant 'pressure points', such as NAPLAN, when allocating resources which often results in music and arts being 'chopped off' from the curriculum.<sup>86</sup>
- There is a significant focus on STEM subjects from the government, as demonstrated in the Australian Government's Job-Ready Package, and from parents, which encourages children and young people to pursue careers in engineering and technology rather than in creative industries.<sup>87</sup>
- Students are dissuaded from selecting arts subjects in high school because the marks are capped for standardised assessments.<sup>88</sup>
- There is a lack of acknowledgement of the creative arts' 'powerful contribution' to deep learning and authentic engagement in 21st century skills and cross curriculum priorities that stimulate students' 'curiosity, discovery, wonder and passion'.<sup>89</sup>

2.8 Inquiry participants argued that these factors have ramifications for arts and music education in New South Wales.

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<sup>85</sup> Online questionnaire report, pp 4-5.

<sup>86</sup> Evidence, Mr Joel Copeland, Kodály Australia member and Past National President Kodály Australia, 23 August 2024, p 17.

<sup>87</sup> Evidence, Dr Kathryn Coleman, President, Art Education Australia, p 14.

<sup>88</sup> Evidence, Dr Kathryn Coleman, President, Art Education Australia, 30 July 2024, p 14.

<sup>89</sup> Submission 40, Drama Australia and Drama NSW, pp 5-6.

## Consequences of undervaluing arts and music education and training

- 2.9** The committee heard that there are significant consequences for undervaluing creative arts education and training.
- 2.10** The principal concern for inquiry participants was that children and young people are not provided adequate opportunities to express themselves creatively. For example, The Song Room commented that 'With rising costs of living and an increasing gap between those that have opportunities to access the arts and those that do not, schools are increasingly becoming the only place where young people can be introduced to the arts'.<sup>90</sup>
- 2.11** Stakeholders identified a range of other consequences, many of which were linked and often caused further harm to the creative arts education and training ecosystem. These issues are discussed throughout the report:
- children and young people are not encouraged to value creative arts, particularly music<sup>91</sup>
  - creative arts education is delivered in an inconsistent manner and is dependent on socio-economic advantage, school system and geographic location<sup>92</sup>
  - the amalgamation of Music, Visual Arts, Drama and Dance into the 'the arts' in the K-6 Creative Arts Syllabus fails to adequately recognise the attributes of each art form<sup>93</sup>
  - the lack of mandatory hours for the K-6 Creative Arts Syllabus, unlike other subjects, such as Mathematics and English, means that these subjects are not always delivered effectively<sup>94</sup>
  - teachers lack confidence to deliver arts and music lessons<sup>95</sup>
  - teachers are not confident to teach music as part of other lessons such as literacy<sup>96</sup>
  - schools, most often public schools, are not adequately funded to deliver high quality creative arts education<sup>97</sup>
  - the reliance on a single teacher, often a principal, to drive creative arts programs<sup>98</sup>

<sup>90</sup> Submission 11, The Song Room, p 2.

<sup>91</sup> Evidence, Mr Ricky Kradolfer, Co-Founder & Head Educator, Amplify Music Education, 23 August 2024, p 16.

<sup>92</sup> Evidence, Dr John Nicholas Saunders, Chair, National Advocates for Arts Education, 30 July 2024, p 10.

<sup>93</sup> Evidence, Amy Gill, Vice President, Drama NSW, 30 July 2024, p 23.

<sup>94</sup> See for example, Submission 94 Australian Education Union - NSW Teachers Federation Branch, p 3, 40 Drama Australia and Drama NSW, p 3.

<sup>95</sup> See for example; Submission 13, Musical Futures International, p 11; Submission 18, Moorambilla Voices, p 4; Submission 9, Victorian Music Teachers' Association Inc, p 2, Submission 44, Visual Arts and Design Educators Association NSW, p 7; Submission 48, Australian Society for Music Education - NSW Chapter, p 5; Submission 50, Music in Me, Australian Youth Orchestra, p 2.

<sup>96</sup> See for example, Submission 11, The Song Room, p 5, Submission 43, Alberts (Music Education Right from the Start), p 10, Evidence, Ms Bernadette Heard, National Manager, Music in Me, 30 July 2024, p 3, Submission 43a, Alberts (Music Education: Right from the Start), p 2.

<sup>97</sup> Submission 55, Live Performance Australia, p 6.

<sup>98</sup> Submission 48, Australian Society for Music Education - NSW Chapter, p 3.

- the perception that HSC creative arts subjects scale poorly and are capped discourages students to choose these subjects<sup>99</sup>
- expectations that teachers will provide their time for free to coordinate extracurricular creative arts activities, like school musicals.<sup>100</sup>
- several universities are cutting their fine arts offerings and many universities reducing the time allocated to the arts in initial teacher education<sup>101</sup>
- youth and education programs delivered by New South Wales arts and cultural institutions being reduced or axed because of lack of investment and support.<sup>102</sup>

## Committee comment

**2.12** The arts and music ecosystem is made up of a diverse and dedicated workforce across the education sector and creative industries, as well as the talented and inspiring students and young people who strive to pursue their creative passions and share their craft. At the outset, the committee wishes to acknowledge the breadth of evidence presented by various inquiry participants, including teachers, musicians and artists, students, philanthropic organisations and industry professionals and thank them for sharing their expertise and experiences.

**2.13** Arts and music are a vital cornerstone of human expression and cultural identity. This inquiry has reinforced how important and beneficial creative arts are in a child's development, both cognitively and socially, but also their critical contribution to shaping culture and fostering social cohesion. Arts and music are transformative and can change lives. We recognise that every child in New South Wales deserves the benefits of a high quality, richly complex creative arts education. The committee also recognises the unique benefits arts and music provides to vulnerable cohorts of children and young people.

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### Finding 1

Every child in New South Wales deserves the benefits of a high-quality, richly complex creative arts education.

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**2.14** As we have heard throughout the inquiry, the benefits of arts and music are well documented. However, despite this, it is clear that the creative arts have become significantly undervalued both in terms of priority in education and training, and socially and culturally.

**2.15** The committee was concerned by the significant societal and cultural discourse that has led to the undervaluing of arts and music. The prioritisation of STEM and a focus on standardised testing, especially NAPLAN, has unduly impacted the standing of creative arts in schools.

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<sup>99</sup> Evidence, Dr Kathryn Coleman President, Art Education Australia, 30 July 2024, p 14.

<sup>100</sup> Submission 27, Australian Society for Music Education (ASME) NSW Chapter, p 7.

<sup>101</sup> Evidence, Dr John Nicholas Saunders, Chair, National Advocates for Arts Education, 30 July 2024, p 10.

<sup>102</sup> Evidence, Dr John Nicholas Saunders, Chair, National Advocates for Arts Education, 30 July 2024, p 10.

Likewise, the misperception of the rigour of arts and music subjects in high school, particularly in Stage 6, as well as the pressure to pursue studies to get a 'high salary job' have contributed to a growing sense that arts and music are not valuable and powerful for individuals or society.

- 2.16** In turn, this societal undervaluing of arts and music has had a trickledown effect, leading to diminishing investment in creative education in schools and broken pathways for further studies for those wanting to hone their craft, as well as inequitable access to the benefits of arts and music. These consequences are examined in turn throughout this report.
- 2.17** In this context, we are concerned that arts and music are not being rightfully valued or invested in. We find that creative arts are undervalued in education, leading to broader and systemic neglect in investment.

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**Finding 2**

That creative arts are undervalued in education, leading to broader and systemic neglect in investment.

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## Chapter 3 Arts and music teacher workforce

This chapter discusses the importance of a thriving creative arts teacher workforce and identifies the challenges to sustaining this system. In particular, the chapter examines the eroding pipeline for students wanting to become arts and music teachers, primary school teachers' lack confidence to deliver creative arts lessons and initial teacher education, as well as the delivery of arts and music programs by external providers. The chapter also considers stakeholders' proposals to rectify these concerns and opportunities to enhance certain successful programs.

### The importance of a thriving arts and music teacher workforce

- 3.1** Inquiry participants noted that primary and secondary teachers are the foundation of a strong and healthy creative sector. Teachers play a vital role in the creative ecosystem by 'lighting the spark' in students and instilling a passion for arts and music.<sup>103</sup>
- 3.2** Stakeholders identified a range of challenges facing prospective and current teachers including:
- the declining number of combined creative arts and education courses offered at New South Wales universities
  - the insufficient pathways for creative professionals to become teachers
  - the adequacy of initial teacher education programs to create graduates who are confident to teach the creative arts in primary schools
  - the lack of specialised teaching qualifications and teaching codes for creative arts in New South Wales primary schools
  - finding long term stable employment in public primary schools
  - the provision of limited support to drive arts and music education in their schools.
- 3.3** Additionally, the committee heard that private organisations often step in to deliver arts and music education, particularly in New South Wales primary schools. Stakeholders acknowledged that this can result in some successful partnerships, and discussed opportunities to strengthen these programs.
- 3.4** Separately, the committee received some concerns about the lack of regulation for private music teachers.

### Eroding the pipeline for music and arts teachers

- 3.5** A key issue raised throughout the inquiry was the diminishing pathways for students wanting to pursue tertiary arts and music education. In particular, the committee received evidence that the

<sup>103</sup> Appendix 1, Site Report summary, p 131.

pipeline for those hoping to become creative arts teachers was specifically being eroded.<sup>104</sup> The declining number of tertiary creative arts courses more generally is discussed in Chapter 6.

**3.6** Stakeholders explained that there were a number of factors that have contributed to the shortage of arts and music teachers across the state:

- There is a 'dwindling' number of tertiary institutions offering undergraduate and postgraduate degrees in Education with a specialisation in Visual Arts and currently no universities offer a specialist postgraduate Masters of Education (Visual Arts).<sup>105</sup> Moreover, this decrease has '... largely been the result of constrained budgets or education policy reforms which prioritise other areas of study'.<sup>106</sup>
- The Bachelor of Music Education at the University of Sydney is the only specialist music education degree taught in New South Wales.<sup>107</sup>
- There are only three tertiary Dance courses available in New South Wales. These courses are all provided by private organisations.<sup>108</sup>
- The number and availability of Drama courses at universities has dramatically declined.<sup>109</sup>
- There has been an overall decline in the number of young people entering the teaching profession, and the number of artists and creative practitioners wanting to work as teachers as a long-term career.<sup>110</sup>
- The 'devaluation' of the teaching profession more generally.<sup>111</sup>

**3.7** The committee heard that the lack of tertiary pathways for creative arts teachers leads to schools being unable to staff arts courses. Indeed, numerous inquiry participants observed that the shortage of Visual Arts and Drama teachers in primary and secondary schools has led to teachers having to teach out of their subject area or having to collapse arts classes all together.<sup>112</sup> This is further exacerbated in regional areas.<sup>113</sup> Access and equity issues are examined in Chapter 7.

**3.8** Furthermore, according to the 2022 *Australian Teacher Workforce Data (ATWD) National Trends: Initial Teacher Education Pipeline*, one-in-four classroom teachers of Performing Arts (26 per cent)

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<sup>104</sup> See for example, Submission 44, Visual Arts and Design Educators Association NSW p 5; Submission 57, Art Education Australia p 3; Evidence, Ms Diane Grant, Member, Ausdance National, 30 July 2024, p 21.

<sup>105</sup> Submission 44, Visual Arts and Design Educators Association NSW p 5.

<sup>106</sup> Submission 53, National Association for the Visual Arts Ltd p 1.

<sup>107</sup> Submission 2, Sydney Conservatorium of Music, p 2.

<sup>108</sup> Evidence, Ms Diane Grant, Member, Ausdance National, 30 July 2024, p 22.

<sup>109</sup> Evidence, Ms Diane Grant, Member, Ausdance National, 30 July 2024, p 22.

<sup>110</sup> Submission 57, Art Education Australia p 5.

<sup>111</sup> Submission 53, National Association for the Visual Arts Ltd p 1; Submission 44, Visual Arts and Design Educators Association NSW p 5; Submission 57, Art Education Australia p 5.

<sup>112</sup> Submission 44, Visual Arts and Design Educators Association NSW p 6; Submission 57, Art Education Australia p 5; Submission 40, Drama Australia and Drama NSW, p 4.

<sup>113</sup> Submission 44, Visual Arts and Design Educators Association NSW p 6.



and one-in-three classroom teachers of Visual Arts (34 per cent), were teaching out-of-field in 2022.<sup>114</sup>

- 3.9** Drama Australia and Drama NSW recommended that tertiary institutions restore arts discipline pathways for young people intending to become a secondary specialist arts educator, teaching artist or artist working in industry.<sup>115</sup> The organisations argued that this would ensure the next generations of primary and secondary teachers, and artists receive innovative and adequate education to support and help sustain their careers.<sup>116</sup>

### **Pathways for artists and musicians to become teachers**

- 3.10** The committee heard that a significant proportion of people who study arts and music want to pursue careers in these industries.<sup>117</sup> However, job security and income instability within the creative sector can result in artists, musicians and performers having 'portfolio careers' - multiple jobs and sources of income - which may encompass teaching.<sup>118</sup> Consequently, the committee received evidence about pathways for artists and musicians to become educators. The creative arts industries are examined in Chapter 6.
- 3.11** Inquiry participants noted that teaching is an attractive career option for some, but certainly not all, individuals in creative professions. Indeed, the National Association for the Visual Arts (NAVA) provided research suggesting that the overwhelmingly most common form of arts-related work is teaching.<sup>119</sup> However, this research indicated that the experience of those teaching in the visual arts varies significantly, with it being considered both a source of stability as well as job insecurity.<sup>120</sup>
- 3.12** This was reflected in teacher responses collected as part of NAVA's research, such as '... being employed as an academic in a permanent/ongoing position ... [contributed to my] financial security'. Another respondent commented: 'While I do have casual employment as an arts educator, this is also only for 9 months of the year, and then I am unpaid for the other three months of the year.'<sup>121</sup>
- 3.13** Similarly, the committee heard that musicians were struggling to sustain full time music careers. In 2023, an annual poll by the Media and Entertainment Arts Alliance found one in five musicians make a full time living from their music and half are earning less than \$6,000 a year from their talents.<sup>122</sup>

<sup>114</sup> Submission 57, Art Education Australia p 3.

<sup>115</sup> Submission 40, Drama Australia and Drama NSW, p 4

<sup>116</sup> Submission 40, Drama Australia and Drama NSW, p 4.

<sup>117</sup> Submission 59, Music NSW, p 11.

<sup>118</sup> Appendix 1, Site Visit Summary Report, p 128.

<sup>119</sup> Answers to questions on notice, Ms Penelope Benton, Executive Director, National Association for the Visual Arts, 27 August 2024, p 4.

<sup>120</sup> Answers to questions on notice, Ms Penelope Benton, Executive Director, National Association for the Visual Arts, 27 August 2024, p 3.

<sup>121</sup> Answers to questions on notice, Ms Penelope Benton, Executive Director, National Association for the Visual Arts, 27 August 2024, p 3.

<sup>122</sup> Submission 51, The Australian Children's Music Foundation, p 4.

- 3.14** To better support musicians to make a living, the Australian Children's Music Foundation (ACMF) advocated for building partnerships with musicians and organisations such as ACMF to place teaching musicians in the classroom with a generalist teacher.<sup>123</sup>
- 3.15** Further to this point, there was support for artists and musicians to be employed in schools. However, many inquiry participants emphasised the importance of ensuring that they be appropriately trained as teachers or have the necessary skills or training.<sup>124</sup>
- 3.16** This was reflected in responses to the inquiry's online questionnaire. For example, when asked whether musicians should be employed in schools, a respondent commented: "This depends on the musician. Teaching is a skill too. Just because you are a good musician doesn't make you a good teacher. Training would be necessary".<sup>125</sup>
- 3.17** The committee also received evidence about the difficulty for dancers and performers to sustain long term careers due to the physical demands of the job. The committee heard that a career as an elite dancer often starts at an early age. Consequently, many dancers may peak early in comparison to other art forms. Ms Lesley Graham, Ausdance Representative on National Advocates for Arts Education, Ausdance National, explained that the physical toll a career in dance takes on a performer's body means that their career often ends in their mid-twenties. Ms Graham called for elite dancer training to be supported by 'rigorous, holistic educational opportunities' to prepare for a successful transition to other careers when they retire from their dance performance career.<sup>126</sup>

### **Primary school teachers lack confidence to teach creative arts**

- 3.18** There was a clear consensus from inquiry participants that primary school teachers feel ill-equipped and uncertain to teach arts and music.<sup>127</sup> The committee heard that this leads to a need for training and ongoing support within their schools and communities.<sup>128</sup>
- 3.19** The committee was informed that teachers' levels of confidence to deliver creative arts lessons varies considerably.<sup>129</sup> According to Dr Sue Lane, teachers are most confident teaching Visual Arts, then Drama, Dance, Music and Media Arts in that order.<sup>130</sup> In addition, it was suggested that a teacher's personal and professional characteristics were perceived to contribute to their

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<sup>123</sup> Submission 51, The Australian Children's Music Foundation, p 4.

<sup>124</sup> Inquiry into arts and music education and training in New South Wales - Online Questionnaire Report, p 16.

<sup>125</sup> Inquiry into arts and music education and training in New South Wales - Online Questionnaire Report, p 17.

<sup>126</sup> Evidence, Ms Lesley Graham, Ausdance Representative on National Advocates for Arts Education, Ausdance National, 30 July 2024, p 21.

<sup>127</sup> See for example, Submission 11, The Song Room, p 5, Submission 43, Alberts (Music Education Right from the Start), p 10, Evidence, Ms Bernadette Heard, National Manager, Music in Me, 30 July 2024, p 3.

<sup>128</sup> Submission 113, Dr Sue Lane, p 1, Submission 18, Moorambilla Voices, p 2.

<sup>129</sup> Submission 113, Dr Sue Lane, p 1.

<sup>130</sup> Submission 113, Dr Sue Lane, p 2.

level of confidence to teach these subjects - with confidence influenced by personal interest, talent or skills in the arts.<sup>131</sup>

- 3.20** Throughout the inquiry, it became clear that primary school teachers were especially not confident to teach music.<sup>132</sup> The committee received evidence that a survey of New South Wales public primary teachers was conducted by Music Education: Right from the Start together with the NSW Department of Education and the NSW Teachers Federation to understand their levels of confidence and competence to teach music in the classroom. This included their ITE background and their professional development experiences.<sup>133</sup>
- 3.21** The survey received responses from 706 primary teachers in 95 schools. Key findings include:
- 53 per cent of teachers ranked music 10-13th in terms of confidence of all 13 subject areas they are required to teach, behind English and Mathematics.
  - 55 per cent of teachers had less than 10 hours of time devoted to music learning in their Initial Teacher Education (ITE) with 82 per cent responding that there was not enough time devoted in their ITE to teach music up to the Year 6 Curriculum.
  - 35 per cent of teachers said no part of the music education content in their ITE course was useful.<sup>134</sup>
- 3.22** As highlighted above, the issue regarding confidence to teach music appears to be two-fold: preservice primary school teachers are not receiving creative arts training during Initial Teacher Education (ITE); and practicing primary school teachers do not have enough professional development opportunities in these subjects.<sup>135</sup>
- 3.23** This following section discusses ITE in New South Wales, while support and professional development of teachers is discussed later in this chapter.

### Initial teacher education for primary school teachers

- 3.24** Unlike secondary school teachers who specialise in a subject area, primary school teachers are expected to teach all curriculum areas. Consequently, the ITE programs for primary school teachers include a range of units including pedagogy and subject specific content. Many inquiry participants were of the view that the number of hours dedicated to arts and music training during ITE is too limited.<sup>136</sup> Stakeholders also put forward suggestions to remedy this situation.

<sup>131</sup> Submission 113, Dr Sue Lane, p 2.

<sup>132</sup> Submission 113, Dr Sue Lane, p 2, Evidence, Ms Bernadette Heard, National Manager, Music in Me, 30 July 2024, p 3; Submission 13, Musical Futures International, p 17.

<sup>133</sup> Evidence, Ms Emily Albert, Executive Director, Alberts, 30 July 2024, p 35, Submission 43a, Alberts (Music Education: Right from the Start), p 1.

<sup>134</sup> Submission 43a, Alberts (Music Education: Right from the Start), p 1.

<sup>135</sup> Correspondence from Professor Jane Edwards, Executive Dean, Faculty of Humanities, Arts, Social Sciences and Education, University of New England, to Chair, 8 October 2024, Submission 11, The Song Room, p 5.

<sup>136</sup> See for example, Submission 11, The Song Room, p 4-5; Submission 5, National Advocates for Arts Education (NAAE) p 3; Submission 40, Drama Australia and Drama NSW, p 3; Submission 5, Music in Me, Australian Youth Orchestra, p 2.

**3.25** A number of universities provided evidence about the creative arts units in their ITE courses. Overall, universities reported that all creative arts disciplines were condensed into one or two units of the ITE programs. For example:

- Western Sydney University stated that pre-service teachers engage in only two to six hours of pedagogical development in each of creative arts disciplines over the course of their entire degree.<sup>137</sup>
- Charles Sturt University acknowledged that the creative arts curriculum area is 'very full' with the five arts disciplines and commented that each of these areas could warrant more time and coverage in primary education degrees.<sup>138</sup>
- The Australian Catholic University (ACU) noted that since 2021, Primary and Early Childhood/Primary undergraduate and Master of Teaching pre-service teachers study only one compulsory core unit which covers Dance, Drama, Music and Visual Arts.<sup>139</sup>

**3.26** As previously mentioned, many stakeholders commented that the current ITE offering does not support students to confidently teach creative arts subjects in primary schools. This was highlighted by Ms Lesley Graham, Ausdance Representative on National Advocates for Arts Education, Ausdance National, who said of her experience with teaching ITE: 'We have one unit where we have to share all of the arts subjects in the training of those primary generalist people. So if those teacher trainees are not confident to start with, they're not likely to get confident in one session or a fifth of a unit'.<sup>140</sup>

**3.27** The lack of time devoted to the arts was noted by a Western Sydney University School of Education postgraduate student who wrote the following on their unit evaluation:

If you think about the kinds of schools that kids want to go to, and the schools that parents and communities want, they are colourful, full of art and visually appealing. Given that we will be required to make art regularly for every year of our career, it is simply appalling that our degree devotes just 2 hours to Visual Arts.<sup>141</sup>

**3.28** Certain inquiry participants were specifically critical of the number of ITE learning hours that are dedicated to music education.<sup>142</sup> In New South Wales, the average number of hours of compulsory music education in teacher training is 9.39 hours.<sup>143</sup> While this is higher than the national average, the committee was informed that the average training time dedicated to music education in ITE has decreased 53 per cent in the past 14 years.<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> Submission 30, School of Education, Western Sydney University, p 5.

<sup>138</sup> Correspondence, Professor John McDonald, Executive Dean, Faculty of Arts and Education, Charles Sturt University, to Chair, 25 September 2024.

<sup>139</sup> Correspondence, Professor Mary Ryan, Executive Dean, Faculty of Education & Arts, Australian Catholic University, to Chair, 18 September 2024.

<sup>140</sup> Evidence, Ms Lesley Graham, Ausdance Representative on National Advocates for Arts Education, Ausdance National, 30 July 2024, p 22.

<sup>141</sup> Submission 30, School of Education, Western Sydney University, p 6.

<sup>142</sup> Correspondence, Ms Emily Albert, Executive Director, Alberts, to Committee, 15 October 2024.

<sup>143</sup> Evidence, Dr Anita Collins, Music Educator, Director, Muse Consulting, and Founder, Bigger Better Brains and LearnGauge, 30 July 2024, p 2.

<sup>144</sup> Submission 43, Alberts (Music Education: Right from the Start), Attachment 3, p 4.

- 3.29** The committee heard that insufficient ITE results in teachers who are ill-equipped to deliver comprehensive and effective music education.<sup>145</sup> Consequently, stakeholders commented that students' creative passions and skills not being nurtured to full capacity.<sup>146</sup>
- 3.30** In her evidence to the committee, Dr Anita Collins, Music Educator, Director, Muse Consulting, and Founder, Bigger Better Brains and LearnGauge, explained that the limited pre-service training dedicated to music is not enough for graduate teachers to feel confident and competent to teach music, especially if they have little prior experience with the subject:
- ...when someone is coming from a background of, "I've never played an instrument, I never sang in a choir and I didn't really have very much music education at school—it wasn't very confidently and competently delivered," to then say, "Now you've got to deliver this subject area," is too much of a stretch for them within their pre-service teaching with such a small amount of time.<sup>147</sup>
- 3.31** According to Dr Collins, teachers in New South Wales are the least supported when it comes to confidence and competence to teach music in primary schools, especially in comparison to Victoria, South Australia and Queensland.<sup>148</sup>
- 3.32** In its submission, Western Sydney University School of Education stated that a number of their pre-service teacher education students were schooled overseas, and possibly experienced no mandated arts education when they went to school.<sup>149</sup> It was noted that even for students educated in New South Wales, Music and Visual Arts are the only creative arts subjects mandated for students in Year 7 and 8. This can mean it may have been years for some pre-service teachers since they last engaged with any kind of formal creative arts education.<sup>150</sup>
- 3.33** Additionally, stakeholders suggested that primary education programs often prioritised subjects such as literacy, numeracy and science. The committee heard that this was in part, due to the curriculum, and the general devaluing of the arts and music.<sup>151</sup> For example, ACU reported that it reduced its undergraduate Primary and Early Childhood-Primary ITE programs from two mandatory core units in arts education to one as a result of the pressures to increase mandatory units in other curriculum areas.<sup>152</sup>
- 3.34** Throughout the inquiry, many inquiry participants called for the increase of time allocated in ITE to enable primary teachers to gain quality learning experiences across the five arts

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<sup>145</sup> Submission 48, Australian Society for Music Education - NSW Chapter, p 3.

<sup>146</sup> Evidence, Ms Eva Spata, Supervisor, Amadeus Music Program, Sydney Catholic Schools, 23 August 2024, p 18.

<sup>147</sup> Evidence, Dr Anita Collins, Music Educator, Director, Muse Consulting, and Founder, Bigger Better Brains and LearnGauge, 30 July 2024, p 4.

<sup>148</sup> Evidence, Dr Anita Collins, Music Educator, Director, Muse Consulting, and Founder, Bigger Better Brains and LearnGauge, 30 July 2024, p 4.

<sup>149</sup> Submission 30, School of Education, Western Sydney University, p 5.

<sup>150</sup> Submission 30, School of Education, Western Sydney University, p 5.

<sup>151</sup> Correspondence from Professor Jane Edwards, Executive Dean, Faculty of Humanities, Arts, Social Sciences and Education, University of New England, to Chair, 8 October 2024.

<sup>152</sup> Correspondence from the Faculty of Education and Arts, Australian Catholic University, to Chair, 18 September 2024.

subjects.<sup>153</sup> Specifically, the School of Education, Western Sydney University, recommended that all undergraduate and postgraduate primary teacher education courses must allocate at least two units of mandatory study in arts education.<sup>154</sup>

**3.35** The NSW Department of Education acknowledged the challenges primary school teachers face teaching across all curriculum areas. Further, it was recognised that the time spent on creative arts education during ITE may contribute to teachers' lack of confidence in these areas. Mr Martin Graham, Deputy Secretary, Teaching, Learning and Student Wellbeing, NSW Department of Education, advised:

In the syllabus, in particular, we know that many teachers report that they're not confident in teaching music. As a primary school teacher, you're responsible for teaching the whole syllabus. We don't have specialist English teachers. We don't have specialist history or geography teachers. It's quite a job to be a primary school teacher and get across that. We do know that, as you pointed out, in the initial teacher education it is perhaps not as lengthy a time that they spend looking at the creative arts subjects and how to teach them. We know that confidence can be an issue in that. That's certainly an issue that we recognise.<sup>155</sup>

**3.36** However, Dr Paul Cahill, Executive Director, Curriculum, NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA), noted that a key challenge when skilling teachers in relation to ITE programs, is that once a syllabus is established it can take ITE providers about two years to incorporate new material. To support and help build teachers' confidence when teaching these subjects, the department has provided teaching advice to accompany the new K-6 Creative Arts Syllabus.<sup>156</sup>

### **Employment pathways for specialist music teachers**

**3.37** During the inquiry the committee learned that the long-term employment opportunities for specialist music teachers were sporadic. This was especially evident in the public primary school system.

**3.38** The committee heard that the lack of a formal process for specialist music teachers to be trained, accredited and employed in primary schools limits their long-term employment opportunities.<sup>157</sup> Stakeholders suggested two solutions to remedy this, the introduction of music as a primary teaching specialisation within ITE primary degree and the creation of a primary school music specialist code.

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<sup>153</sup> See for example, Submission 5, National Advocates for Arts Education (NAAE) p 3; Submission 30, School of Education, Western Sydney University, p 5; Submission 40, Drama Australia and Drama NSW p 4.

<sup>154</sup> Submission 30, School of Education, Western Sydney University, p 5.

<sup>155</sup> Evidence, Mr Martin Graham, Deputy Secretary, Teaching, Learning and Student Wellbeing, NSW Department of Education, 23 August 2024, p 53.

<sup>156</sup> Evidence, Dr Paul Cahill Executive Director, Curriculum, NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA), 23 August 2024, p 54.

<sup>157</sup> Submission 21, Dr James Humberstone, p 2.

- 3.39** Inquiry participants explained that historically there have been music programs that have sat in schools where tutors come in for parts of the days and work across a number of locations.<sup>158</sup> As many schools rely on engaging a specialist music teacher on an ad hoc basis, they are locked out of long-term and stable employment.<sup>159</sup> The committee heard that many excellent teachers leave their roles due to these dynamics and lack of job security.<sup>160</sup>
- 3.40** In evidence to the committee, Mr Kevin Carragher, Director of Education and Research, Sydney Catholic Schools, explained that part of the rationale of the Amadeus program is to incorporate specialist music teachers into the community so that they can work in 'full-time capacities across a number of schools.'<sup>161</sup> Mr Carragher observed a significant point of attraction of this model is that these teachers were still able to 'gig' and engage in the music industry as they otherwise would, while having stable employment.<sup>162</sup>
- 3.41** Other inquiry participants noted that the growth of the Amadeus program in Sydney Catholic schools has led to many teachers leaving the public system for the private system seeking stable ongoing employment.<sup>163</sup> Mr Alex Masso, Executive Officer, Australian Music Association, explained the challenge with the supply of music teachers is that many public teachers are being absorbed into the Catholic system because of the promise of full time employment:

There is quite a different challenge there and a lot of them are being absorbed now by the Catholic system. Even in the peripatetic teachers, a lot of them used to go into this public school for an hour and this public school for two hours, and this one for three hours. Amadeus came and said, "I'll give you a job for four days a week. Do you want it? I'll give you a salary." They said, "Okay, sure, I'll take it," because they don't want to do all the bits and pieces. That has actually absorbed a lot of the people and they're getting classroom teachers, which is great. They're providing jobs, but I think there is a challenge at the moment.<sup>164</sup>

### *Specialisation within ITE*

- 3.42** Several inquiry participants, such as National Advocates for Arts Education and the Australian Society for Music Education, called for arts and music to be introduced as areas of primary specialisation in ITE courses to allow primary generalist teachers to specialise in individual arts subjects (Dance, Drama, Media Arts, Music, and Visual Arts).
- 3.43** In relation to music specialisation, Dr James Humberstone, Senior Lecturer, Music Education, Sydney Conservatorium of Music, University of Sydney, explained that whilst the Sydney Conservatorium trains around half of the music teachers in New South Wales, it is only accredited to train secondary music teachers. This means that while pre-service teachers are

<sup>158</sup> Evidence, Mr Kevin Carragher Director of Education and Research, Sydney Catholic Schools, 23 August 2024, p 22.

<sup>159</sup> Submission 43, Alberts (Music Education Right from the Start), p 11.

<sup>160</sup> Submission 48, Australian Society for Music Education - NSW Chapter, p 5.

<sup>161</sup> Evidence, Mr Kevin Carragher Director of Education and Research, Sydney Catholic Schools, 23 August 2024, p 22.

<sup>162</sup> Evidence, Mr Kevin Carragher Director of Education and Research, Sydney Catholic Schools, 23 August 2024, p 22.

<sup>163</sup> Evidence, Mr Alex Masso Executive Officer, Australian Music Association, 30 July 2023, p 59.

<sup>164</sup> Evidence, Mr Alex Masso Executive Officer, Australian Music Association, 30 July 2023, p 59.

taught some primary pedagogies, these are not in depth because NESA does not accredit a specialisation in teaching primary school music.<sup>165</sup>

**3.44** The committee heard that the approach to using specialist music teachers in primary schools varies across jurisdictions. For example:

- In Queensland music education is delivered by a specialist teacher.<sup>166</sup>
- In Victoria generalist teachers usually deliver music education. However, school principals have discretion to employ a specialist music teacher.<sup>167</sup>
- In South Australia generalist teachers teach music education.<sup>168</sup>

**3.45** Finally, Mr Martin Graham, Deputy Secretary, Teaching, Learning and Student Wellbeing, NSW Department of Education, supported the idea of specialisation, telling the committee: 'We're quite happy to work with ITE providers in a number of areas around providing teachers with that passion and that commitment to provide them with a micro-credential so that they can have that specialisation.'<sup>169</sup>

#### *Introduction of a primary school music specialist code*

**3.46** During the inquiry, many inquiry participants called on the introduction of a new subject teaching area code for music in primary schools to assist with providing permanent employment pathways for specialist music teachers.<sup>170</sup> The committee heard that this new code was 'essential'<sup>171</sup> and could reduce inequity and broaden access to music education.<sup>172</sup>

**3.47** Staffing codes indicate the 'subject and teaching areas' in which a teacher is qualified and willing to teach.<sup>173</sup> There are also staffing codes for related 'skills and experience' which a teacher has demonstrated competence. Staffing codes can indicate a teacher's suitability to be matched for a vacant position.<sup>174</sup>

<sup>165</sup> Submission 21, Dr James Humberstone, p 5.

<sup>166</sup> Submission 4, Dr Anita Collins, p 4; Submission 50, Music in Me, p 10.

<sup>167</sup> Submission 4, Dr Anita Collins, p 4.

<sup>168</sup> Department for Education, South Australia 'Music Education Strategy 2019 to 2029' <https://www.education.sa.gov.au/department/strategies-and-plans/music-education-strategy-and-music-innovation-fund#quality-music-education-framework>

<sup>169</sup> Evidence, Mr Martin Graham, Deputy Secretary, Teaching, Learning and Student Wellbeing, NSW Department of Education, 23 August 2024, p 53.

<sup>170</sup> See for example, Submission 48, Australian Society for Music Education - NSW Chapter, p 5; Evidence, Dr Kirsten Macaulay, NSW Executive and NSW Treasurer, Australian Society for Music Education, 30 July 2024, 34-35; Evidence, Dr James Humberstone, FRSA, Senior Lecturer in Music Education, Sydney Conservatorium of Music, University of Sydney, 23 August 2024, p 2; Submission 21, Dr James Humberstone, p 6.

<sup>171</sup> Submission 48, Australian Society for Music Education - NSW Chapter, p 5.

<sup>172</sup> Submission 48, Australian Society for Music Education - NSW Chapter, p 5.

<sup>173</sup> NSW Government, Education, Staffing codes, <https://education.nsw.gov.au/about-us/careers-at-education/roles-and-locations/roles-at-education/teaching/staffing-codes> (26 August 2024)

<sup>174</sup> NSW Government, Education, Staffing codes, <https://education.nsw.gov.au/about-us/careers-at-education/roles-and-locations/roles-at-education/teaching/staffing-codes> (26 August 2024)



- 3.48** Currently there is no subject teaching area code for music teachers in New South Wales primary schools.<sup>175</sup> However, there is one for music teachers in secondary schools.<sup>176</sup>
- 3.49** In primary schools, subject teaching codes are available for general teachers, STEM specialisation and languages.<sup>177</sup> There is a 'skills and experience' code for music which sits alongside band, choir and sport.<sup>178</sup> However, the committee heard that skills and experience codes are not used for 'Central Appointment' matching methods when filling classroom teacher vacancies on a permanent basis.<sup>179</sup> In some instances, principals develop a 'work around' to secure these sought-after music specialists.<sup>180</sup>
- 3.50** Inquiry participants indicated that this makes permanent appointment of specialist music teachers in primary schools more difficult as there is no pathway to permanency for them.<sup>181</sup> The committee heard that as a result they are 'left hanging'<sup>182</sup> and often end up on long term temporary contracts, which in turn impacts career progression.<sup>183</sup>
- 3.51** The committee also heard that a primary school music specialist code would also assist with statistics about how much music teaching is happening in schools.<sup>184</sup>
- 3.52** The NSW Department of Education addressed the issue of teaching codes. Mr Martin Graham, Deputy Secretary Teaching Learning and Student Wellbeing, NSW Department of Education, advised that music and languages have their own subject teaching codes because of the ITE arrangements and the national agreement around specialisations.<sup>185</sup> The NSW Department of Education later outlined that it grants approval to teach and relevant subject teaching codes based on the teacher's tertiary qualifications and ITE accreditation.<sup>186</sup>
- 3.53** Mr Graham advised that while there is a skills and experience code for music in primary schools, it is a code that attaches to the person, rather than their position and acknowledged this was not the same as having a specialist music position with a code.<sup>187</sup>

<sup>175</sup> Submission 48, Australian Society for Music Education - NSW Chapter, p 5.

<sup>176</sup> NSW Government, Education, Staffing codes, <https://education.nsw.gov.au/about-us/careers-at-education/roles-and-locations/roles-at-education/teaching/staffing-codes> (26 August 2024).

<sup>177</sup> Submission 48, Australian Society for Music Education - NSW Chapter, p 5.

<sup>178</sup> Submission 55, Australian Music Association, p 15.

<sup>179</sup> Submission 55, Australian Music Association, p 15; NSW Government, Education, Staffing codes, <https://education.nsw.gov.au/about-us/careers-at-education/roles-and-locations/roles-at-education/teaching/staffing-codes> (26 August 2024).

<sup>180</sup> Submission 43, Alberts (Music Education Right from the Start), p 11.

<sup>181</sup> See for example, Submission 55, Australian Music Association, p 15; Submission 48, Australian Society for Music Education - NSW Chapter, p 5.

<sup>182</sup> Submission 43, Alberts (Music Education Right from the Start), p 11.

<sup>183</sup> Submission 48, Australian Society for Music Education - NSW Chapter, p 5.

<sup>184</sup> Evidence, Dr Kirsten Macaulay, NSW Executive and NSW Treasurer, Australian Society for Music Education, 30 July 2024, 34-35.

<sup>185</sup> Evidence, Mr Martin Graham, Deputy Secretary Teaching Learning and Student Wellbeing, NSW Department of Education, 23 August 2024, p 63.

<sup>186</sup> Answers to questions on notice, NSW Department of Education, 26 September 2024, p 4-5.

<sup>187</sup> Evidence, Mr Martin Graham, Deputy Secretary Teaching Learning and Student Wellbeing, NSW Department of Education, 23 August 2024, p 63.

## Practicing teachers and school leaders

- 3.54** There was a great deal of discussion during the inquiry about the role of principals, school leadership teams and teachers to not only teach creative arts, but also foster an environment that pursues excellence in this area. To this end, stakeholders told the committee that successful creative arts curriculums were often dependent on the passion of a single principal or teacher. Without this type of leadership, arts and music were often left to languish.
- 3.55** Inquiry participants told the committee that school leaders and teachers need more support, such as increased professional development opportunities, to engender a more hospitable environment for creative arts education in classrooms and as cocurricular activities.

### Roles and responsibilities for teachers and school leaders

- 3.56** A common theme that emerged during the inquiry was that often the successful delivery of arts and music in schools relied heavily upon one passionate teacher or principal.
- 3.57** The committee heard stories of students who were inspired to further their creative studies because they had an engaging arts or music teacher who helped 'light the spark' in them. However, it was also noted that it was often 'luck of the draw' whether a student had a good arts or music teacher.<sup>188</sup>
- 3.58** Similarly, inquiry participants indicated that school principals and support from school executive was one of the most crucial factors in the success of a primary school music program.<sup>189</sup> In its submission, the Australian Society for Music Education referred to one primary school principal's reflections on their pivotal role, saying 'If I were to fall under a bus tomorrow, it'd [music education would] all die'.<sup>190</sup>
- 3.59** In a similar vein, Alberts recognised that even the best music program is likely to 'fall over' if a committed principal leaves unless it has also been developed and supported by the broader school team. Alberts concluded that 'school leaders' as a whole are critical to progressing access to quality music education and they also decide the priority, approach and resources allocated to subjects.<sup>191</sup>
- 3.60** Stakeholders advocated a range of initiatives to better support principals, school leadership teams and teachers, including:
- As discussed in Chapter 2, the NSW Government and NSW Department of Education send an 'unequivocal' message to school leaders that sequential and ongoing music education is a foundational commitment for all primary schools and that those who move to implement and improve programs in their schools will be supported.<sup>192</sup>

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<sup>188</sup> Evidence, Mr Joe Muller, Managing Director, MusicNSW, 30 July 2024, p 29.

<sup>189</sup> Submission 48, Australian Society for Music Education - NSW Chapter, p 3.

<sup>190</sup> Submission 48, Australian Society for Music Education - NSW Chapter, p 3.

<sup>191</sup> Submission 43, Alberts (Music Education: Right from the Start), p 9.

<sup>192</sup> Submission 43, Alberts (Music Education: Right from the Start), p 9.

- School leadership teams receive education and training on the benefits of creative arts to encourage the prioritisation of these subjects<sup>193</sup>
- Rules and procedures governing school leaders, such as KPIs, school reporting, actively encourage primary school leaders to introduce quality music across their school.<sup>194</sup>
- School leaders be provided with information about quality music education, guidance and practical aids, teaching resources and programs.<sup>195</sup>

**3.61** As discussed in Chapter 7, the NSW Department of Education provides specific support to creative arts programs through its Arts Unit. Mr Martin Graham, Deputy Secretary Teaching Learning and Student Wellbeing, NSW Department of Education, recognised that the department could make it easier and clearer for principals to understand what supports are on offer via the Arts Unit so that principals are not overwhelmed.<sup>196</sup>

### *Delivery of extracurricular activities*

**3.62** Another issue that was raised during the inquiry was the rising expectations on arts and music teachers to deliver extracurricular activities such as ensembles and musicals. On one hand, the committee heard overwhelming evidence about the benefit these activities have for students.<sup>197</sup> However, there is significant pressure on teachers to facilitate these activities.<sup>198</sup>

**3.63** This was highlighted by Ms Diane Grant, Member, Ausdance National, who explained the experiences of dance teachers who are expected to deliver extracurriculars above their full-time teaching loads:

I can only add that every dance teacher in every high school is expected to do extracurricular—before school or after school—ensembles to keep the art form alive in the school, and be prepared to choreograph for the school musical. That also includes all the other arts departments as well. It's just an expectation. They do it on their goodwill, over and above their full-time teaching loads.<sup>199</sup>

**3.64** Other inquiry participants reported that music teachers are particularly prone to burn-out due to responsibilities and expectations placed on them by their schools.<sup>200</sup>

**3.65** Inquiry participants acknowledged that these extracurriculars significantly enrich learning opportunities for students and the broader school culture and community, and called for the time spent on these activities to be appropriately accounted for in teachers' workloads.<sup>201</sup>

<sup>193</sup> Submission 11, The Song Room, p 6; Submission 4, Dr Anita Collins, p 3.

<sup>194</sup> Submission 43, Alberts (Music Education: Right from the Start), p 9.

<sup>195</sup> Submission 43, Alberts (Music Education: Right from the Start), p 9.

<sup>196</sup> Evidence, Mr Martin Graham, Deputy Secretary Teaching Learning and Student Wellbeing, NSW Department of Education, 23 August 2024, p 57.

<sup>197</sup> Evidence, Ms Amy Gill, Vice President, Drama New South Wales, 30 July 2024, p 24; Evidence, Ms Evelyn Richardson, Chief Executive, Live Performance Australia, p 28.

<sup>198</sup> Evidence, Ms Diane Grant, Member, Ausdance National, 30 July 2024, p 24.

<sup>199</sup> Evidence, Ms Diane Grant, Member, Ausdance National, 30 July 2024, p 24.

<sup>200</sup> Submission, Australian Society for Music Education, p 7.

<sup>201</sup> Submission, Australian Society for Music Education, p 7.

**3.66** In particular, the Australian Society for Music Education recommended that equitable teaching allocation loading be mandated for each cocurricular ensemble activity that a music teacher takes at the request of the school.<sup>202</sup>

**3.67** The committee received evidence that it is often up to a principal's discretion about what allowances may be given to teachers who deliver activities above their normal classroom time. For example, Mr McCorquodale, Music Teacher 7-12, Cronulla High School, told the committee that he was fortunate to receive an allocation to direct a concert band and a music production every two years. However, he noted that this is not the case in every school where funding can be stretched:

It's about ensuring that each public school has the funds to relieve a teacher for the time they're spending at a rehearsal on a weekly basis from the time that would be spent in the classroom, to make sure that it's not doubling up their work but is allowing parity between all teachers. At some schools, the principals will use that funding to make sure that their music teachers are given a fair allowance to direct ensembles and to provide music opportunities but, very often, schools are stretched.<sup>203</sup>

### **Professional development, training and support for teachers**

**3.68** There was a clear consensus among inquiry participants that teachers need more opportunities for professional development and training in arts and music.<sup>204</sup>

**3.69** Inquiry participants highlighted the difficulty for teachers to access further professional development. In particular, Visual Arts and Design Educators Association NSW (VADEA) expressed concern that the NSW Government and NESA have removed the requirement for teachers to complete accredited professional development teacher education programs that meet specific standards for preparing teachers in New South Wales.<sup>205</sup>

**3.70** VADEA said that this has resulted in there being 'little impetus' from schools to encourage or accommodate teachers to pursue specialist professional development in subject specific areas.<sup>206</sup> For example, VADEA noted that there has been a declining number of teachers participating in their annual events as it has become increasingly hard for teachers to get released from schools to attend professional development.<sup>207</sup>

**3.71** To strengthen professional development opportunities, Alberts (Music Education: Right from the Start) recommended increased incentives and support including teacher release provisions for relevant professional development. It was recommended that this takes place at each stage

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<sup>202</sup> Submission, Australian Society for Music Education, p 7.

<sup>203</sup> Evidence, Mr Thomas McCorquodale, Music Teacher 7-12, Cronulla High School, 23 August 2024, p 29.

<sup>204</sup> See for example, Submission 19, Bangarra Dance Theatre, p 2; Submission 44, Visual Arts and Design Educators Association NSW, p 5.

<sup>205</sup> Submission 44, Visual Arts and Design Educators Association NSW, p 5.

<sup>206</sup> Submission 44, Visual Arts and Design Educators Association NSW, p 5.

<sup>207</sup> Submission 44, Visual Arts and Design Educators Association NSW, p 5.

of the teaching lifecycle but with an immediate priority for teachers in the first five years of service.<sup>208</sup>

**3.72** A number of stakeholders put forward other proposals to help primary school teachers feel more confident and skilled in teaching music. For example, Professor Jane Edwards, Executive Dean, Faculty of Humanities, Arts, Social Sciences and Education, University of New England, suggested:

- funding annual places in existing music training programs to build greater confidence for primary school teachers
- creating new bespoke training offered during team time with teaching load reduction
- further curriculum support and resources.<sup>209</sup>

**3.73** Professor Edwards also suggested using specialist music teachers, conservatoria staff and local musicians to mentor generalist teachers, help develop curriculum and teaching materials, and support upskilling.<sup>210</sup>

**3.74** The committee received evidence from Bangarra who strongly advocated for increased professional learning opportunities in early learning, primary and secondary levels to support teachers to effectively teach First Nations content within the arts. Bangarra explained that this would in turn to improve student academic and non-academic outcomes in this learning area.<sup>211</sup>

**3.75** Separately, in South Australia a ten-year music education strategy was launched in 2019 to enhance the quality of music education. The Government of South Australia has committed \$14.5 million to the plan so far.<sup>212</sup> A key element of the plan is upskilling non-specialist teachers to improve the delivery of general classroom music education by providing professional development.<sup>213</sup>

**3.76** The committee heard about various educational and professional development programs provided by external providers and arts organisations and the impact they have on teacher confidence.

## Delivery of arts and music programs by external providers

**3.77** The NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) and the NSW Department of Education provide support to schools to implement the curriculum. For example, the NSW Department

<sup>208</sup> Submission 43, Alberts (Music Education: Right from the Start), p 12.

<sup>209</sup> Correspondence from Professor Jane Edwards, Executive Dean, Faculty of Humanities, Arts, Social Sciences and Education, University of New England, to Chair, 8 October 2024.

<sup>210</sup> Correspondence from Professor Jane Edwards, Executive Dean, Faculty of Humanities, Arts, Social Sciences and Education, University of New England, to Chair, 8 October 2024.

<sup>211</sup> Submission 19, Bangarra Dance Theatre, p 2.

<sup>212</sup> Submission 4, Dr Anita Collins, p 4.

<sup>213</sup> Submission 50, National Advocates for Arts Education, p 10, citing the Department for Education, South Australia, *Music Education Strategy 2019 to 2029*, <https://www.education.sa.gov.au/department/strategies-and-plans/music-education-strategy-and-music-innovation-fund>.

of Education Primary Curriculum team provides curriculum support to schools and the Arts Unit provides opportunities for schools, teachers and students to engage in the arts and activities.<sup>214</sup> Principals and their leadership teams are responsible for ensuring that curriculum outcomes are met.

- 3.78** Throughout the inquiry, it became clear that many schools and teachers rely heavily on third parties such as arts and music organisations, regional conservatoriums and teacher associations to provide professional development opportunities in the arts for teachers, teaching and learning resources and to deliver arts and music education for students.<sup>215</sup>
- 3.79** The committee heard that these organisations play a complementary role in delivering arts and music education. These organisations were invariably described as 'essential', 'critical', and 'vital' parts of the creative arts education ecosystem.<sup>216</sup>
- 3.80** Many stakeholders highlighted that the services these organisations provide build the confidence and capability of generalist primary school teachers and the capacity of the teaching profession as a whole.<sup>217</sup>
- 3.81** The committee also received evidence about the critical role public and regional galleries and museums play in supporting the cultural needs of young people, especially in regional areas, as well as providing career pathways for cultural workers.<sup>218</sup> According to the Museums and Galleries of NSW 2022 census, 56 per cent of its organisations partner with schools and/or education providers to deliver programs to young people.<sup>219</sup>
- 3.82** A key issue that was raised by inquiry participants was that the inconsistent delivery of arts and music education in schools is leading to a reliance on external arts and music organisations to fill the void.<sup>220</sup> Further, the committee heard that organisations often faced delivering these services without a secure funding model to match.<sup>221</sup>
- 3.83** Stakeholders commented that it was unclear how creative education was being delivered in schools.<sup>222</sup> The committee heard that some students receive valuable music education from

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<sup>214</sup> Submission 50, Music in Me, Australian Youth Orchestra, p 9.

<sup>215</sup> Submission 50, Music in Me, Australian Youth Orchestra, p 9.

<sup>216</sup> Submission 50, Music in Me, Australian Youth Orchestra, p 9; Submission 11, The Song Room, p 3; Submission Victorian Music Teachers' Association p 4; Evidence, Mr Alex Masso, Executive Officer, Australian Music Association, 30 July 2024, p 55.

<sup>217</sup> Submission 11, The Song Room, p 3; Submission 51, The Australian Children's Music Foundation, p 4.

<sup>218</sup> Submission 23 Museums and Galleries of NSW, p 1.

<sup>219</sup> Submission 23 Museums and Galleries of NSW, p 1.

<sup>220</sup> See for example, Evidence, Ms Mia Patoulios, Chief Executive Officer, Sydney Youth Orchestras, 30 July 2024, p 47.

<sup>221</sup> See for example, Evidence, Ms Mia Patoulios, Chief Executive Officer, Sydney Youth Orchestras, 30 July 2024, p 47.

<sup>222</sup> Evidence, Ms Gemma Quinn, Chief Executive Officer, Federation of Parents and Citizens Associations of New South Wales, 23 August 2024, p 34.

external providers, while others reported that students receive minimal music education and more often, none at all.<sup>223</sup>

- 3.84** Mr Anthony van den Broek, Deputy Chair, Music Teachers' Association of NSW, told the committee that as a private music teacher he was doing the heavy lifting to provide music education that was not being delivered in school, becoming what he called a 'remedial music teacher':

I think what I notice as a private music teacher in the industry is that we are doing the heavy lifting for what is not happening in primary schools. I only discovered that music education wasn't compulsory in primary schools when students started coming to me who had absolutely no ability to sing. They really had no skills. They couldn't do any rhythm. So, as a private piano teacher, my job all of a sudden became, actually, a remedial music teacher to try to get them to a basic level. So that's what's happening in primary schools. The teachers who are teaching on the side, who are instead teaching what should be going on at school, are developing the music students in New South Wales.<sup>224</sup>

- 3.85** Similarly, Mr Joe Muller, Managing Director, MusicNSW, confirmed that many industry organisations were filling the gaps for schools where there is no access to quality music education. In his evidence to the committee, Mr Muller explained that there was a role for industry to play in bridging gaps in music education that would be beneficial not just to the students, but also for the teachers to have access to additional expertise and inspiration.<sup>225</sup>

- 3.86** The committee heard of several programs in New South Wales that deliver in-school music and arts education. For example, Moorambilla Voices, a regionally based, multi-artform, youth education and capacity building program that commissions and creates choral, dance, visual arts and Taiko drumming works. The program works to embody the spirit of walking together with Australia's First Nations people with inclusion and respect.<sup>226</sup>

- 3.87** Other initiatives include programs run by the Australian Children's Music Foundation and the Australian Chamber Orchestra. The committee visited Merrylands Public School and St Marys North where these programs operate. As discussed in the case studies below, these site visits highlighted the importance of specialist music teachers and specialist music programs in delivering sequential music education to students, and empowering generalist teachers to upskill their own music education.

<sup>223</sup> Submission 11, The Song Room, p 2; Submission 69, Kodály NSW, p 3.

<sup>224</sup> Evidence, Mr Anthony van den Broek, Deputy Chair, Music Teachers' Association of NSW, 30 July 2024, p 32.

<sup>225</sup> Evidence, Mr Joe Muller, Managing Director, MusicNSW, 30 July 2024, p 28.

<sup>226</sup> Submission 18, Moorabilla Voices, p 1.

**Case study - Merrylands Public School and the Australian Children's Music Foundation<sup>227</sup>**

The Australian Children's Music Foundation (ACMF) delivers long term quality sequential music education and instruments to children and youth-at-risk across Australia. ACMF's music programs are delivered in low Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage schools (mainly primary), specialist support classes and schools for specific purposes and Youth Justice Centres.

In September 2024, the committee visited Merrylands Public School, a comprehensive coeducational public school in Western Sydney, where ACMF runs its program. As part of ACMF's program, a qualified music teacher attends the school once per week, spending 30 minutes with each of the school's five support classes. The program includes singing, music therapy, movement, rhythm, and instruments.

The committee observed a music lesson during its visit. The ACMF teacher was unable to attend the lesson. However, other teachers were comfortable leading the class as exposure to the ACMF program had increased their confidence to teach music.

The lesson focused on volume levels through play and singing. The committee observed the students use coloured boom whackers to identify musical notes while singing 'The Lion Sleeps Tonight'. Students described the music classes as making them feel 'awesome', 'good', 'calm' and 'beautiful'.

Ms Bronwyn York, Principal of Merrylands Public School, explained that many students come from low socio-economic backgrounds, where they may not have the financial or social means to attend music lessons outside of school. The ACMF provides students with an opportunity to engage in music education and spark their interest in continued musical and instrumental engagement.

**Case study - St Marys North and Australian Chamber Orchestra (ACO)<sup>228</sup>**

The Australian Chamber Orchestra (ACO) Foundations program is an in-school program that uses music learning to improve the developmental and educational outcomes of children in low socio-economic status schools. The ACO Foundation has overseen more than 160 students across western Sydney since 2018, demonstrating the life-changing impacts music education has on students and their communities. The program has been evaluated and clearly correlated with improved student attendance. The evaluation also found that ACO Foundations students increased their performance in their ability to learn, numeracy, reading and spelling at a greater rate than students not participating in the program.

In September 2024, the committee visited St Marys North Public School, a comprehensive coeducational primary school in Western Sydney. Since 2018, the ACO, in collaboration with St Marys North's classroom teachers, have delivered a music program to students in Years 1-3. Key components of the program include:

- Students are assigned either a violin or a cello in Year 1 which will be used for the entirety of the program. The instruments are provided by the school and stored at the school.

<sup>227</sup> Submission 51, The Australian Children's Music Foundation; School site visit summary report, Appendix One of this report of this report, p 136. This case study is based on the content of the submission and the site visit report.

<sup>228</sup> Submission 92, New South Wales Government Submission, p16; Australian Chamber Orchestra Foundations Evaluation Report 2018-2022, p 39, 17, 21.; School site visit summary report, Appendix One of this report of this report, p 136-137. This case study is based on the content of the submission, Report and the site visit report.



- Students engage in 15-20 minutes of music education every day. Music tutors attend the school on certain days. However, on most days, lessons are led by the classroom teacher who follows a program designed by the ACO. The lessons step students through basic knowledge and form, moving them into longer pieces, which they play as a class.
- The students eventually form an ensemble and hold performances.

The committee heard that students at St Marys North are often from families of low socio-economic status and may not have access to such comprehensive music education outside of school. Engaging with the ACO delivers students with what may be a once-off opportunity to immerse themselves in an instrument.

The committee observed Year 1 students playing the violin and cello. The students appeared focused and confident in their abilities as their classroom teacher led their warm up and they practised their assigned melody.

Mrs Lisa Parello, Principal of St Marys North, and Ms Tara Smith, Director for Learning and Engagement, Australian Chamber Orchestra, identified several benefits of the daily music lessons and instrumental classes, including increased cognitive and behavioural development, increased parental engagement in student learning and enhanced general wellbeing.

**3.88** The committee also received evidence about many external initiatives that provide tools, resources and professional development to teachers. For example, the Music in Me teacher mentoring program run by the Australian Youth Orchestra which was established to address the decline in music education quality within New South Wales primary schools. The program seeks to enhance the confidence and competence of generalist primary teachers in delivering quality music education by mentoring and upskilling classroom teachers.<sup>229</sup>

**3.89** Another example of an in-school music program delivered by an external provider is Amplify, a software platform that teachers use to deliver high-quality, sequential music lessons that meet the compulsory curriculum outcomes. According to Amplify, the tool enhances existing school systems, upskills and supports non-specialist teachers to deliver engaging and contemporary lessons, is accessible to all schools regardless of location and can be tailored for all types of learners.<sup>230</sup>

### **Funding of arts and music organisations**

**3.90** During the inquiry the committee heard concerns about the general lack of funding for arts and music organisations as a whole, as well as the limited funding for these organisations to deliver their educational programs and provide curriculum support to schools.

**3.91** The committee received evidence that much of the valuable work that arts and music organisations provide as part of their education and training programs does not have dedicated

<sup>229</sup> Submission 50, Music In Me, Australian Youth Orchestra p 2.

<sup>230</sup> Submission 82, Amplify Music Education, p 1.

government funding. Rather, this work is often funded by the organisations themselves with donor or philanthropy support.<sup>231</sup>

**3.92** In some instances, the committee heard that organisations offer their programs for free as schools do not have the budget to support them.<sup>232</sup>

**3.93** The committee also heard that many organisations were having to cut their educational programs due to funding difficulties. In its submission, Museums and Galleries of NSW reported a drop in the number of education focused roles in the sector and explained that it is often these positions that are 'the first to be cut within a constrained fiscal environment.'<sup>233</sup>

**3.94** Further to this point, the committee heard about the funding challenges facing the Sydney Theatre Company's 'School Drama' program. The program, which has been running for the past 12 years to deliver professional development for teachers in primary schools, will be discontinued in 2025 due to a lack of funding.<sup>234</sup> Ms Amy Gill, Vice President, Drama NSW, discussed the potential impacts that cutting this program will have on young people from low socio-economic areas:

We just recently found out that they're cutting their school drama program, which was being led by industry within that space, because of funding. They've just made redundant the education coordinator at Sydney Theatre Company, who is an education-trained specialist, because they don't have the funding. That's trickling down into our young people that aren't having those cultural experiences and often it's schools that are giving our young people those first cultural experiences, particularly those young people living in low socio-economic areas.<sup>235</sup>

**3.95** Similarly, the committee heard that Bangarra Dance Theatre, along with many other arts and music organisations, do not receive enough funding support from the NSW Department of Education to deliver its programs in schools. Bangarra Dance Theatre, recommended that the department review its current support for arts organisations to fund such activities in order for Bangarra to continue to offer this critical opportunity across regional and remote public schools in the state.<sup>236</sup>

**3.96** Other inquiry participants reported that arts and music organisations have struggled to establish supportable business models noting volatile revenue sources, such as government funding, inadequate capacity and capabilities to operate sustainably and grow financially.<sup>237</sup> It was noted that some organisations also often fall between the funding gaps at both state and national levels.

**3.97** In terms of improving funding to arts and music organisations, many stakeholders suggested the development of a comprehensive investment model that acknowledges and supports the

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<sup>231</sup> See for example, Submission 55, Live Performance Australia, p 6; Evidence, Mr Alex Masso, Executive Officer, Australian Music Association, 30 July 2024, p 55.

<sup>232</sup> Submission 55, Live Performance Australia, p 6.

<sup>233</sup> Submission 23, Museums and Galleries of NSW, p 2.

<sup>234</sup> Submission 14, Sydney Theatre Company, p 1.

<sup>235</sup> Evidence, Ms Amy Gill, Vice President, Drama NSW, 30 July 2024, p 22.

<sup>236</sup> Submission 19, Bangarra Dance Theatre, p 4.

<sup>237</sup> Submission 114, Cultural Arts Collective and Scared Currents Inc, p 2.

significant contributions of small to medium arts organisations as key providers of arts education.<sup>238</sup> Sydney Theatre Company, along with other stakeholders called for there to be increased and dedicated funding for companies that deliver arts education and training.<sup>239</sup>

**3.98** It was also suggested that by investing in professional performing arts organisations will enable existing successful programs to be scaled up for increased reach and impact across New South Wales.<sup>240</sup>

**3.99** The committee received other suggested solutions, including:

- developing a bursary program for fee-based music programs/activities<sup>241</sup>
- allocating ring-fenced funds to school budgets for art experiences in schools<sup>242</sup>
- establishing an innovation task force made up of organisations, artists and academics to look at building new models of delivery that are financially sustainable and scalable<sup>243</sup>
- defining the Key State Youth Arts Organisations and fund them to provide equal access and equity to all programs to prevent redundancy and duplication of work and resources and foster close collaboration among organisations.<sup>244</sup>

### *Partnerships with the NSW Department of Education*

**3.100** There was discussion about developing and improving partnerships between government agencies, particularly the NSW Department of Education, schools, creative industries and organisations to continue the delivery of arts and music education and training.

**3.101** One issue raised in particular was that as there are many arts and music organisations delivering different models and programs, it is challenging to set standards, measure activity and improve access to these programs.<sup>245</sup> The committee heard that this also made it challenging to create pathways and form connections between schools and share knowledge between organisations.<sup>246</sup>

**3.102** Another issue raised was that it was difficult for organisations to engage with the NSW Department of Education to deliver programs. Inquiry participants called for processes to be streamlined and simplified to better facilitate partnerships between organisations and schools.<sup>247</sup> For example, Western Sydney Arts Alliance suggested that a framework be developed to

<sup>238</sup> Submission 20, Western Sydney Creative, Western Sydney University, p 4, Submission 23 Museums and Galleries of NSW, p 2.

<sup>239</sup> See for example, Submission 14, Sydney Theatre Company, p1; Submission 23, Museums and Galleries of NSW, p 3; Submission 55, Live Performance Australia, p 6.

<sup>240</sup> Submission 36, Musica Viva Australia, p 1.

<sup>241</sup> Submission 58, Australian Music Association, p 4.

<sup>242</sup> Submission 24, Bell Shakespeare, p 6.

<sup>243</sup> Submission 49, Sydney Youth Orchestra, p 6.

<sup>244</sup> Submission 49, Sydney Youth Orchestra, p 6.

<sup>245</sup> Submission 58, Australian Music Association, p 12.

<sup>246</sup> Submission 58, Australian Music Association, p 12.

<sup>247</sup> Submission 52, Western Sydney Arts Alliance, p 3.

efficiently addresses the policy and regulatory environment for partnerships with school and tertiary institutions and providing schools with incentive to engage in arts programs.<sup>248</sup>

- 3.103** Several inquiry participants called for more support for arts and cultural organisations to work in partnership with education providers to make arts-based learning a core part of education.<sup>249</sup> The committee heard that the work done by external partners allows musicians to add to their portfolio of work opportunities at the same time as helping to address the skills gap in music education at many schools. For example, Musica Viva, one of the leading providers of music education in schools, is one of Australia's largest employers of freelance classical musicians and provides musicians with steady and ongoing employment.<sup>250</sup>
- 3.104** Further, the committee heard that the NSW Government should act as a connector between arts and music organisations and schools by supporting the evaluation of programs and providing ongoing investment to enhance effective partnerships.<sup>251</sup>
- 3.105** Similarly, it was suggested that a standardised research framework with consistent outcomes be developed so that all arts organisations might use to evaluate their impact, helping schools to access in their own decision making when engaging with organisations.<sup>252</sup>

## Regulation of private music teachers

- 3.106** The committee heard that the inconsistent delivery of music education leads certain individuals to seek out music education by private providers. A related issue that was raised briefing during the inquiry was the lack of regulation of the private music teacher industry.
- 3.107** Inquiry participants expressed concern that private music providers are unregulated and unpoliced.<sup>253</sup> Moreover, the committee was informed that students are being let down by a lack of regulation.<sup>254</sup>
- 3.108** Mr Anthony van den Broek, Deputy Chair, Music Teachers' Association of NSW, made the link between the limited availability of the Bachelor of Music and pedagogical education with the emergence of an unregulated private music teacher industry.<sup>255</sup> Telling the committee about his experience as an examiner for the Australian Music Examinations Board, Mr van den Broek

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<sup>248</sup> Submission 52, Western Sydney Arts Alliance, p 3.

<sup>249</sup> Submission 20, Western Sydney Creative, Western Sydney University, p 4; Submission 24 Bell Shakespeare, p 6.

<sup>250</sup> Submission 36, Musica Viva Australia, p 3-4.

<sup>251</sup> Submission 59, Music NSW, p 4.

<sup>252</sup> Submission 24, Bell Shakespeare, p 6.

<sup>253</sup> Submission 46, Riverina Conservatorium of Music, p 4; Submission 48, Australian Society for Music Education - NSW Chapter, p 5.

<sup>254</sup> Evidence, Mr Anthony van den Broek, Deputy Chair, Music Teachers' Association of NSW, 30 July 2024, p 33.

<sup>255</sup> Evidence, Mr Anthony van den Broek, Deputy Chair, Music Teachers' Association of NSW, 30 July 2024, p 33.

said that he has seen a range of abilities and teaching prowess now that anyone can call themselves a music teacher.<sup>256</sup>

- 3.109** Whilst acknowledging that external providers offer valuable support in delivering music curriculum, the Australian Society for Music Education highlighted the urgent need for a formal accreditation process for external music providers and their teaching programs.<sup>257</sup>
- 3.110** The Music Teachers' Association of NSW, the accreditation body for instrumental and vocal music teachers across the state, advocated for partnership with the NSW Government to provide adequate regulation of the industry.<sup>258</sup>
- 3.111** Inquiry participants argued that regulation would ensure high standards and consistency across primary music education and reassure schools, teachers, parents and education authorities.<sup>259</sup>

### Committee comment

- 3.112** It is clear that primary and secondary teachers are the foundations of a strong and healthy creative sector. Throughout the inquiry we heard first-hand about the vital role of teachers in 'lighting the spark' in students and instilling a passion for arts and music.
- 3.113** The impact just one passionate teacher can have on a student cannot be underestimated, and we acknowledge the countless stories we have heard of teachers going above and beyond to provide quality creative education across the state.
- 3.114** Unfortunately, the committee heard that there are barriers for those wanting to pursue qualifications as an arts or music teacher, including limited study options and opportunities for long-term employment. We are concerned to hear that there are only a handful of tertiary institutions where students can study to become an arts or music teacher specifically, and that these options are further limited in the regions.
- 3.115** As such there is a shortage of arts and music teachers across the state. This is of great concern as it is vital that the next generation of primary and secondary arts and music teachers receive innovative and adequate education to support a sustainable arts ecosystem.

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### Finding 3

The limited availability of specialist arts and music teaching degrees in tertiary institutions has diminished pathways for students wanting to become creative arts teachers.

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- 3.116** The committee was interested to understand how the unique skills of artists and musicians could be leveraged to better support generalist teachers in the classroom or become teachers themselves. We heard that job security and income instability within the creative sector can

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<sup>256</sup> Evidence, Mr Anthony van den Broek, Deputy Chair, Music Teachers' Association of NSW, 30 July 2024, p 33.

<sup>257</sup> Submission 48, Australian Society for Music Education - NSW Chapter, p 5.

<sup>258</sup> Submission 32, The Music Teachers' Association of NSW, p 5.

<sup>259</sup> Submission 48, Australian Society for Music Education - NSW Chapter, p 5.

result in artists, musicians and performers having 'portfolio careers'. We were concerned by evidence that musicians were struggling to sustain full time music careers.

- 3.117** One potential solution is to employ artists and musicians in schools to provide more supportive and sustainable income. Whilst there was support for this idea, many emphasised the importance that they be appropriately trained as teachers or have the requisite training. The Australian Children's Music Foundation (ACMF) advocated for building partnerships with musicians and organisations such as ACMF to place teaching musicians in the classroom with a generalist teacher. The committee sees merit in this model as a way to enhance the delivery of creative arts education in schools whilst also supporting artists and musicians. Accordingly, we recommend that the NSW Government explore opportunities to build further partnerships between artists and musicians and external arts organisations and schools.
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#### **Recommendation 1**

That the NSW Government explore opportunities to build further partnerships between artists and musicians and external arts organisations and schools.

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- 3.118** Evidence presented to the committee made it apparent that primary school teachers are not confident in teaching arts and music. Moreover, it appears that teachers are neither gaining enough training in these areas during initial teacher education (ITE) due to the limited hours dedicated to these subjects, nor receiving enough support and professional development opportunities once in the workforce. To remedy this, we recommend that the NSW Government require initial teacher education to include at least two units of mandatory study in Visual Arts, Music, Drama and Dance education.
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#### **Recommendation 2**

That the NSW Government require initial teacher education to include at least two units of mandatory study in Visual Arts, Music, Drama and Dance education.

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- 3.119** Additionally, we acknowledge that once a graduate teacher enters the teaching profession, they are faced with more workforce barriers that prevent them from gaining stable long-term employment. To alleviate these barriers, we recommend that the NSW Government explore introducing arts and music as areas of primary specialisation in ITE courses to allow primary teachers to specialise in individual creative arts subjects and strengthen employment pathways for specialist music teachers. The committee also recommends that the NSW Government consider introducing a teaching area code for primary music teachers to assist with the long-term employment of music teachers in primary schools.
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#### **Recommendation 3**

That the NSW Government explore introducing arts and music as areas of primary specialisation in initial teacher education courses to allow primary teachers to specialise in individual creative arts subjects and strengthen employment pathways for specialist music teachers.

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**Recommendation 4**

That the NSW Government consider introducing a teaching area code for primary music teachers to assist with the long term employment of music teachers in primary schools.

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- 3.120** It was also clear to the committee that there is insufficient professional development support for teachers and school leaders to teach and promote arts and music subjects. As previously mentioned, the committee heard repeatedly about the role even one passionate educator can have in inspiring the next generation of creative professionals. However, not every student in New South Wales is 'lucky' enough to have a teacher like this. It is our view that it should not come down to luck, but that every teacher and school should be equipped to confidently and competently teach creative arts in primary schools.
- 3.121** In addition, we heard that due to NESA's removal of the required number of accredited training hours, schools are reluctant to release teachers to access further professional development in creative arts, such as those programs offered by Visual Arts and Design Educators Association NSW. This undermines a teacher's ability to enhance their knowledge in both the subject and pedagogical practice. To remedy this, we recommend that the NSW Government increase incentives and support including teacher release provisions for relevant professional development in the creative arts. We also recommend that the NSW Government fund and expand arts and music professional development programs to enhance teachers' confidence to teach music in primary schools.
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**Recommendation 5**

That the NSW Government increase incentives and support including teacher release provisions for relevant professional development in the creative arts.

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**Recommendation 6**

That the NSW Government fund and expand arts and music professional development programs to enhance teachers' confidence to teach music in primary schools.

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- 3.122** Throughout the inquiry, it became clear that schools and teachers rely heavily on external third parties such as arts and music organisations and philanthropic groups to deliver creative arts education. Many of these programs and initiatives are specialised to support and engage with vulnerable cohorts of young people including youth-at-risk, young people from low-socio-economic backgrounds, young people with disability, those living in regional and rural areas and First Nations young people.
- 3.123** These organisations are critical parts of the creative arts education ecosystem and are filling the gaps where there is little or no existing arts and music education. The committee was fortunate to experience the impact of two of these programs first hand – the Australian Children's Music Foundation at Merrylands Public School and the Australian Chamber Orchestra at St Marys North. Both of these programs are leading models for what music education in primary schools can look like.
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- 3.124** We recognise that there are challenges facing arts and music organisations which deliver educational programs, such as the lack of dedicated government funding. We were disappointed to hear that the Sydney Theatre Company's School Drama program, which has been running for over a decade, will not continue in 2025 due to a lack of funding.
- 3.125** We support calls for the development of a comprehensive investment model that acknowledges and facilitates the significant contributions of small to medium arts organisations as key providers of arts education. To this end, the committee recommends that the NSW Government consider opportunities to increase dedicated funding for organisations that deliver arts and music education and training, with additional consideration of those providing specialist programs to vulnerable cohorts of young people including youth-at-risk, young people from low-socio-economic backgrounds, young people with disability, those living in regional and rural areas and First Nations young people.
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**Recommendation 7**

That the NSW Government consider opportunities to increase dedicated funding for organisations that deliver arts and music education and training, with additional consideration of those providing specialist programs to vulnerable cohorts of young people including youth-at-risk, young people from low-socio-economic backgrounds, young people with disability, those living in regional and rural areas and First Nations young people.

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- 3.126** The committee notes that it can be difficult for organisations to engage with the NSW Department of Education and that stronger partnerships are needed to support the delivery of educational programs. We note that a streamlined policy and regulatory environment would be beneficial for facilitating these partnerships. The committee recommends that the NSW Government develop an engagement framework for arts and music organisations delivering educational programs that streamlines processes and includes evaluation measures. We also recommend that the NSW Government conduct a state-wide audit or assessment to identify areas where arts and music programs are not being delivered.
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**Recommendation 8**

That the NSW Government develop an engagement framework for organisations delivering arts and music educational programs that streamlines processes and includes evaluation measures.

**Recommendation 9**

That the NSW Government conduct a state-wide audit or assessment to identify areas where arts and music programs are not being delivered.

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- 3.127** Finally, we are concerned by the evidence raised by the Music Teachers' Association of NSW, the accreditation body for instrumental and vocal music teachers in NSW, regarding the lack of regulation of the private music teacher industry and the potential consequences if left unmanaged. We recommend that the NSW Government seek to work with the Music Teachers' Association of NSW to consider opportunities to provide adequate regulation of the industry,
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including that the standards of regulation should take into consideration the ability of non-accredited tutors to deliver basic music tuition where appropriate.

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**Recommendation 10**

That the NSW Government seek to work with the Music Teachers' Association of NSW to consider opportunities to provide adequate regulation of the industry, including that the standards of regulation should take into consideration the ability of non-accredited tutors to deliver basic music tuition where appropriate.

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## Chapter 4 Creative arts curriculums in New South Wales schools

This chapter examines the key issues raised about the creative arts curriculums in New South Wales primary and secondary schools. The chapter sets out the principal arts and music syllabuses used in schools. It then discusses the concerns raised during the inquiry about the syllabuses, including whether the NSW Creative Arts K-6 Syllabus meets best practice models for the delivery of music education. The chapter also outlines issues regarding the Stage 4 and 5 creative arts syllabuses. It concludes by discussing the concerns raised at the Stage 6 arts creative arts syllabuses, including the impact of scaling and capping of HSC courses, and the availability of extension arts and music courses.

Note, this chapter mentions certain outcomes of the NSW Curriculum Reform. The NSW Curriculum Reform is examined in Chapter 5.

### Key arts and music syllabuses in New South Wales

- 4.1** As overviewed in Chapter 1, the New South Wales Education Standards Authority (NESA) has developed a number of mandatory and elective arts and music syllabuses across Early Stage 1 (Kindergarten) through to Stage 6 (Years 11-12) that are used in schools in New South Wales. In particular:
- The NSW Creative Arts K-6 Syllabus is mandatory for students from Kindergarten to Year 6.
  - In Years 7-8 there are mandatory syllabuses for Music and Visual Arts which compel students to study each subject for 100 hours. There are also elective syllabuses for Dance and Drama, Photographic and Digital Media, Visual Arts and Visual Design available for Years 7-10 with 100- or 200-hour options.
  - In Years 11-12 there are NESA-developed courses in Dance, Drama and Visual Arts. Additionally, there are content endorsed courses in these years for Visual Design, Ceramics, and Photography, Video and Digital Imaging.<sup>260</sup>
- 4.2** There are also Technological and Applied Studies (TAS) syllabuses, some of which are mandatory, that engage students in creative design and production activities.<sup>261</sup>
- 4.3** All of these syllabuses are in various stages of updating as part of the NSW Curriculum Reform. The reforms, including concerns with the proposed draft syllabuses and consultation process, are examined in Chapter 5.
- 4.4** Throughout the inquiry the committee received a significant amount of evidence that related to the content of these syllabuses and their delivery as part of the broader curriculum. The principal concern was the perception that the syllabuses, particularly the NSW Creative Arts K-6 Syllabus, do not support best practice models. Other issues raised included the availability of certain HSC courses and the lack of a distinct Media Arts course in the New South Wales curriculum.

<sup>260</sup> Submission 92, NSW Government, p 6.

<sup>261</sup> Submission 92, NSW Government, p 6.

## NSW Creative Arts K-6 Syllabus

- 4.5 Stakeholders identified a number of concerns about the NSW Creative Arts K-6 Syllabus, including:
- the suggestion that the syllabus does not facilitate best practice models for the delivery of music education
  - the amalgamation of discrete art forms and the struggle for attention in a crowded curriculum
  - the new syllabus – which was released in July 2024 and will be taught from 2027 – failed to adequately address these oversights.

### The need for quality, sequential and ongoing music learning

- 4.6 There was a great deal of discussion about whether the NSW Creative Arts K-6 Syllabus supports best practice for music learning in New South Wales primary schools. In particular, the need for quality, sequential and ongoing music education.

- 4.7 The committee heard that a quality music education is continuous and sequential. Alberts: The Tony Foundation explained the importance of this approach:

Quality music education is an ongoing, sequential learning experience. To ensure that both permanent positive cognitive development and deep musical learning and appreciation occur, these learning experiences must take place in an ongoing and sequential manner.<sup>262</sup>

- 4.8 Results from a survey of teachers in New South Wales public primary schools indicated that 50 per cent of teachers reported that music is usually taught for one term per year.<sup>263</sup>

- 4.9 Alberts: The Tony Foundation also noted that quality music education is guided by the teaching practices, including providing authentic and rigorous learning experiences and increasing levels of challenge through effective scaffolding.<sup>264</sup>

- 4.10 Moreover, it is essential to have a competent and capable teacher workforce to facilitate quality music learning. Teacher workforce capability issues are examined in Chapter 3.

- 4.11 Many inquiry participants were supportive of quality, sequential and ongoing music education.<sup>265</sup>

- 4.12 Stakeholders noted that quality music education does not need to be expensive to be effective. For example, the Kodály method uses a sequential, cumulative and developmental program, based on an aural-vocal approach to develop musical literacy across all age groups.<sup>266</sup> The

<sup>262</sup> Submission 4, Dr Anita Collins, Attachment 2, p 1.

<sup>263</sup> Submission 43a, Alberts (Music Education Right from the Start), p 2.

<sup>264</sup> Submission 4, Dr Anita Collins, Attachment 2, p 2.

<sup>265</sup> See, Submission 10, Ms Margaret Moore OAM, p 1, Submission 11, The Song Room, p 1; Submission 41, The Balnaves Foundation, p 6; Submission 50, Music in Me, Australian Youth Orchestra, p 12; Submission 59, Music NSW, p 2.

<sup>266</sup> Submission 69, Kodály NSW, p 1.

Kodály method is used by some music teachers in New South Wales, and is exclusively used by highly trained teachers in Queensland.<sup>267</sup>

**4.13** Some inquiry participants contended that the K-6 Creative Arts Syllabus does not facilitate quality music education. For example, the Australian Society for Music Education commented:

The need for a sequential and continuous nature of music education is not well realised within the K-6 Creative Arts Syllabus. Due to the necessity of meeting outcomes in four art forms, the delivery of music education is often piecemeal ... as there is a lack of clear direction given as to the division of time between the art forms.<sup>268</sup>

**4.14** In addition to concerns about the piecemeal delivery of music education, it was noted that there is currently no mandated time at all for music education in primary schools.<sup>269</sup> Rather, there is a guidance of around two hours a week for the creative arts as a whole (Music, Dance, Visual Arts, Drama).<sup>270</sup> The committee was informed that the lack of mandated hours can result in teachers omitting music from their programming.<sup>271</sup>

**4.15** A related concern was that music, and indeed all arts education, is often sidelined due to the 'crowded' curriculum and that teachers are required to focus on literacy and numeracy, as well as Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics.<sup>272</sup>

**4.16** Many stakeholders said that music education in New South Wales is 'incredibly inequitable'.<sup>273</sup> For example, that the committee heard high fee Independent schools employ a specialist music teacher or have rigorous music programs.<sup>274</sup>

**4.17** Similarly, Sydney Catholic Schools has the Amadeus Music Education Program which provides students in Years 3-8 with classroom music lessons, ensemble lessons and small group tuition.<sup>275</sup>

**4.18** In contrast, in most public schools the responsibility for teaching music falls to the classroom teacher, many of whom are not appropriately trained, or confident to deliver lessons.<sup>276</sup> Access and equity issues are examined in Chapter 7.

<sup>267</sup> Evidence, Dr Anita Collins, Music Educator, Director, Muse Consulting, and Founder, Bigger Better Brains and LearnGauge, 30 July 2024, p 4.

<sup>268</sup> Submission 48, Australian Society for Music Education, p 4.

<sup>269</sup> Submission 94, Australian Education Union - NSW Teachers Federation Branch, p 2.

<sup>270</sup> Evidence, Dr Paul Cahill Executive Director, Curriculum, NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA), 23 August 2024, p 54.

<sup>271</sup> Submission 48 Australian Society for Music Education, p 4.

<sup>272</sup> Submission 18, Moorambilla Voices, p 5.

<sup>273</sup> Submission 69, Kodály NSW, p 2; Evidence, Mr Thomas McCorquodale Music Teacher 7-12, Cronulla High School, 23 August 2024, p 25; Evidence, Ms Frances Georgeson, General Manager, Australian Children's Music Foundation, 30 July 2024, p 47.

<sup>274</sup> Evidence, Dr Thomas Fienberg, Acting Associate Dean Indigenous Strategy and Services and Lecturer in Music Education, Sydney Conservatorium of Music, 23 August 2024, p 4, Submission 35, Mrs Monique Fruewirth, p 4.

<sup>275</sup> Submission 105, Sydney Catholic Schools, pp 3-4.

<sup>276</sup> See for example, Submission, 69 Kodály NSW, p 3; Submission 113, Dr Sue Lane, pp 2-3, Submission 50, Music in Me, Australian Youth Orchestra, p 3.

- 4.19** External providers and organisations can also deliver music lessons.<sup>277</sup> As discussed in Chapter 3, there are some successful examples of these programs such as those that operate at St Marys North Public School and Merrylands Public School. These initiatives are an essential part of the musical ecosystem, especially in regional areas. Often, the success of these programs is reliant on a school principal identifying music as a priority and then engaging and allocating funding appropriately.<sup>278</sup> However, the committee heard that for the most part, public schools are not sufficiently resourced to provide quality music education.<sup>279</sup>
- 4.20** The committee heard these inequities were even more stark in rural, regional and remote areas.<sup>280</sup> Additionally, Ms Michelle Leonard OAM, Founder and Artistic Director, Moorambilla Voices, observed not only is very little opportunity for in-class learning in these environments, but there are also '... no orchestras, no bands, no choirs, very few musicals and even less instrumental tuition'.<sup>281</sup> Access and equity issues are examined in Chapter 7.
- 4.21** Following on, there was concern that students are unlikely to be experiencing the benefits that music education can provide for their general learning and personal development.<sup>282</sup>
- 4.22** Separately, there was some discussion during the inquiry about NESAs' role in monitoring the quality and delivery of music education. Mrs Debra Batley, NSW Chair, Australian Society for Music Education, explained: 'NESA audits teaching programs, or inspects independent schools, but when you look at that, it doesn't give you the information you need to be able to tell that that program has been delivered in a quality, in-depth way'.<sup>283</sup>

*Proposals to improve the delivery of music learning*

- 4.23** There was overwhelming support for all primary students in New South Wales to be able to access quality, sequential and ongoing music education and that an 'unequivocal priority commitment' be made to this effect.<sup>284</sup>
- 4.24** The Alberts (Music Education: Right from the Start) advocated a range of initiatives to support the delivery of quality, sequential and ongoing music education in New South Wales primary schools, including:
- setting an explicit standard as to what constitutes quality, sequential and ongoing music education

<sup>277</sup> Submission 69, Kodály NSW, p 2.

<sup>278</sup> Submission 50, Music in Me, Australian Youth Orchestra, p 9.

<sup>279</sup> See for example, Submission 30, School of Education, Western Sydney University, p 4; Submission 58, The CREATE Centre, University of Sydney, 4.

<sup>280</sup> See, Mrs Debra Batley, NSW Chair, Australian Society for Music Education, 30 July 2024, p 37.

<sup>281</sup> Evidence, Ms Michelle Leonard OAM, Founder and Artistic Director, Moorambilla Voices, 23 August 2024, p 11.

<sup>282</sup> See for example, Submission 4, Dr Anita Collins, p 4; Submission 69, Kodály NSW, p 2.

<sup>283</sup> Evidence, Mrs Debra Batley NSW Chair, Australian Society for Music Education, 30 July 2024, p 33.

<sup>284</sup> See for example, Submission 43, The Alberts (Music Education: Right from the Start) p 2; Submission 11, The Song Room, p 1; Submission 4, Dr Anita Collins, p 4; Submission 69, Kodály NSW, p 2; Submission 36, Musica Viva Australia, p 3; Submission 58, Australian Music Association, p 4.

- mandating a minimum of 60 minutes of music per week up to Stage 4 with a teacher (generalist or specialist) confident and capable of delivering quality music learning
- setting ambitious targets for statewide access to primary music education, specifically:
  - that at least 50 per cent of NSW Government primary schools offer quality music education by the beginning of the 2027 school year
  - at least 75 per cent by 2029
  - 100 per cent of primary schools by 2031
- developing a Music Education Plan for New South Wales primary schools to give effect to the commitment to 60 minutes of high quality music education per week, including milestones, timeline and resourcing for an initial three-to-five year period
- requiring the Secretary of the NSW Department of Education to publicly report biennially on progress in implementing the quality music education plan
- establishing a Ministerially appointed advisory group to work with the NSW Department of Education to develop the plan
- developing a more rigorous and clear approach to data collection and evaluation to help track how music education is being delivered in primary schools.<sup>285</sup>

**4.25** Many of these recommendations were endorsed by other inquiry participants.<sup>286</sup>

**4.26** The Alberts noted that there have similar developments in Queensland where the state government has committed to a minimum of 30 minutes of music education per week.<sup>287</sup>

**4.27** Ms Emily Albert, Executive Director, Alberts and Head of Music Education: Right from the Start, noted that the suggested mandated 60 minutes a week needs to be applied on a school-by-school basis in whatever way is most appropriate in that school and stage level.<sup>288</sup>

**4.28** Finally, inquiry participants emphasised the need for support, development and training to help navigate the new curriculum.<sup>289</sup>

### **Visual Arts, Drama and Dance**

**4.29** During the inquiry the committee heard concerns about the content of the Creative Arts K-6 Syllabus and its impact on the delivery of arts subjects, specifically Visual Arts, Drama and Dance, in New South Wales primary schools.

**4.30** A key issue for representatives from visual arts, drama and dance organisations was the importance of distinguishing and respecting each discrete art form rather than amalgamating

<sup>285</sup> Submission 43, The Alberts (Music Education: Right from the Start) pp 3-8.

<sup>286</sup> Submission 59, Music NSW, p 15; Submission 58, Australian Music Association, p 4; Submission 72, Federation of Parents and Citizens Associations of New South Wales, p 1.

<sup>287</sup> Submission 43, The Alberts (Music Education: Right from the Start) p 3.

<sup>288</sup> Evidence, Ms Emily Albert Executive Director, Alberts and Head of Music Education: Right from the Start, 30 July 2024, p 33.

<sup>289</sup> Submission 11, The Song Room, p 3.

them.<sup>290</sup> In particular, it was noted that both the draft and newly released Creative Arts K-6 Syllabus use a one-size-fits-all model which reduces outcomes and oversimplifies the creative arts.<sup>291</sup>

- 4.31** Representatives from visual arts, drama and dance organisations also emphasised the need for primary school teachers to be trained in each art form.<sup>292</sup> To this end, there were calls for funding for professional associations and arts organisations to provide quality, ongoing professional learning experiences for teachers, and for improved initial teacher education programs.<sup>293</sup> Teacher training is examined in Chapter 6.
- 4.32** Separately, Art Education Australia noted the importance of providing flexibility in the delivery of the syllabus to ensure teachers can contextualise their lessons to meet the needs and experiences of their students<sup>294</sup>

### **NSW Government response to concerns**

- 4.33** The NSW Department of Education and the NSW Education and Standards Authority (NESA) responded to concerns that stakeholders raised about the K-6 Creative Arts Syllabus.
- 4.34** In particular, the department and NESA advised:
- school principals and their leadership teams are primarily responsible for ensuring that all the mandatory syllabuses are being taught, students are being assessed, and students' results are being recorded<sup>295</sup>
  - NESA conducts random inspections of schools to gather evidence to determine whether the outcomes of the syllabuses are being taught<sup>296</sup>
  - the curriculum reform provides consistency in both content and delivery to ensure that '... the student in Bourke receives the same education as the student in Bourke Street'<sup>297</sup>

<sup>290</sup> Evidence, Ms Gemma Baldwin Advocacy, State and National Issues, Visual Arts and Design Educators Association (VADEA) NSW, 30 July 2024, p 18; Submission 40, Drama Australia and Drama NSW p 3; Submission 75, Dance Educators Professional Teachers Association, p 8.

<sup>291</sup> Answers to Questions on Notice, Ms Nicole DeLosa, Visual Arts and Design Educators Association, 26 August 2024; Submission 75, Dance Educators Professional Teachers Association, p 8.

<sup>292</sup> Submission 44, Visual Arts and Design Educators Association NSW, p 3; Submission 40, Drama Australia and Drama NSW p 3; Submission 75, Dance Educators Professional Teachers Association, p 8.

<sup>293</sup> Evidence, Ms Amy Gill, Vice President, Drama NSW, 30 July 2024, p 20; Evidence, Dr Christine Hatton, Director of Research, Drama Australia, 30 July 2024, p 20.

<sup>294</sup> Evidence, Dr Kathryn Coleman, President, Art Education Australia, 30 July 2024, p 11.

<sup>295</sup> Evidence, Mr Martin Graham, Deputy Secretary, Teaching, Learning and Student Wellbeing, NSW Department of Education, 23 August 2024, p 53; Evidence, Dr Sylvia Cornish, Executive Director, Student Support and Specialist Programs, NSW Department of Education, 23 August 2024, p 53.

<sup>296</sup> Evidence, Mr Martin Graham, Deputy Secretary, Teaching, Learning and Student Wellbeing, NSW Department of Education, 23 August 2024, p 53.

<sup>297</sup> Evidence, Dr Paul Cahill, Executive Director, Curriculum, NSW Education Standards Authority, 23 August 2024, p 52.



- the reforms also sought to streamline outcomes of the syllabus so that they are 'doable and explicit' about the content that needs to be taught.<sup>298</sup>

**4.35** The NSW Government advised that comprehensive teacher support is being developed to implement the new syllabuses through professional learning and curriculum resources.<sup>299</sup> According to Mr Martin Graham, Deputy Secretary Teaching Learning and Student Wellbeing, NSW Department of Education, the Department is looking to increase the support provided to schools in comparison to previous years, by providing sufficient materials, advice and professional learning to schools and teachers.<sup>300</sup>

### Stage 4 and Stage 5 creative arts syllabuses

**4.36** As previously mentioned, studying Music and Visual Arts is part of the mandatory curriculum in Stage 4 (Years 7-8), where students must study 100 hours of Music and 100 hours of Visual Arts. However, in Stage 5 (Years 9-10) students are offered more flexibility to choose elective subjects. There are also a range of elective syllabuses for Dance, Drama, Photographic and Digital Media, Visual Arts and Visual Design.

**4.37** There was general consensus about the importance of delivering high-quality arts and music education to this cohort. Specifically, many inquiry participants highlighted that, in large part, the strengths of the Stage 4 Music course are that it is mandatory and for many students it is their first opportunity to be taught by a specialist music teacher.<sup>301</sup>

**4.38** Despite Music being compulsory in Stage 4, the committee heard that it is delivered inconsistently across schools.<sup>302</sup> Inquiry participants reported that some schools teach students music only in Year 7 or Year 8 or for half of Year 7 and half of Year 8. Kodály NSW argued this approach was not suitable for a skills-based subject that requires consistent, sequential teaching.<sup>303</sup>

**4.39** Stakeholders provided mixed feedback on the reforms of the Stage 4 and Stage 5 arts and music syllabuses. For example, there was some support for the draft Visual Arts 7-10 Syllabus and its 'innovative' approach towards fostering student engagement.<sup>304</sup>

<sup>298</sup> Evidence, Dr Paul Cahill, Executive Director, Curriculum, NSW Education Standards Authority, 23 August 2024, p 52.

<sup>299</sup> Submission 92, NSW Government, p 7.

<sup>300</sup> Evidence, Mr Martin Graham, Deputy Secretary Teaching Learning and Student Wellbeing, NSW Department of Education, 23 August 2024, p 53.

<sup>301</sup> Submission 100, Dr Thomas Fienberg, p 6; Submission 48, Australian Society for Music Education (ASME) NSW, pp 6-7.

<sup>302</sup> Submission 100, Dr Thomas Fienberg, p 6; Submission 69, Kodály NSW, Submission 30, School of Education, Western Sydney University, p 5, Submission 27, Australian Society for Music Education (ASME), p 6.

<sup>303</sup> Submission 69, Kodály NSW, p 4.

<sup>304</sup> Submission 44, Visual Arts and Design Educators Association NSW, p 9.

- 4.40** On the other hand, Dr James Humberstone FRSA, noted that while the Years 7-10 Music Syllabus is a small step forward, it was a 'huge missed opportunity' to become a world leader in music education.<sup>305</sup>
- 4.41** Further commentary on the secondary music curriculum was that it should be modernised to prioritise skills in and conceptual understandings of contemporary music forms, production, modern instruments. Specifically, Music NSW suggested that the curriculum should contain contemporary language at all levels to support students interested in contemporary music careers and should not privilege Western classical music. For example, the curriculum should refer to 'songwriters' in addition to 'composers', and 'electronic music producers' in addition to 'instrumentalists'.<sup>306</sup>

## Stage 6 creative arts syllabuses

- 4.42** The was discussion during the inquiry about the Stage 6 creative arts syllabuses. The following sections discuss the scaling and capping of Stage 6 arts and music courses, and the availability of certain Stage 6 creative arts courses.
- 4.43** Concerns about the NSW Curriculum Reform as it related to the Stage 6 Drama and Music syllabuses are examined in Chapter 5.

### Scaling and capping of HSC arts and music courses

- 4.44** As discussed in Chapter 2, a key issue raised by inquiry participants was that there was a lack of value placed on creative arts. Stakeholders told the committee that the scaling and capping of HSC arts and music courses were a contributing factor to the 'devaluing' of creative arts subjects.<sup>307</sup>
- 4.45** The committee heard that often students are dissuaded from selecting arts subjects in secondary school because the marks are capped for standardized assessments.<sup>308</sup> Indeed, during a site visit to the Australian Institute of Music some students said that were discouraged from taking music in secondary school because it was considered a 'bludge subject' and that taking it would make it harder to get into university.<sup>309</sup>
- 4.46** For NSW HSC students, the Universities Admissions Centre (UAC) calculates and provides information about the Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR), which is the ranking system used in Australia to assess students' eligibility for entry into tertiary education.<sup>310</sup>

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<sup>305</sup> Submission 21, Dr James Humberstone FRSA, p 2.

<sup>306</sup> Submission 59, Music NSW, p 3.

<sup>307</sup> Submission 53, Art Education Australia, p 1; Evidence, Dr Kathryn Coleman President, Art Education Australia, 30 July 2024, p 14; Appendix 1, Site Visit Summary Report, p 133.

<sup>308</sup> Evidence, Dr Kathryn Coleman President, Art Education Australia, 30 July 2024, p 14.

<sup>309</sup> Appendix 1, Site Visit Summary Report, p 134.

<sup>310</sup> Tabled document, UAC Submission to Joint Select Committee on Arts and Music Education and Training in NSW, p 1.

- 4.47** The ATAR is a rank, not a mark. While HSC marks tell a student about their performance in the HSC, an ATAR tells a student their position or ranking in the HSC.<sup>311</sup>
- 4.48** In terms of the calculation of the ATAR, UAC confirmed that all HSC courses are treated equally in the scaling process and that the purpose of scaling is to ensure that students are neither advantaged nor disadvantaged in their choice of HSC course.<sup>312</sup> Further the scaling process helps to compare different courses by putting them on a common scale. Ms Kim Paino, Chief Strategy and Engagement Officer, Universities Admissions Centre, explained:
- We're trying to compare apples with apples, effectively, putting everything on a common scale. Then we are able to see and compare performance across different types of HSC courses. So how does a band 6 in visual arts stack up against a band 5 in physics, for example? They're very different courses. The scaling mechanism is a mathematical way to represent the strength of the candidature in each of the courses.<sup>313</sup>
- 4.49** UAC noted that there are many 'myths' and confusing messages about the ATAR and scaling. UAC has worked with NESAs and the media to correct these misconceptions.<sup>314</sup>
- 4.50** Ms Paino told the committee that 'perception can be reality' when it comes to students being dissuaded from studying creative arts subject because they will be scaled poorly:
- The perception can be reality, I suppose. We're very aware that, in schools and amongst the year 12 community and even amongst parents, there are quite a few perceptions that are not necessarily based on fact, but they're very persistent myths about how certain courses are treated in the scaling process.<sup>315</sup>
- 4.51** According to the NSW Department of Education, there is consistency over time in Year 12 creative arts course enrolments. For government school students, consistently 7 per cent of course enrolments are in creative arts (from 2019 to 2023). The proportion of government schools running Year 12 creative arts subjects has also been consistent over the past five years, for most subjects.<sup>316</sup>
- 4.52** In contrast, in terms of entry to university, UAC reported that there has been a steady decline in applications through UAC for arts and music courses over the past decade.<sup>317</sup> However, Ms Paino noted that applications for many arts and music courses at the tertiary level are managed outside of UAC:

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<sup>311</sup> Tabled document, UAC Submission to Joint Select Committee on Arts and Music Education and Training in NSW, p 1.

<sup>312</sup> Tabled document, UAC Submission to Joint Select Committee on Arts and Music Education and Training in NSW, p 1.

<sup>313</sup> Evidence, Ms Kim Paino, Chief Strategy and Engagement Officer, Universities Admissions Centre, 23 August 2024, p 38.

<sup>314</sup> Tabled document, UAC Submission to Joint Select Committee on Arts and Music Education and Training in NSW, p 1.

<sup>315</sup> Evidence, Ms Kim Paino, Chief Strategy and Engagement Officer, Universities Admissions Centre, 23 August 2024, p 37.

<sup>316</sup> Answer to Question on Notice, NSW Department of Education, 26 September 2024.

<sup>317</sup> Tabled document, UAC Submission to Joint Select Committee on Arts and Music Education and Training in NSW, p 1.

There is a broader context around which students are making these decisions. So, yes, we're very aware of how unhelpful these perceptions about visual arts being scaled down and these sorts of things are to students choosing. We're not seeing it in the data in terms of the volume of students at this stage. We are seeing it, however, in the number of applications to arts and music courses post-school.<sup>318</sup>

**4.53** It was noted that admission to most arts and music courses at universities involve additional selection criteria beyond the ATAR, such as an audition or portfolio.<sup>319</sup>

**4.54** In evidence to the committee, Ms Paino acknowledged that there are other factors outside of the ATAR that may impact students HSC marks. Ms Paino explained that some courses by their nature and the students studying it may impact the scaled mean of the course, but noted that the broader social context influences the ATAR:

The ATAR doesn't exist in a vacuum. There is a strong focus at the Federal Government level on greater equity in tertiary admissions, and this is why universities don't just rely on ATAR. I think there's a way in which they can preserve the unbiased, data-driven approach of ATAR while acknowledging that there's a broader social context in which all this is playing out. It may well be much broader than whether the subject is offered by the school; it's also how much support students have to achieve academically. There's obviously a lot that's packed into it.<sup>320</sup>

#### ***VET Music Industry course***

**4.55** As outlined in Chapter 1, students in Years 11-12 can access certain Vocational Education and Training (VET) courses to learn entrepreneurial skills and gain industry experience in the arts. These include Assistant Dance Teaching, Music Industry, Entertainment Industry, Visual arts and Contemporary craft and Screen and Media. These VET courses have both optional and mandatory work placements as part of the course.

**4.56** The committee heard that as the VET Music Industry course is ineligible for the ATAR, many students are deterred from taking this industry specific unit. To address this, ASME suggested that content from the VET Music Industry course, particularly music creation and sound production, should be embedded into the Music 1 and Music 2 courses to help increase industry relevance and employability. ASME argued that this was more beneficial than creating an ATAR pathway for the VET Music Industry course.<sup>321</sup>

**4.57** Similarly, Dr Thomas Fienberg, Acting Associate Dean Indigenous Strategy and Services and Lecturer in Music Education, Sydney Conservatorium of Music, suggested that there should be a greater focus placed on recorded sound as composition, rather than on transcribing music. Dr Fienberg explained that transcribing a song is not always culturally congruent with the music. Rather, aspects of the VET Music Industry course allow for music creation and sound production that be assessed:

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<sup>318</sup> Evidence, Ms Kim Paino, Chief Strategy and Engagement Officer, Universities Admissions Centre, 23 August 2024, p 39.

<sup>319</sup> Tabled document, UAC Submission to Joint Select Committee on Arts and Music Education and Training in NSW, p 1.

<sup>320</sup> Evidence, Ms Kim Paino, Chief Strategy and Engagement Officer, Universities Admissions Centre, 23 August 2024, p 40.

<sup>321</sup> Submission 48, Australian Society for Music Education NSW, p 15.

For my students in Blacktown, if they wanted to submit a song to be assessed, they had to transcribe it, which is just not culturally congruent with the music. We have students who have equipment in their bedrooms creating incredible sounds. Music Industry really does provide the skills for them to be able to hone those skills and then be assessed on it. But presently our music 1, music 2 and music extension courses do not assess the recorded sound. They assess the notated sound.<sup>322</sup>

### **Discontinuation of Visual Arts Extension course**

**4.58** There was some discussion during the inquiry about the discontinuation of Visual Arts Extension course as a result of HSC curriculum changes in 1998.<sup>323</sup>

**4.59** The decision to discontinue the Visual Arts Extension course was described as 'political'.<sup>324</sup> Dr Kathryn Coleman, President, Art Education Australia, told the committee that there was a lack of understanding about the distinction between the two unit and extension courses. Dr Coleman remarked that it is incredibly sad to have lost the unit as it further perpetuates the perception that arts is undervalued:

That shows the whole education community that it doesn't matter, because apparently you can't extend your study or knowledge of being an artist and being responsive as an audience member beyond a two-unit subject. It is incredibly sad.<sup>325</sup>

**4.60** The committee heard that in the current context of the NSW Curriculum Reform there was little appetite to add courses to the suite of subjects and there is discussion of removing subjects. However, the discontinuation of the Visual Arts Extension course was seen as a real loss given that it was an 'amazing' offering that was available to New South Wales students.<sup>326</sup>

**4.61** Dr Paul Cahill, Executive Director, Curriculum, NSW Education Standards Authority, (NESA), defended the current offerings of extension courses, contending that not all courses or syllabuses go on with an extension course.<sup>327</sup> Dr Cahill noted that the Stage 6 Visual Arts Syllabus is very highly regarded, but told the committee that if there was a strong case made that a three unit course would genuinely extend students beyond the syllabus then NESA would consider it.<sup>328</sup>

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<sup>322</sup> Evidence, Dr Thomas Fienberg, Acting Associate Dean Indigenous Strategy and Services and Lecturer in Music Education, Sydney Conservatorium of Music, 23 August 2024, p 6.

<sup>323</sup> Submission 91, National Art School, p 4.

<sup>324</sup> Evidence, Dr Kathryn Coleman, President, Art Education Australia, 30 July 2024, p 15.

<sup>325</sup> Evidence, Dr Kathryn Coleman President, Art Education Australia, 30 July 2024, p 15.

<sup>326</sup> Evidence, Ms Nicole DeLosa, Co-President Advocacy & Communications, Visual Arts and Design Educators Association (VADEA) NSW, 30 July 2024, p 18.

<sup>327</sup> Evidence, Dr Paul Cahill Executive Director, Curriculum, NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA), 23 August 2024, p 60.

<sup>328</sup> Evidence, Dr Paul Cahill Executive Director, Curriculum, NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA), 23 August 2024, p 60.

### *National Art School Intensive Studio Study course*

- 4.62** Following the discontinuation of Visual Arts Extension course, the National Art School (NAS) developed its Intensive Studio Study course (a Stage 6 Board endorsed extension course) to allow students to expand and enhance their skills and prepare them for tertiary studies in the field. The program is available to students from across New South Wales. Around 10-14 per cent of students from the HSC Intensive go on to study the NAS Bachelor of Fine Art and anecdotally about 30-40 per cent of students go on to pursue tertiary arts education including architecture and design.<sup>329</sup>
- 4.63** NAS reported that since the NSW Department of Education has ceased funding, the program is now a user pays model. NAS indicated that funding support would allow for the program to be offered free of charge, increasing access to creative arts education and breaking down financial barriers for the students from regional areas and Western and South-Western Sydney.<sup>330</sup>

### **Media Arts and the NSW Curriculum**

- 4.64** As discussed in Chapter 1, states and territories are responsible for the implementation of the Australian Curriculum. In New South Wales, creative arts subjects have not yet been updated to align with the Australian Curriculum. While there was some discussion about the advantages and disadvantages of greater alignment between these documents,<sup>331</sup> a key point of contention during the inquiry was that the New South Wales curriculum, unlike the Australian curriculum, does not include a discrete Media Arts subject.
- 4.65** Dr John Nicholas Saunders, Chair, National Advocates for Arts Education, told the committee that under the Australian curriculum, there is a 'central entitlement that all young Australians have access to all five arts subjects'.<sup>332</sup> Dr Saunders added: 'We want all children across Australia to be able to access dance, drama, media arts, music and visual arts, despite where they go to school, despite which State they're in and despite which system they're being taught in'.<sup>333</sup>
- 4.66** However, the committee heard that New South Wales is the only state and territory to not teach Media Arts as its own separate subject.<sup>334</sup>
- 4.67** According to Dr Saunders, Media Arts involves developing critical literacy skills when looking at media, film, television and radio and how to engage with news and social media.<sup>335</sup> Dr

<sup>329</sup> Submission 91, National Art School, p 4.

<sup>330</sup> Submission 91, National Art School, p 4.

<sup>331</sup> Submission 40, Drama Australia and Drama NSW, p 3; Submission 5, National Advocates for Arts Education (NAAE), p 3; Submission 44, Visual Arts and Design Educators Association NSW, p 9.

<sup>332</sup> Evidence, Dr John Nicholas Saunders, Chair, National Advocates for Arts Education, 30 July 2024, p 12.

<sup>333</sup> Evidence, Dr John Nicholas Saunders, Chair, National Advocates for Arts Education, 30 July 2024, p 12.

<sup>334</sup> Evidence, Dr John Nicholas Saunders, Chair, National Advocates for Arts Education, 30 July 2024, p 12.

<sup>335</sup> Evidence, Dr John Nicholas Saunders, Chair, National Advocates for Arts Education, 30 July 2024, p 12.

Saunders explained that currently Media Arts is not currently taught as a standalone subject, but rather 'little bits of it are covered in other areas'.<sup>336</sup>

**4.68** National Advocates for Arts Education strongly advocated for the inclusion of Media Arts in the New South Wales curriculum, arguing that students are disadvantaged in relation to their peers in all other states and territories as Media Arts as it teaches students to be critical consumers, and aware of the social and political context around them.<sup>337</sup>

**4.69** Likewise, Ms Amy Gill, Vice President, Drama New South Wales, explained that the subject matter of Media Arts was not being addressed broadly across other areas of the syllabus given there are other priorities in those syllabus areas. Ms Gill highlighted that media arts should be prioritised as its own subject as young people are increasingly engaging in the digital space:

We live in a digital age. Even the young people that we're engaging with in the drama classroom want to be stepping into that digital space. That is the world that they live in, and we are not prioritising that as an art form in any space in our schools at this point. It's an add-on or an extra option for them, but it's not a priority in any of those syllabuses.<sup>338</sup>

**4.70** On the other hand, certain inquiry participants were supportive of the current approach to Media Arts in the New South Wales curriculum. For example, Ms Nicole DeLosa, Co-President, Advocacy and Communications, Visual Arts and Design Educators Association of NSW, said she was satisfied that that outcomes for a Media Arts course are already adequately addressed in existing visual arts and English syllabus and did not need its own subject.<sup>339</sup>

## Committee comment

**4.71** Throughout the inquiry it was clear that there are significant challenges facing the creative arts curriculum across schools in New South Wales. We heard from concerned Visual Arts, Music, Dance and Drama educators that there is simply not enough time nor resources to ensure the quality and quantity of creative education that each child in this state deserves.

**4.72** The committee heard various views on the NSW Curriculum Reform and the release of arts and music related syllabuses. We acknowledge that teachers will be facing many changes with the new K-6 Creative Arts Syllabus and that increased support is required to ensure that teachers and schools are prepared to deliver its content. As such, we recommend that the NSW Government fast track the development of training and guidance materials for primary school teachers to facilitate the effective delivery of the new K-6 Creative Arts Syllabus.

<sup>336</sup> Evidence, Dr John Nicholas Saunders, Chair, National Advocates for Arts Education, 30 July 2024, p 12.

<sup>337</sup> Submission 5, National Advocates for Arts Education (NAAE), p 9.

<sup>338</sup> Evidence, Ms Amy Gill, Vice President, Drama New South Wales, 30 July 2024, p 23.

<sup>339</sup> Evidence, Ms Nicole DeLosa, Co-President, Advocacy and Communications, Visual Arts and Design Educators Association of NSW, 30 July 2024, p 17.

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**Recommendation 11**

That the NSW Government fast track the development of training and guidance materials for primary school teachers to facilitate the effective delivery of the new K-6 Creative Arts Syllabus.

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- 4.73** While we accept that each art form is equally deserving of respect and value in the curriculum, the committee received an overwhelming amount of evidence about the need for quality, sequential and ongoing music learning in primary schools. It was disheartening to hear that music education in primary schools does not meet these requirements. Indeed, it is often delivered in a piecemeal fashion.
- 4.74** It was especially troubling to receive evidence about the inequitable delivery of music education with some children receiving little or no music education in New South Wales public schools, particularly in rural, regional and remote areas. We concur with stakeholders that this situation is due to a range of factors, including a lack of value placed on creative arts, an overcrowded curriculum, and the lack of mandated hours for music education. We also acknowledge concerns about teachers' confidence to deliver music lessons which is examined in Chapter 3.
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**Finding 4**

That it is essential for all students in New South Wales primary schools to receive quality, sequential and ongoing music learning.

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- 4.75** We received evidence from a range of stakeholders, notably The Alberts (Music Education: Right from the Start) who advocated for a range of initiatives to support the delivery of quality, sequential and ongoing music education in New South Wales primary schools. These include setting an explicit standard as to what constitutes quality, sequential and ongoing music education, mandating a minimum of 60 minutes of music per week up to Stage 4 with a teacher (generalist or specialist) confident and capable of delivering quality music learning and setting ambitious targets for statewide access to primary music education.
- 4.76** In addition, stakeholders called for the development of a Music Education Plan for New South Wales primary schools to give effect to the commitment to 60 minutes of high quality music education and requiring the NSW Department of Education to publicly report biennially on progress in implementing the quality music education plan. We note the need for a more rigorous and clear approach to data collection and evaluation to help track how music education is being delivered in primary schools.
- 4.77** In this context, we recommend that the NSW Government consider developing a Music Education Plan for New South Wales to support the delivery of quality, sequential and ongoing music education in New South Wales primary schools which includes, but is not limited to:
- setting an explicit standard as to what constitutes quality, sequential and ongoing music education
  - mandating a minimum amount of music education per week up to Stage 4 with a teacher (generalist or specialist) confident and capable of delivering quality music learning
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- setting ambitious targets for statewide access to primary music education
- mandatory reporting and data collection of the delivery of music education
- mandatory biennial reporting on progress in implementing the quality music education plan.

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### **Recommendation 12**

That the NSW Government consider developing a Music Education Plan for New South Wales to support the delivery of quality, sequential and ongoing music education in New South Wales primary schools, but is not limited to:

- setting an explicit standard as to what constitutes quality, sequential and ongoing music education
- mandating a minimum amount of music education per week up to Stage 4 with a teacher (generalist or specialist) confident and capable of delivering quality music learning
- setting ambitious targets for statewide access to primary music education
- mandatory reporting and data collection of the delivery of music education
- mandatory biennial reporting on progress in implementing the quality music education plan.

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- 4.78** Turning to secondary schools, there was general consensus about the importance of delivering high-quality music and arts education to this cohort. We note that studying music and visual arts is mandatory for students to study both Visual Arts and Music during the initial stages of secondary school.
- 4.79** The committee notes the mixed feedback on the Stage 4 and Stage 5 arts and music syllabus reforms. We heard that there had been some improvements for the draft Visual Arts 7-10 syllabus and its 'innovative' approach towards fostering student engagement. On the other hand, there was some criticism of the Years 7-10 Music syllabus which we heard may have been a missed opportunity to become a world leader in music education.
- 4.80** Throughout the inquiry the issue of scaling and capping of HSC arts and music courses emerged as a serious concern. We agree with inquiry participants that the scaling and capping of HSC arts and music courses further contributes to the devaluing of creative arts subjects.
- 4.81** It was disheartening to hear that students are dissuaded or discouraged from pursuing their passions through HSC creative arts subjects for fear of being scaled poorly and the pressures around achieving a high ATAR. The committee is of the view that young people should have the opportunity to study their craft at a senior level and participate in the arts without societal, parental or school pressures to do otherwise.
- 4.82** We acknowledge that there are many reasons behind a student's choice of HSC subjects, including interest, course availability and future career plans. However, as discussed during the inquiry, perception can be reality, and we are considerably concerned that young people are not being provided with accurate information about HSC creative arts subjects as they relate to the ATAR and scaling.

- 4.83** While the University Admissions Centre (UAC) has worked to correct these misconceptions, it is clear that these perceptions are deep rooted. We are of the view that the findings and recommendations of this report will go some way in helping to prioritise and value arts and music across the board and that this may translate into better outcomes for those wanting to study creative arts subjects in the HSC.
- 4.84** The committee believes that more can be done within schools to inform and advise students correct information about the ATAR in relation to creative arts subjects. As such, we recommend that the NSW Government work with UAC to develop a 'myth-busting' awareness campaign targeted at students, parents and schools to provide accurate information about HSC creative arts subjects in relation to the ATAR and scaling.
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**Recommendation 13**

That the NSW Government work with University Admissions Centre to develop a 'myth-busting' awareness campaign targeted at students, parents and schools to provide accurate information about HSC creative arts subjects in relation to the ATAR and scaling.

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- 4.85** On the issue of the curriculum, we recognise the benefits of studying Visual Arts in an extended format at the HSC level. The committee acknowledges the work that the National Art School has done since the Visual Arts Extension course was removed to offer opportunities for students to study the Intensive Studio Study course. We therefore recommend the NSW Government explore funding the Intensive Studio Study course at the National Art School to allow students the opportunity to expand and enhance their skills in visual arts. We also recommend that the NSW Education Standards Authority consider the reintroduction of Visual Arts Extension in their upcoming review of the Stage 6 Visual Arts curriculum.
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**Recommendation 14**

That the NSW Government explore funding the Intensive Studio Study course at the National Art School to allow students the opportunity to expand and enhance their skills in visual arts.

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**Recommendation 15**

That the NSW Education Standards Authority consider the reintroduction of Visual Arts Extension in their upcoming review of the Stage 6 Visual Arts curriculum.

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- 4.86** The committee notes evidence calling for changes to the Music 1 and Music 2 courses to embed content from the VET Music Industry course. It is believed that these amendments will increase industry relevance of these courses and employability of students. We recommend that the NSW Government explore opportunities to incorporate the VET Music Industry course, particularly its music creation and sound production components, into the Stage 6 Music 1 and Music 2 courses.
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**Recommendation 16**

That the NSW Government explore opportunities to incorporate the VET Music Industry course, particularly its music creation and sound production components, into the Stage 6 Music 1 and Music 2 courses.

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- 4.87** We also heard that there are some mixed views when it comes to the New South Wales Curriculum and its alignment with the Australian Curriculum: The Arts. The committee recognises that every child is entitled to equal access to Dance, Drama, Media Arts, Music and Visual Arts, and therefore we recommend that the NSW Government look for ways to further integrate Media Arts into the existing curriculum.
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**Recommendation 17**

That the NSW Government look for ways to further integrate Media Arts into the existing curriculum.

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## Chapter 5 The NSW Curriculum Reform process

This chapter discusses specific concerns that were raised during the inquiry about the NSW Curriculum Reform process. It briefly outlines the background to the NSW Curriculum Reform. Next, it considers stakeholders' concerns with the draft Stage 6 Drama Syllabus. It then details inquiry participants' issues with the draft Stage 6 Music 1, Music 2 and Music Extension syllabuses. Finally, the chapter outlines various critiques with the reform process itself, including the suggestion that the consultation stage lacked transparency.

### NSW Curriculum Reform background

- 5.1 The NSW Curriculum follows a comprehensive curriculum review undertaken by a team led by Professor Geoff Masters from 2018-20.<sup>340</sup>
- 5.2 As mentioned in Chapter 1, syllabuses are at varying stages of review completion. For example, the final Creative Arts K-6 Syllabus has been released and will be taught from 2027. Whereas the Stage 6 Music 1, Music 2, Music Extension and Drama syllabuses are in draft form and the consultation period for these documents is due to conclude on 20 December 2024.
- 5.3 The content and implications of the draft Stage 6 Music 1, Music 2, Music Extension and Drama syllabuses became prominent issues towards the end of the inquiry. Released in October 2024, these draft syllabuses sparked significant debate and criticism amongst academics, educators, students and practitioners.

### Draft Stage 6 Drama Syllabus and assessment

- 5.4 There was a great deal of discussion about the proposed changes under the draft Stage 6 Drama Syllabus and assessment, including the changes to the assessment of the group performance component, an additional question in the HSC written exam, and increased weighting of the HSC written exam.
- 5.5 Inquiry participants expressed strong opposition to the draft Stage 6 Drama Syllabus. Drama NSW called the draft 'poorly conceived' and said it poses risks not only for students and teachers but also for the broader education and cultural sectors, including threatening pathways into tertiary education and training for future artists and arts leaders.<sup>341</sup>
- 5.6 Dr Paul Gardiner said that the draft syllabus was 'unteachable' and 'appears to disregard 30 years of successful practice and a wealth of research evidence that support current practice'.<sup>342</sup>
- 5.7 Likewise, Professor Michael Anderson, who has 30 years of experience as a Drama teacher, researcher, Senior Marker and syllabus developer, remarked that the draft falls short of teacher,

<sup>340</sup> NSW Government, About the NSW Curriculum Reform (2024), <https://www.nsw.gov.au/education-and-training/nesa/about/strategies-and-reforms/curriculum-reform/about>

<sup>341</sup> Submission 125, Drama NSW, p 1 and p 7.

<sup>342</sup> Submission 120, Dr Paul Gardiner, p 1.

student and industry expectations.<sup>343</sup> Professor Anderson stated that the draft syllabus would have system-wide implications including:

- reducing creative educational opportunities
- narrowing curriculum assessment methods
- applying a narrow view of best practice assessment
- privileging administrative efficiency over educational effectiveness.<sup>344</sup>

**5.8** Further, Professor Anderson resigned from his role providing feedback to NESA about the draft syllabus over 'process and content issues'.<sup>345</sup>

**5.9** For reference, under the current Stage 6 Drama Syllabus, HSC Drama students are externally examined by NESA in three key component areas:

1. **Individual project (30 marks)** – students complete a major work drawn from either critical analysis, design, performance, script writing or video drama
2. **Group performance (30 marks)** – students collaborate with a group in devising and performing a piece of original theatre based on a theme or concept, issue, idea or image chosen from the Group Performance list
3. **Written HSC exam (40 marks)** – two sections worth 20-marks each based on the two core content areas: Australian Drama and Theatre and Studies in Drama and Theatre.<sup>346</sup>

**5.10** Additionally, the current formal school-based assessment program for HSC Drama sets out:

- there can be a maximum of four assessment tasks
- the minimum weighting for an individual task is 10 per cent
- the maximum weighting for an individual task is 40 per cent
- only one task may be a formal written examination with a maximum weighting of 30 per cent.<sup>347</sup>

**5.11** Key changes to HSC Drama proposed under the draft syllabus include:

1. **Individual project** – removal of Video Drama as an option for study, and now all individual projects, excluding performance, must be submitted electronically.<sup>348</sup>

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<sup>343</sup> Submission 122, Professor Michael Anderson, p 1.

<sup>344</sup> Submission 122, Professor Michael Anderson, p 2.

<sup>345</sup> Submission 122, Professor Michael Anderson, p 1.

<sup>346</sup> NSW Education and Standards Authority, *Assessment and reporting in Drama Stage 6* (2024), <https://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/11-12/stage-6-learning-areas/stage-6-creative-arts/drama-syllabus/assessment-and-reporting>.

<sup>347</sup> NSW Education and Standards Authority, *Assessment and reporting in Drama Stage 6* (2024), <https://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/11-12/stage-6-learning-areas/stage-6-creative-arts/drama-syllabus/assessment-and-reporting>.

<sup>348</sup> Submission 115, Name suppressed, p 1; NSW Education Standards Authority, 'Assessment and examination requirements for Drama 11–12 Syllabus', October–December 2024, p 9.

2. **Group performance** – moving the ensemble performance to be an internal school assessment, rather than an external assessment conducted by NESA.<sup>349</sup>
3. **Written HSC exam** – will be worth a total of 50 marks: two 20-mark questions and a 10-mark written response about an ensemble performance.<sup>350</sup>

### Concerns raised about the Independent Performance

- 5.12** With regards to changes to the Individual Project (IP) component, some inquiry participants argued that the requirement for projects to be submitted electronically 'downgraded' project areas, calling it 'retrograde' and 'against best industry practice'.<sup>351</sup>
- 5.13** Drama NSW argued that digitally submitted photographs of designs, particularly for sets, fail to capture the full scope and detail of the projects in the same way as physical submissions, undermining the authenticity of the assessment process.<sup>352</sup>
- 5.14** In addition, Drama NSW said that requiring digital submission of projects may disadvantage students who lack access to the software and technology needed to create and present their work in a digital format, further exacerbating inequities.<sup>353</sup>
- 5.15** Respondents to the Student Voice Survey, conducted by Drama NSW in response to the draft Stage 6 Drama Syllabus, also expressed misgivings about having to submit projects electronically. For example, a respondent to the Student Voice Survey said:
- I also hate the idea of submitting the Individual Projects online, particularly the performances - that defeats the purpose of drama and live theatre if the markers are watching a screen. If I were to have completed my performance IP through a filmed format, I think I would not have enjoyed the subject as much and I would've found this use of technology to be misguided and not beneficial at all.<sup>354</sup>
- 5.16** Stakeholders commented that reducing IP options diminishes student choice and the opportunities for effective differentiation that come with the current range of options.<sup>355</sup> In particular, Drama NSW stated that removing Video Drama, which has the third highest candidature in HSC Drama Project area, impacts students in rural areas or with financial constraints, who may not have ready access to live theatre.<sup>356</sup>
- 5.17** Further, the committee heard that part of NESA's rationale for removing Video Drama as an option is because it is covered in other subjects, such as English Extension. However, Ms Amy Gill, Vice President of Professional Learning, Drama NSW explained that only students who

<sup>349</sup> Evidence, Mr Paul Martin, CEO, NSW Education Standards Authority, 25 November 2024, p 20.

<sup>350</sup> NSW Education Standards Authority, 'Assessment and examination requirements for Drama 11–12 Syllabus', October–December 2024, p 7.

<sup>351</sup> Submission 115, Name suppressed, p 1; Submission 125, Drama NSW, p 3.

<sup>352</sup> Submission 125, Drama NSW, p 3.

<sup>353</sup> Submission 125, Drama NSW, p 3.

<sup>354</sup> Additional information, Student Voice Survey, Drama NSW, 22 November 2024.

<sup>355</sup> Submission 115, Name suppressed, p 1; Submission 125, Drama NSW, p 4.

<sup>356</sup> Submission 125, Drama NSW, p 4.

are 'academically gifted' would be studying English Extension. Ms Gill also noted that as Media Arts is not a discrete subject in New South Wales, students are at a further disadvantage:

Our other students do not have access to any form of narrative storytelling through film across any of our curriculum areas. As we said in our last presentation here, we are the only State that doesn't offer media arts in a digital world. Our students are already at a disadvantage. Yet here we are, further taking away quite a significant choice.<sup>357</sup>

### Concerns raised about the Group Performance

- 5.18** There was significant discussion regarding changes to the Group Performance (GP) component included in the draft Stage 6 Drama Syllabus. Many stakeholders expressed serious concerns that a central component of the HSC syllabus was being eliminated.<sup>358</sup> The committee heard that draft syllabus 'downgrades and sidelines' the performance aspect of the subject in preference of a 'token written task'.<sup>359</sup>
- 5.19** Numerous inquiry participants voiced strong opinions against this change, arguing that the introduction of a written task in lieu of an externally graded performance devalues the practical component of drama and would disadvantage students with lower literacy. For example:
- Drama NSW argued that the elimination of the GP and removal of external examination significantly devalues the practical learning that is an essential feature of Drama education.<sup>360</sup>
  - In a letter to the Minister for Education, the Hon Prue Car MP, a group of academics expressed serious concern regarding the removal of the GP component, stating "This leaves us in the absurd position of having a performing arts syllabus without an emphasis on performance".<sup>361</sup>
  - 'Group performance has always been subject to internal NESA judgment and moderation processes that have consistently shown that the rigour of our marking practice is statistically consistent with other courses'.<sup>362</sup>
- 5.20** Drama NSW was of the view that by removing the external assessment of the ensemble process, the proposed changes send a clear signal that this vital aspect of collaboration and creative practice is no longer considered important, undermining its significance in Drama education.<sup>363</sup>
- 5.21** Further, Drama NSW stated that a live performance assessment by external assessors 'significantly enhances the quality of student work, as it fosters high standards and aligns with

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<sup>357</sup> Evidence, Ms Amy Gill, Vice-President of Professional Learning, Drama NSW, 25 November 2024, p 7.

<sup>358</sup> Submission 115, Name suppressed, p 2; Submission 125, Drama NSW, p 2, Submission 122, Professor Michael Anderson, p 1.

<sup>359</sup> Submission 122, Professor Michael Anderson, Attachment 1, p 2.

<sup>360</sup> Submission 125, Drama NSW, p 2.

<sup>361</sup> Submission 122, Professor Michael Anderson, Attachment 1, p 2.

<sup>362</sup> Submission 120, Dr Paul Gardiner, p 1.

<sup>363</sup> Submission 125, Drama NSW, p 1.



real-world practices in drama and the arts.<sup>364</sup> As highlighted by Dr Christine Hatton, Director of Research, Drama Australia:

You can't take performance out of the performing arts. You can't take that need for young people to have that live component. It raises the bar for their achievement. All the teachers in our survey are saying that. All the students are saying that. We've seen it if they have to perform for examiners who don't know them. Does their art matter? Does it rate? That process validates them, and their achievement extends because of that.<sup>365</sup>

**5.22** This was reflected in responses to the Student Voice Survey. In its submission, Drama NSW observed that according to the survey, 90.9 per cent of the 764 responses reported a positive or very positive experience with the GP.<sup>366</sup> Examples of responses to the Student Voice Survey includes:

- 'The group performance was the most difficult but also the most challenging rewarding, seeing the growth in the group as time progressed towards examination date. Very fulfilling experience.'
- 'Heavy focus on individual projects and group performances allow students to connect, engage and explore themselves and the world around them, which is key to not only the arts, but day to day life. Performance is expression, and to express is to live.'
- 'The Group Devised Project was the heart of my learning in Drama. It was difficult, rigorous, and scary at times but it was also the most engaged in learning I was in any part of any course I did in the HSC.'
- 'I am really enjoying both the individual project and group project as they allow me to balance out theory with practical. Both are very important for future plans as I gain skills in individual work that's self-motivated as well as group work which helps in future no matter what.'
- 'The Stage 6 Drama syllabus was the best syllabus out of any stage 6 subject I did. It was the one subject I truly felt able to express myself creatively whilst learn in a healthy and effective environment. The IP and GP sections taught the most VALUABLE skills for the future and I am forever thankful I took this subject.'
- 'I also get this practical aspect do drama which I love and I much prefer performing within a group setting rather than acting in a monologue.'

**5.23** Many respondents to the Student Voice Survey were concerned that the GP could be removed from the HSC Drama course, commenting:

- 'I'm shocked at the proposal to axe the GP. How can you truly understand theatre without the experience of ensemble work?'
- 'Do not remove GP from the NESA syllabus. For many students this is the only chance they have to show their acting and performance abilities. Further, this is the only chance

<sup>364</sup> Submission 125, Drama NSW, p 2.

<sup>365</sup> Evidence, Dr Christine Hatton, Director of Research, Drama Australia, 25 November 2025, p 8.

<sup>366</sup> Submission 125, Drama NSW, p 2, Additional information, Student Voice Survey, Drama NSW, 22 November 2024.

for students to illustrate the development of those key collaboration and communication skills as I mentioned above. Many students look forward to this part of the syllabus, and for some it would be the primary reason for choosing to study drama in stage 6.'

- The group project was by far the best experience I had. While it was still a nerve wracking examination, the support gained from being part of a group, consistently developing our skills as one, refining the script, changing the set to our updated outlooks on set design etc. I could go on about this aspect of the Drama curriculum but seeing it potentially removed would be a major blow to a subject that I held, and still do, in such high regard'.<sup>367</sup>

### Concerns raised about the Written HSC exam

- 5.24** As previously mentioned, the draft Stage 6 Drama Syllabus proposes to externally-assess the ensemble performance based on a written response.<sup>368</sup> Drama NSW described this situation as 'problematic', noting that an excellent writer could fabricate a response without having meaningfully contributed to the work, making this form of assessment unreliable and invalid.<sup>369</sup>
- 5.25** Further, some inquiry participants expressed concern that the increased emphasis on written components in the external exam disproportionately benefits academically inclined students and strong writers, while disadvantaging those who have traditionally thrived in Drama due to its emphasis on practical and creative expression.<sup>370</sup> One inquiry participant noted that the written examination will now be longer, which will disadvantage students with lower literacy, learning needs, neuro diversities, English as an Additional Language or Dialect and students from Non English Speaking Background.<sup>371</sup>
- 5.26** Respondents to the Student Voice Survey also supported maintaining a focus on the practical, rather than theory, components Drama. For example, an respondent stated: 'Keep it [Drama] practical. Alongside ext 2 English, Drama was the most real world applicable subject I took for the HSC. It prepared me for uni and for my career. Overweighting theory is a bad move'.<sup>372</sup>

### Other concerns and proposals for improvement

- 5.27** Amongst a host of issues, stakeholders told the committee that NESA had potentially misinterpreted evidence. Several inquiry participants also raised concerns regarding NESA's consultation process on the draft syllabus, including the timing of the consultation, the incorporation of stakeholder feedback and transparency of the process.<sup>373</sup> These concerns are examined later in this chapter.
- 5.28** Drama NSW expressed serious concerns with what it called 'misuse of research evidence' to justify NESA's proposed changes. In its submission, Drama NSW argued that 'NESA's use of

<sup>367</sup> Additional information, Student Voice Survey, Drama NSW, 22 November 2024.

<sup>368</sup> Submission 125, Drama NSW, p 3.

<sup>369</sup> Submission 125, Drama NSW, p 3.

<sup>370</sup> Submission 125, Drama NSW, p 3, Submission 115, Name suppressed, p 1.

<sup>371</sup> Submission 115, Name suppressed, p 1.

<sup>372</sup> Additional information, Student Voice Survey, Drama NSW, 22 November 2024.

<sup>373</sup> For example; Submission 122, Professor Michael Anderson, p 2; Submission 125, Drama NSW, p 5.

research findings to support the proposed changes raises concerns about whether these studies have been fully or appropriately represented'.<sup>374</sup>

**5.29** During her evidence to the committee, Dr Christine Hatton, Director of Research, Drama Australia told the committee that some of her work had been referenced as evidence base justifying the syllabus, however she does not support the changes.<sup>375</sup>

**5.30** Certain stakeholders were adamant the draft Stage 6 Drama Syllabus should be the scrapped and that NESA should restart the consultation process.<sup>376</sup> For example, Drama NSW urged NESA to reinstate the syllabus writing process and to ensure the incorporation of teacher and student voices and drawing on the expertise of leading researchers in Drama education.<sup>377</sup>

**5.31** Drama NSW and Professor Michael Anderson also made a host of other suggestions for the draft syllabus:

- maintaining the GP as a central externally assessed component
- reinstating diverse IP options, such as restoring Video Drama, Director's Folio, Lighting Design and the Applied Research Project
- preserving the current balance between performance and written work in the examination
- conducting a comprehensive, transparent consultation process that values teacher expertise
- prioritising expert educational input from practicing teachers and academics
- maintaining the integrity of drama as a transformative educational experience
- undertaking an inquiry into NESA's processes as they relate to arts syllabus development and renewal (examined later in this chapter)
- prioritising assessments that accommodate neurodiverse learners, EALD students, and those in rural and remote areas, recognising the value of practical and collaborative outputs over an overemphasis on written work.<sup>378</sup>

### **NSW Government response to concerns about the draft Stage 6 Drama Syllabus**

**5.32** During evidence to the committee NESA responded to concerns about the draft Stage 6 Drama Syllabus.

**5.33** In response to the proposal to move the assessment from an external assessment to a school-based assessment for the GP, Mr Paul Martin, CEO, NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA), advised that the rationale for the change was based on NESA's evolving approach to assessment practice:

<sup>374</sup> Submission 125, Drama NSW, p 5.

<sup>375</sup> Evidence, Dr Christine Hatton, Director of Research, Drama Australia, 25 November 2024, p 10.

<sup>376</sup> Submission 122, Professor Michael Anderson, p 2.

<sup>377</sup> Submission 125, Drama NSW, p 2.

<sup>378</sup> Submission 125, Drama NSW, p 6; Submission 122, Professor Michael Anderson, pp 2-3.

[... over the past four to five years NESAs has been] deliberately and decisively moving towards making sure that teachers who are closer to students or teachers who are involved in schools have more say and more context in being able to understand what is happening in the teaching and learning process.<sup>379</sup>

**5.34** Mr Martin added that NESAs had not made an assessment of economic benefits of the proposed change and added said it would not be a 'workload shift' to teachers.<sup>380</sup>

**5.35** Mr Martin acknowledged that the removal of the external assessment component has been the prime issue raised by drama teachers during the consultation process and announced that the external assessment would remain:

Right from the beginning, that external assessment has been the number one issue raised by drama teachers to us. We will be changing and moving from the consultation document that suggests that it be an in-school assessment. The teachers have spoken pretty clearly, I think, that they would prefer NESAs's external assessors to go to schools—that the students prepare for it, that they like that as a part of the performance element and that performing for someone outside of a school gives a level of status that they really enjoy and feel rewarded by. We already, I think, would say that we should move in that direction.<sup>381</sup>

**5.36** Further to this point, Mr Martin explained that NESAs had decided to revert this change due to the 'level of misinformation' that the GP would no longer be assessed at all, rather than internally:

We decided to make a decision on drama, and I had a conversation with my team internally in order to try to get attention on the content of the drama syllabus for us and the external performance element. Part of the problem is the level of misinformation—that we were no longer assessing dramatic performance, no longer assessing group performance—meant that particular issue became so much of an issue to deal with that it is my judgement, and it is still my judgement, that dealing with that immediately would allow proper consultation on other parts of the document.<sup>382</sup>

**5.37** Mr Martin noted that other proposed changes to the draft will be considered as part of the ongoing consultation process.<sup>383</sup>

**5.38** NESAs responded to concerns about the misinterpretation of evidence supporting the draft Stage 6 Drama Syllabus. NESAs advised that all syllabuses are based upon a range of academic scholarship which forms a key element of the evidence base. NESAs explained that it engages with a wide range of academic scholarship and 'adopts the elements appropriate for the development of the syllabuses'.<sup>384</sup> NESAs noted that 'scholars in the Creative Arts do not necessarily align with one another when it comes to elements of a Drama or Music education'.<sup>385</sup>

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<sup>379</sup> Evidence, Mr Paul Martin, CEO, NSW Education Standards Authority, 25 November 2024, p 20.

<sup>380</sup> Evidence, Mr Paul Martin, CEO, NSW Education Standards Authority, 25 November 2024, p 21.

<sup>381</sup> Evidence, Mr Paul Martin, CEO, NSW Education Standards Authority, 25 November 2025, p 21.

<sup>382</sup> Evidence, Mr Paul Martin, CEO, NSW Education Standards Authority, 25 November 2025, p 25.

<sup>383</sup> Evidence, Mr Paul Martin, CEO, NSW Education Standards Authority, 25 November 2025, p 25.

<sup>384</sup> Answer to question on notice, NSW Education Standards Authority, 27 November 2024, p 1.

<sup>385</sup> Answer to question on notice, NSW Education Standards Authority, 27 November 2024, p 1.

- 5.39** Further, NESA outlined that citation in the evidence base does not necessarily imply a wholesale adoption of an academic's work, but acknowledgement that NESA has been informed, at least in part, by the work of the relevant academic.<sup>386</sup>
- 5.40** As previously mentioned, Dr Christine Hatton, Director of Research, Drama Australia, raised concerns about being incorrectly referenced in the evidence base for the draft Drama syllabus. In response to these concerns NESA confirmed that during the writing of the concept paper and the drafting of the Drama 11-12 syllabus, some of the scholarship of Dr Hatton was consulted and informed elements of the syllabus.<sup>387</sup>

### **Draft Stage 6 Music 1, Music 2 and Music Extension syllabuses**

- 5.41** Numerous inquiry participants raised concerns with the draft Music 1, Music 2 and Music Extension syllabuses and the impact of the reformed syllabuses on the uptake of Music in Stage 6, as well as the accessibility of Music 2 to students across the state.
- 5.42** New South Wales has a significantly higher percentage of Stage 6 students studying Music than other states. In New South Wales, 7 per cent of Year 12 students do music, in comparison to Victoria where it is 4 per cent.<sup>388</sup> Stakeholders told the inquiry that the current syllabus needs to be modernised to better reflect current music making and better incorporate the breadth of contemporary music and non-Western music.<sup>389</sup>
- 5.43** Stakeholders expressed strong opposition to the draft music syllabuses, with some highlighting 'fundamental structural flaws' in the proposed drafts.<sup>390</sup> Several inquiry participants declared that the proposed syllabuses 'do not represent best, evidence-based practice in music teaching and learning'.<sup>391</sup>
- 5.44** Dr Thomas Fienberg, Vice-Chair, Australian Society for Music Education NSW, told the committee that the draft music syllabuses 'do not align with leading international music curricula and research. They also fail to adequately prepare students for post-school opportunities in the music industry, with a disregard for student choice, autonomy and creative expression'.<sup>392</sup>
- 5.45** Dr Rachel White outlined that under the draft syllabuses, teachers and students will lack choice in what music can be studied, and new restrictions on performance will limit a student's ability to participate in diverse and relevant musical practices.<sup>393</sup> Further, the committee heard that the focus on writing about music, along with the 'devaluing' of creating and composing music in

<sup>386</sup> Answer to question on notice, NSW Education Standards Authority, 27 November 2024, p 1.

<sup>387</sup> Answer to question on notice, NSW Education Standards Authority, 27 November 2024, p 1.

<sup>388</sup> Submission 119, Dr Emily Wilson and Dr Brad Merrick, p 3.

<sup>389</sup> For example: Submission 121, Alex Hone, p 4; Submission 100a, Dr Thomas Fienberg, p 3, Submission 117, Luke Chapman p 4.

<sup>390</sup> Submission 119, Dr Emily Wilson and Dr Brad Merrick, p 2.

<sup>391</sup> For example: Submission 116, Dr Rachel White, p 2; Submission 119, Dr Emily Wilson and Dr Brad Merrick, p 2.

<sup>392</sup> Evidence, Dr Thomas Fienberg, Vice-Chair, Australian Society for Music Education NSW, 25 November 2024, p 3.

<sup>393</sup> Submission 118, Caitlin Sandiford, p 4.

both internal and external assessment, favours and validates limited forms of knowledge and is not reflective of musical practices and cultures outside the classroom.<sup>394</sup>

**5.46** In her submission to the inquiry, Dr White indicated that there would be practical implications of the draft syllabuses including:

- impacting Stage 6 Music enrolments, ATARs and scaling
- impacting opportunities for teacher professional development
- putting an unnecessary burden on teacher workloads.<sup>395</sup>

**5.47** Likewise, in submissions and during oral evidence, stakeholders observed:

- '...these two components, trust and support, are also the key factors that have allowed me to make space for my students and create inclusive experiences in their music education – and these are under threat with the current direction of the curriculum reform'.<sup>396</sup>
- 'If we lose the strengths of the current HSC Music courses, they are gone forever and will impact the next generation of music educators, and the continuous stream of composers, artists, creators, and ultimately impact the future of creative industries in Australia and beyond'.<sup>397</sup>
- 'If these structural issues, among many other concerns, are not addressed, we forecast a significant reduction in students completing stage 6 music courses, leading to a substantial impact on the music industry and arts economy as a whole'.<sup>398</sup>
- The proposed changes to the music syllabuses fail to adequately include non-Western and contemporary music practices in meaningful ways. Non-Western and contemporary music practices should be enhanced, not removed from the syllabus. Additionally, the committee heard that while Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music is mentioned, it feels 'tokenistic rather than integral to the curriculum'.<sup>399</sup>

**5.48** These views were also reflected in testimonials provided to the committee from previous music students now working professionally in the music industry:

- Nick Norton, currently the Lead Singer with Australian Rock Band – The Angels, said: 'I studied music throughout high school and did Music 1 in Year 11. It was during high school that I first experienced playing with other musicians in a rock band, which was encouraged and nurtured by my teachers, who often even let us rehearse in the music department after school... Many of the performance assessments in Music 1 were based around ensembles often comprising of up to 6 people, which was important for gaining

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<sup>394</sup> Submission 118, Caitlin Sandiford, p 4.

<sup>395</sup> Submission 116, Dr Rachel White, p 2.

<sup>396</sup> Submission 118, Caitlin Sandiford, p 2.

<sup>397</sup> Submission 119, Dr Emily Wilson and Dr Brad Merrick, p 7.

<sup>398</sup> Evidence, Dr Thomas Fienberg, Vice-Chair, Australian Society for Music Education NSW, 25 November 2024, p 3.

<sup>399</sup> Submission 117, Luke Chapman p 4.

an understanding and appreciation of how to perform dynamically. I did end up studying music at university, where I completed a Bachelor of Music...'.<sup>400</sup>

- Cat Hunter, Drummer – Percussion with artists such as Little May and Rita Ora observed: '...I loved my experience of music 2 and music extension with a major in performance in 2008...Performing with such a range of ensembles really developed my skills as a session drummer and set me up for success in my career. I've been performing professionally around the world for the last 16 years. This course was paramount to preparing me for the industry. In introducing longer written exams and less options/choices across the subjects it will be detrimental to the students experience and limit their potential pathways as musicians'.<sup>401</sup>
- Otto Wicks-Green a musician and songwriter with three times ARIA nominated rock group sleepmakeswaves said: 'As a music 1 graduate from 2007 who went on to pursue a career in music, my experiences doing music 1 were really formative and valuable to me. As a student with less strength in music theory, the option to maximize my performance electives was really important to me, and my strong marks in this really boosted my confidence and the work I put in honed my skills. I'm concerned to hear about the changes to the course, which would put someone of my skills in a difficult spot and make it harder to focus on and develop my strengths. In my HSC performances I also really benefited from playing with a bigger ensemble and I would hope future students get the chance to have these experiences and not have to focus mostly on an extended exam for such a tactile and fundamentally collaborative subject. Students of music will bring an array of aptitudes and strengths that a well-designed course will support and encourage'.<sup>402</sup>

- 5.49** There was also some discussion about the rationale behind particular changes to the draft music syllabuses. Dr James Humberstone commented that since the draft syllabus are not 'pedagogical or evidence-based, they must be done for cost-cutting reasons'.<sup>403</sup>
- 5.50** The committee received evidence that in response to the proposed changes, 31 of Australia's leading academics wrote to the NSW Minister of Education, Minister Prue Car MP, asking her to have NESAs withdraw the draft HSC Music syllabuses and restart the process once the committee has finalised this report.<sup>404</sup>
- 5.51** Separately, it was noted that the Music syllabuses had not been regularly or systematically reviewed over the past twenty years. The committee heard that this made it difficult for it to remain at the forefront of international best practice.<sup>405</sup>
- 5.52** Following on, inquiry participants recommended that the Music curriculum be regularly updated, as per best practice in other states, to respond to international developments and increasingly diverse tertiary and industry pathways.<sup>406</sup>

<sup>400</sup> Submission 119, Dr Emily Wilson and Dr Brad Merrick, p 9.

<sup>401</sup> Submission 119, Dr Emily Wilson and Dr Brad Merrick, p 9.

<sup>402</sup> Submission 119, Dr Emily Wilson and Dr Brad Merrick, p 10.

<sup>403</sup> Submission 21a, Dr James Humberstone FRSA, p 5.

<sup>404</sup> Submission 119, Dr Emily Wilson and Dr Brad Merrick, p 2.

<sup>405</sup> Submission 21, Dr James Humberstone FRSA, p 5.

<sup>406</sup> Submission 21, Dr James Humberstone FRSA, p 5.

### Concerns raised about the draft Music 1 Syllabus

- 5.53** The committee heard that the current Music 1 Syllabus provides the vast majority of enrolments and is highly valued by staff and students for its flexibility, with students able to select elective topics and modes of learning relevant to their interests.<sup>407</sup> Music 1 is often the only Music course offered at many New South Wales schools.<sup>408</sup>
- 5.54** Traditionally, Music 1 has attracted students who want to focus on performance of contemporary music. Under the proposed changes to the curriculum, the assessment of Music 1 will be far less performance-based and more theory-based, with around 50 per cent of the assessment to be a written exam rather than based on performance.<sup>409</sup>
- 5.55** Inquiry participants expressed significant concerns with these proposed changes. For example, Alex Hone said that the changes to Music 1 represent a 'major attack' on many of the core features of this course that make it so successful.<sup>410</sup>
- 5.56** According to Professor Deborah Cheetham Fraillon AO FAHA, Elizabeth Todd Chair of Vocal Studies, Sydney Conservatorium of Music, this change to Music 1 will disadvantage students and music departments who rely on students taking the course to keep their departments alive.<sup>411</sup>
- 5.57** Further to this, the committee heard that Music 1 is the subject most likely to be offered in secondary schools with smaller candidatures, especially in regional and rural areas, because it can draw in musicians from any genre or level of experience.<sup>412</sup> Mr Hone noted that although Music 1 is often perceived as the 'pop' course, many classical musicians also study Music 1, either to pursue their specific interests or because their school does not offer Music 2. This makes the Music 1 course the essential pillar of HSC music study in diverse, regional and disadvantaged communities.<sup>413</sup>
- 5.58** A further concern was raised by Dr Rachel White who argued that reducing Music 1 to two performances and a two-hour written exam would greatly disadvantage any students who are not strong performers, but may be excellent composers, or capable of wide listening and research. Dr White also said that this structure will put more pressure on students with varying literacy levels.<sup>414</sup>

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<sup>407</sup> Submission 48, Australian Society for Music Education, p 8, Submission 119, Dr Emily Wilson and Dr Brad Merrick, p 3.

<sup>408</sup> Submission 100a, Dr Thomas Fienberg; p 3, Submission 121, Alex Hone, p 3.

<sup>409</sup> Evidence, Professor Deborah Cheetham Fraillon AO FAHA, Elizabeth Todd Chair of Vocal Studies, Sydney Conservatorium of Music, 30 October 2024, p 5; Submission 116, Dr Rachel White, p 4.

<sup>410</sup> Submission 121, Alex Hone, p 5.

<sup>411</sup> Evidence, Professor Deborah Cheetham Fraillon AO FAHA, Elizabeth Todd Chair of Vocal Studies, Sydney Conservatorium of Music, 30 October 2024, p 5.

<sup>412</sup> Submission 121, Alex Hone, p 3.

<sup>413</sup> Submission 121, Alex Hone, p 3.

<sup>414</sup> Submission 116, Dr Rachel White, p 4.



**5.59** Other key concerns with the draft Music 1 syllabus include:

- The mandatory 'focus areas' removes flexibility, restricts the range of topics available and forces students into 'rigid categories'.<sup>415</sup>
- The proposed reduction in performance opportunities and ensemble size does not reflect real-world music making and performance.<sup>416</sup>
- The removal of Composition as a core element eliminates one of the most effective ways to engage students creatively and allow them to express their ideas.<sup>417</sup> Dr Jim Coyle, Lecturer in Music Education, Sydney Conservatorium of Music reported that the proposal to remove electives from Music 1, including composition, was highly problematic, noting that for many students a heavily weighted performance program is not suitable.<sup>418</sup>
- Further, Dr Thomas Fienberg, called the removal of composition from external assessment 'unacceptable'.<sup>419</sup> Dr Fienberg observed that the curriculum review was an opportunity to expand composition, however its removal devalues students as 'replicators-only' rather than creators of new music, telling the committee 'Our future artistic voice is at stake'.<sup>420</sup>
- The proposed two-hour written examination worth 50 per cent of the final grade (up from 25 per cent) is a 'hugely backwards step' that will:
  - result in the 'decimation' of senior secondary music enrolments in New South Wales and have national implications<sup>421</sup>
  - place undue stress on students<sup>422</sup>
  - disproportionately benefit those with strong written skills, rather than showcasing the diverse range of abilities students bring to the subject.<sup>423</sup>
- The increased focus on prescribed written assessments shifts attention away from practical skills. Moreover, students develop as musicians by composing, performing, and improvising—not just by analysing scores or studying concepts.<sup>424</sup>
- There are now discrepancies with language and content structures that do not allow for a natural, logical progression of learning from Stages 4 and 5 to Stage 6.<sup>425</sup> Indeed, it was noted that there are more opportunities for individual development in Stage 5 than in Stage 6, which is 'counter-intuitive to best practice'.<sup>426</sup>

<sup>415</sup> Submission 118, Caitlin Sandiford, p 3; Submission 117, Luke Chapman, p 2, Submission 119, Dr Emily Wilson and Dr Brad Merrick, p 2; Submission 100a, Dr Thomas Fienberg, p 4.

<sup>416</sup> Submission 119, Dr Emily Wilson and Dr Brad Merrick, p 6.

<sup>417</sup> Submission 117, Luke Chapman p 3, Submission 100a, Dr Thomas Fienberg, p 3.

<sup>418</sup> Tendered Document, Draft HSC syllabus compared to current with comments, tendered by Dr Jim Coyle, Lecturer in Music Education, Sydney Conservatorium of Music, 18 November 2024, p 1.

<sup>419</sup> Submission 100a, Dr Thomas Fienberg, p 3.

<sup>420</sup> Submission 100a, Dr Thomas Fienberg, p 3.

<sup>421</sup> Submission 119, Dr Emily Wilson and Dr Brad Merrick, p 4.

<sup>422</sup> Submission 117, Luke Chapman, p 2.

<sup>423</sup> Submission 117, Luke Chapman p 3.

<sup>424</sup> Submission 117, Luke Chapman p 3.

<sup>425</sup> Submission 116, Dr Rachel White, p 2, Submission 100a, Dr Thomas Fienberg, p 3.

<sup>426</sup> Submission 116, Dr Rachel White, p 2.

**Concerns raised about the draft Music 2 and Music Extension syllabuses**

- 5.60** The committee received evidence that Music 2 has a more rigid structure, with a focus on Western Art music and has historically provided students with preparation for further musical study. Stakeholders also observed that Music 2 and Music Extension scale particularly well for the ATAR and encourage higher achieving students to continue studying music.
- 5.61** The committee heard that not all New South Wales secondary schools offer Music 2 and Music Extension and that these courses have the highest mean socio-economic status among students.<sup>427</sup> ASME noted that this highlighted the significant disparity and inequity of access for the courses.<sup>428</sup>
- 5.62** This was echoed by Mr Thomas McCorquodale, Music Teacher 7-12, Cronulla High School, who told the committee that his school does not have the capacity to run Music 2 or Music Extension as a class on the timetable full time. Mr McCorquodale stated that this year there is one HSC student taking Music 2 who is studying it off the school timetable. He explained this could happen because of dedicated staff who were willing to deliver the course during their own time.<sup>429</sup>
- 5.63** Inquiry participants also raised concerns with NESA's claim that the increased focus on test-based written knowledge about music provides 'rigour' to the courses.<sup>430</sup> Whilst inquiry participants noted that rigour is an important factor to consider in the design of HSC music courses, the assumption embedded in the new syllabuses is that rigour specifically means the 'ability to recall facts and theoretical concepts about music when encountering unfamiliar repertoire in exam situations'.<sup>431</sup>
- 5.64** Mr Hone stated that this an 'extremely limited and reductive' vision of musical knowledge and does not account for the incredible rigour of solo and ensemble performance in many styles of music, or the rigour involved in creating and composing new pieces.<sup>432</sup>

**Calls to remove all draft Stage 6 Music syllabuses**

- 5.65** Inquiry participants from the music education community were unanimous in their call for the removal of the current draft Stage 6 Music 1, Music 2 and Music Extension syllabuses, saying that the drafts should be suspended to avoid 'disengagement among students and teachers'.<sup>433</sup>

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<sup>427</sup> Submission 100, Dr Thomas Fienberg, p 10.

<sup>428</sup> Submission 48, Australian Society for Music Education, p 7.

<sup>429</sup> Evidence, Mr Thomas McCorquodale, Music Teacher 7-12, Cronulla High School, 23 August 2024, p 26.

<sup>430</sup> Submission 21a, Dr James Humberstone, p 2; Submission 121, Alex Hone, p 5.

<sup>431</sup> Submission 121, Alex Hone, p 5.

<sup>432</sup> Submission 121, Alex Hone, p 6.

<sup>433</sup> Submission 116, Dr Rachel White, p 8; Submission 117, Luke Chapman, p 4.

- 5.66** Many stakeholders recommended that NESA restart the review process for the draft syllabuses.<sup>434</sup> The committee heard that the process should be transparent and genuine, with NESA clearly communicating how feedback from educators is incorporated into the process and actively involve classroom teachers.<sup>435</sup>
- 5.67** Further, inquiry participants, including Dr Emily Wilson and Dr Brad Merrick, argued that the drafting process needed to start again, noting that the 'deficiencies' with the draft syllabuses cannot be addressed with an additional round of consultation as it will not lead to the level of change required to develop a world leading, future-focussed HSC Music syllabuses.<sup>436</sup>
- 5.68** The committee was informed that the consultation process needs to include the voices of experts and stakeholders and be public.<sup>437</sup> In addition, it was noted that the process of translating the consultation into a syllabus needs to be clearly justified and reflective of the needs of the stakeholders.<sup>438</sup>
- 5.69** Mr Chapman put forward a range of recommendations to enhance the syllabuses, including:
- restore the flexibility of Music 1 to allow students to explore a broader range of topics and ensure composition is reinstated as a core element
  - integrate diverse musical practices, such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander traditions, in meaningful ways.
  - offer musicology as an elective that allows students to explore the music they are passionate about, with an emphasis on cultural and contextual diversity.
  - reduce the length and rigidity of exams across Music 1 and Music 2, ensuring they reflect the realities of music-making rather than academic testing.
  - integrate audio-recorded composition as a valid assessment method, recognising the importance of contemporary music technology.<sup>439</sup>

## Critiques of NSW Curriculum Reform process

- 5.70** There was a great deal of discussion during the inquiry about the NSW Curriculum Reform process. In particular, NESA's consultation practices in relation to transparency, stakeholder engagement and the incorporation of feedback. The issue was first raised in submissions and the initial mid-year hearings. It then remerged towards the end of the inquiry was the release of the final draft of the Stage 6 music and drama syllabuses.

<sup>434</sup> Submission 117, Luke Chapman, p 4, Submission 100a, Dr Thomas Fienberg, p 1, Submission 118, Caitlin Sandiford, p 3.

<sup>435</sup> Submission 116, Dr Rachel White, p 8; Submission 117, Luke Chapman, p 4; Submission 118, Caitlin Sandiford, p 3.

<sup>436</sup> Submission 119, Dr Emily Wilson and Dr Brad Merrick, p 4, Submission 100a, Dr Thomas Fienberg, p 3.

<sup>437</sup> Submission 118, Caitlin Sandiford, p 3.

<sup>438</sup> Submission 118, Caitlin Sandiford, p 3.

<sup>439</sup> Submission 117, Luke Chapman, p 4.

**5.71** A number of inquiry participants raised concerns about a lack of transparency during the consultation period. Dr James Humberstone FRSA, Senior Lecturer in Music Education, Sydney Conservatorium of Music, called the process 'secretive and opaque'.<sup>440</sup> Likewise, the Visual Arts and Design Educators Association (VADEA) described the consultation process as 'adversarial in nature, opaque, contradictory and confusing'.<sup>441</sup>

**5.72** Dr Humberstone summarised the key transparency concerns:

- the requirement for individuals who are involved in drafting the syllabuses, such as writers and advisors, to sign Non-Disclosure Agreements
- reports that individuals involved with drafting syllabuses are 'routinely ignored or have their drafts reworked by other departments in NESAs'
- submissions to the NSW Curriculum Reform are not published
- the writing group did not explain how it had responded to feedback in subsequent releases.<sup>442</sup>

**5.73** According to inquiry participants there are significant ramifications for the lack of transparency, including that NESAs' decisions, objectives and practices can go 'largely unchallenged'.<sup>443</sup>

**5.74** Stakeholders also noted that the lack of transparency around the reform process made it difficult for educators and researchers to understand how feedback was incorporated and to track changes against international benchmarks. Dr Humberstone stated:

Those of us who are working in research are obviously trying to follow what is happening internationally, and we want to see how we're actually going against those international benchmarks. We're quite frustrated that we can't really see how we're moving forward. We can guess at what the conversations are in those panels, but we can't really work out how we end up where we end up, apart from seeing that there are, obviously, ideological arguments or tussles going on in those secret panels.<sup>444</sup>

**5.75** On the other hand, Mr Owen Nelson, Member, Australian Society for Music Education (ASME) NSW and a member of TAG which consults on the syllabus, told the committee that there are good reasons for confidentiality as the process needs to be respected:

I think that there are very good reasons for that, because the process needs to be respected. Also, it's very high stakes. I don't necessarily find an issue with the

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<sup>440</sup> Submission 21a, Dr James Humberstone, p 5.

<sup>441</sup> Answers to Questions on Notice, Ms Nicole DeLosa, Visual Arts and Design Educators Association (VADEA), 26 August 2024, p 3.

<sup>442</sup> Submission 21a Dr James Humberstone, p 5; Submission 21, Dr James Humberstone FRSA, p 2, Evidence, Dr James Humberstone FRSA, Senior Lecturer in Music Education, Sydney Conservatorium of Music, 23 August 2024, p 2.

<sup>443</sup> Answers to Questions on Notice, Ms Nicole DeLosa, Visual Arts and Design Educators Association (VADEA), 26 August 2024, p 3.

<sup>444</sup> Evidence, Dr James Humberstone FRSA, Senior Lecturer in Music Education, Sydney Conservatorium of Music, 23 August 2024, p 3.

confidentiality that is surrounding a lot of aspects of working or engaging with NESA. They do hold these things in very high regard.<sup>445</sup>

**5.76** However, Mr Nelson noted that he would like for the Subject Matter Experts to be able to talk more freely about the process:

However, in my personal experience, I'm looking for maybe the voice of the subject matter experts. I do feel that there are quite a lot of layers and competing interests. From a personal viewpoint, I would like to see those subject matter experts be able to talk more freely and respond more freely in those consultations, if that's at all possible.<sup>446</sup>

**5.77** Dr Thomas Fienberg, urged the committee to obtain recommendations and minutes from TAG meetings through FOI requests, to determine the extent to which these experts were ignored.<sup>447</sup>

**5.78** The committee heard that the NSW Curriculum Reform process did not adequately engage with stakeholders. There was concern that the syllabuses, especially the draft Stage 6 Drama and Music syllabuses, were developed without experts in evidence-based practice.

**5.79** Drama NSW put forward the view that process did not draw on the expertise of teachers, noting that if this had been addressed then there would 'not be such widespread disdain and dissatisfaction across the Drama education community'.<sup>448</sup> Ms Gill told the committee that there had been less TAG consultations in the Stage 6 syllabuses than any other syllabuses.<sup>449</sup>

**5.80** There were similar concerns expressed by representatives of the music community. For example, Dr Humberstone said that the Stage 6 Music syllabuses were developed without the involvement of an expert in evidence-based practice in music education.<sup>450</sup>

**5.81** This view was echoed by Dr Thomas Fienberg, Acting Associate Dean Indigenous Strategy and Services and Lecturer in Music Education, Sydney Conservatorium of Music, who told the committee that while the syllabus review process is written 'by teachers for teachers' it is difficult for academic to be able to provide support and feedback.<sup>451</sup> Dr Fienberg commented release of the draft Music syllabuses, has managed 'to unite everyone across sectors and associations to stand together in defence of our four 11-12 courses'.<sup>452</sup>

<sup>445</sup> Evidence, Mr Owen Nelson Member, Australian Society for Music Education (ASME) NSW, 25 November 2025, p 17.

<sup>446</sup> Evidence, Mr Owen Nelson Member, Australian Society for Music Education (ASME) NSW, 25 November 2025, p 17.

<sup>447</sup> Submission 100a, Dr Thomas Fienberg, p 2.

<sup>448</sup> Submission 125, Drama NSW, p 5.

<sup>449</sup> Evidence, Ms Amy Gill Vice President of Professional Learning, Drama NSW, 25 November 2025, p 15.

<sup>450</sup> Submission 21, Dr James Humberstone FRSA, p 3; Evidence, Dr James Humberstone FRSA, Senior Lecturer in Music Education, Sydney Conservatorium of Music, 23 August 2024, p 2.

<sup>451</sup> Evidence, by Dr Thomas Fienberg, Acting Associate Dean Indigenous Strategy and Services and Lecturer in Music Education, Sydney Conservatorium of Music, 23 August 2024, p 7.

<sup>452</sup> Submission 100a, Dr Thomas Fienberg, p 3.

- 5.82** Inquiry participants also expressed the following concerns:
- The consultation period was poorly timed, coinciding with educators' busiest period, and lacked transparency and responsiveness<sup>453</sup>
  - The 'Have Your Say' survey where teachers can give feedback on the proposed changes is 'deeply inadequate' as a method of providing substantive feedback, allowing a maximum of only 600 words of written submissions per HSC course in addition to several quantitative questions.<sup>454</sup>
  - That without the existence of the committee and the current inquiry, stakeholder concerns would not be heard as part of the consultation process.<sup>455</sup>
- 5.83** Inquiry participants noted that the review of the Stage 6 Visual Arts Syllabus has not started yet and called for Drama and Music to be shifted back to allow for a more realistic timeframe for further consultation and redrafting.<sup>456</sup>
- 5.84** In terms of improving the consultation and reform process, some suggested solutions from stakeholders included:
- publishing the results of consultations and public submissions
  - publishing reasoning behind changes in each draft, and responding to key points in consultations and submissions
  - independent leadership of syllabus writing teams, such as an independent music educator or music education scholar)
  - including expert educators in the syllabus development process to maintain high standards and relevance in arts education.<sup>457</sup>
- 5.85** Following the release of the draft Stage 6 Music and Drama syllabuses an e-petition was launched on the NSW Parliament's website calling on the government to implement a 'new review process to commence following the release of the NSW Parliamentary Inquiry Report on Arts and Music Education and Training,' stating that the petitioners 'view the release of these syllabuses as a significant backward step and not representing the values of our members. If not addressed with additional policy safeguards, we forecast a significant decrease in enrolments for

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<sup>453</sup> Submission 125, Drama NSW, p 5.

<sup>454</sup> Submission 121, Alex Hone, p 7.

<sup>455</sup> Evidence, Mrs Debra Batley, Chair, Australian Society for Music Education (ASME) NSW, 25 November 2024, p 13.

<sup>456</sup> Evidence, Dr Thomas Fienberg Vice Chair, Australian Society for Music Education (ASME) NSW, 25 November 2024, p 15; Evidence, Ms Amy Gill Vice President of Professional Learning, Drama NSW, 25 November 2024, p 15.

<sup>457</sup> Submission 21, Dr James Humberstone FRSA, pp 7-8 and Submission 44 Visual Arts and Design Educators Association NSW, p 10.

Music and Drama courses, leading to ongoing implications for our state's artistic voice and the arts economy'.<sup>458</sup> The e-petition received 8,555 signatures in a three-week period.<sup>459</sup>

### **NSW Government response to concerns with the consultation process**

**5.86** Representatives from NESAs responded to concerns about the NSW Curriculum Reform consultation process during their appearance before the committee.

**5.87** When asked about the concerns raised about the consultation process at the hearing, Dr Paul Cahill Executive Director, Curriculum, NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA), told the committee he was surprised by claims the process is not open and transparent.<sup>460</sup> Dr Cahill advised:

- the consultation process entails two rounds of public consultation where feedback from the first round is responded to in the second
- an engagement report which lists the submissions received is also provided
- while submissions from schools or unions are published, individual submissions are not.<sup>461</sup>

**5.88** In response to the concerns raised regarding the draft Stage 6 Drama and Music syllabuses, Mr Paul Martin, CEO, NESA acknowledged that there has been significant conversation, disagreement and agitation around these creative arts syllabuses but noted that it was in the middle of a consultation process.<sup>462</sup>

**5.89** Mr Martin told the committee that NESA has consulted on 50 syllabuses so far and that there have been views expressed at various points during each of the consultation processes.

There have been views expressed at various points in most of those syllabuses, perhaps not as vociferous and not as heated as there are in some, but in each of them we have stood by the consultation process, listened to what teachers, community members and other organisations have said.<sup>463</sup>

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<sup>458</sup> Parliament of New South Wales, Legislative Assembly – Closed ePetition Details, Suspend and remove the draft music and drama syllabuses from circulation and restart the review process with improved policy safeguards, [https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/la/Pages/closedePetition-details.aspx?q=pH7Tit7rg\\_lpbKMGihBUpA](https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/la/Pages/closedePetition-details.aspx?q=pH7Tit7rg_lpbKMGihBUpA)

<sup>459</sup> Parliament of New South Wales, Legislative Assembly – Closed ePetition Details, Suspend and remove the draft music and drama syllabuses from circulation and restart the review process with improved policy safeguards, [https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/la/Pages/closedePetition-details.aspx?q=pH7Tit7rg\\_lpbKMGihBUpA](https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/la/Pages/closedePetition-details.aspx?q=pH7Tit7rg_lpbKMGihBUpA)

<sup>460</sup> Evidence, Dr Paul Cahill Executive Director, Curriculum, NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA), 23 August 2024, p 63.

<sup>461</sup> Evidence, Dr Paul Cahill Executive Director, Curriculum, NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA), 23 August 2024, p 62.

<sup>462</sup> Evidence, Mr Paul Martin CEO, NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA), 25 November 2024, p 19.

<sup>463</sup> Evidence, Mr Paul Martin CEO, NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA), 25 November 2024, p 19.

**5.90** Mr Martin explained that changes to draft syllabuses occur as part of the consultation process in response to feedback provided:

In every single syllabus to date, there have been changes between draft and final syllabus. Some of the changes have come about because the arguments were absolutely irrefutable and we needed to learn from the arguments put forward by those who opposed various elements. Sometimes there have been significant additions to syllabuses on the basis of strong advocacy. We will continue to do that because the nature of consultation requires the advice and activism, to some degree, of those people who are concerned.<sup>464</sup>

**5.91** When asked about the strong backlash against the draft Stage 6 Drama and Music syllabuses, Mr Martin noted that it is the first time these syllabuses have been consulted on in 24 years, and as such it was reasonable to expect some change in both content and assessment. However, he also told the committee that NESAs would be open to making changes to the drafts:

Now, I would argue that 24 years later it is reasonable to expect some changes in both content and assessment—that we go through our processes and if we find that we have put things into place that have strong opposition, if the opposition fits with rational arguments and objective positions and doesn't work, we, of course, will change, as we have changed every other syllabus.<sup>465</sup>

**5.92** The committee also heard that the Technical Advisory Group (TAG), the expert body that gives advice of the various iterations of the syllabus and recommends syllabus writers, has representatives from the academic world, as well as teaching profession.<sup>466</sup>

**5.93** In terms of the possibility of another round of consultation for the draft syllabuses, Mr Martin confirmed that at this stage there would be no further consultation. However, he acknowledged the importance of maintaining the trust of the creative arts community during this process and noted NESAs would wait until the end of the consultation period before making any other judgements:

At this stage, this consultation is the only consultation. There are still another couple of weeks to go, but I think what we will need to do is make sure and assess how much we feel that there needs to be changed and where we need to go with it. But other syllabuses, whether they have this level of concern or not, have had the same—largely the same, depending on the nature of the syllabus consultation process—and it has worked very successfully thus far with 50 syllabuses. So while I'm concerned, and we have to maintain the faith of the creative arts community and their trust, which clearly is a problem for us at the moment, we'll see when we finish the consultation period before we go any further and make any other judgements.

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<sup>464</sup> Evidence, Mr Paul Martin CEO, NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA), 25 November 2024, p 19.

<sup>465</sup> Evidence, Mr Paul Martin CEO, NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA), 25 November 2024, p 20.

<sup>466</sup> Evidence, Dr Paul Cahill Executive Director, Curriculum, NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA), 23 August 2024, p 63.



## Committee comment

- 5.94** It is clear that there has been strong opposition to the draft Stage 6 Drama and Music syllabuses. We are encouraged by the level of passion of those in the creative arts and education spaces who have expressed their concerns and their dedication to the arts, their students and the next generation of inspiring creatives.
- 5.95** We note that there were significant concerns expressed by stakeholders, particularly Drama NSW and Drama Australia, about the proposal to move the HSC Group Performance (GP) from an external NESA assessment to a school-based assessment in the draft Stage 6 Drama Syllabus. We understand that while the GP would have remained a compulsory part of the syllabus, there was widespread dissatisfaction with the proposal. We commend NESA for listening to the strong feedback of the drama community and committing to ensuring the GP remains as an external assessment.
- 5.96** We recognise however, that there remain some serious concerns with the draft Stage 6 Drama Syllabus, including the limited options available for the Individual Project and the introduction of an additional written exam. The committee notes that these changes could disadvantage students including those in regional areas, or students who are more drawn to the performing arts than other content heavy subjects. We expect NESA to give due consideration to these concerns and to ensure the final Stage 6 Drama Syllabus broadens, rather than restricts, student choice and supports a diverse range of learning opportunities.

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### Finding 5

Practical exams and assessment for performing arts students has long been the hallmark of achieving excellence in their subject areas.

### Finding 6

That the draft Stage 6 Drama Syllabus does not meet community expectations and needs extensive revision.

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- 5.97** The committee is equally concerned with the proposed changes to the Stage 6 Music 1, Music 2 and Music Extension syllabuses. We recognise that there are significant concerns about whether the draft syllabuses adequately balance the development of technical skills with fostering creativity and individual expression. We concur with stakeholders that an overemphasis on theoretical aspects over performance may limit opportunities for experimentation and artistic growth. This is especially problematic in relation to the Music 1 course, which is a very popular subject and is an essential pillar of HSC music in diverse, regional and low socio economic communities.
- 5.98** Further to this, the committee also heard that the draft Stage 6 Music syllabuses may not sufficiently incorporate a wide range of musical traditions and contemporary genres, particularly those from non-Western cultures. We support opportunities for ensuring cultural inclusivity in music education and in communities more broadly.
- 5.99** The committee acknowledges other key concerns about the proposed changes to draft Stage 6 Music syllabuses, including the decreased flexibility and diversity of choice in focus areas, the removal of composition as a core element of the course, and the increase of written

examinations. The significant restriction of student choice across the proposed Stage 6 Music syllabuses in content areas and electives for assessment coupled with more rigid, less diverse examination weightings runs contrary to the expert evidence given about what constitutes high quality music education. At a time when we are looking to increase the number of students in creative arts subjects, it is concerning to hear that these proposed changes could detrimentally impact student enrolments in Stage 6 Music courses.

- 5.100** We encourage NESA to take note of these concerns and work with the music community to address them in a meaningful way.
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### **Finding 7**

That the draft Stage 6 Music 1, Music 2 and Extension Music syllabuses do not meet community expectations and need extensive revision.

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- 5.101** The committee acknowledges that there were significant concerns with the consultation undertaken as part of the NSW Curriculum Reform process. It appears these issues were amplified with the release of the final draft Stage 6 Drama and Music syllabuses.

- 5.102** We recognise that stakeholder engagement is complex and can be challenging. However, it is essential for this process to be transparent to ensure accountability and credibility. It is disappointing to hear that the music and drama communities have such widespread concerns about the consultation process.

- 5.103** The committee notes the calls for the draft Stage 6 Drama and Music syllabuses to be scrapped and for the consultation process to begin again, also noting that the process for further NESA consultation on the Stage 6 Music and Drama syllabuses is unclear to the committee. We do not support this stance. Rather, to maintain the NSW Curriculum Reform timeline, we expect NESA to ensure consultation is transparent, genuinely consultative, and aligns with leading and international drama and music curricula and research. We expect that through this inquiry the consultation process for the NSW Curriculum Reform can be improved to avoid another instance such as this in the future. To this end, we recommend that during curriculum reviews and reforms, NSW Education Standards Authority:

- publish all public submissions
  - provide detailed reasoning when releasing second drafts for consultation.
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### **Recommendation 18**

That during curriculum reviews and reforms, the NSW Education Standards Authority:

- publish all public submissions
  - provide detailed reasoning when releasing second drafts for consultation.
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- 5.104** Furthermore, the committee recommends that the NSW Government and the NSW Education Standards Authority ensures the Stage 6 Drama and Music syllabuses are reflective of community expectations and incorporates the feedback provided by community members of
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the Technical Advisory Groups, Targeted Assessment Consultations and the wider public through the Have Your Say period.

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**Recommendation 19**

That the NSW Government and the NSW Education Standards Authority ensures the Stage 6 Drama and Music syllabuses are reflective of community expectations and incorporates the feedback provided by community members of the Technical Advisory Groups, Targeted Assessment Consultations and the wider public through the Have Your Say period.

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## Chapter 6      **The creative arts industry and the tertiary education pipeline**

This chapter considers the creative arts industry landscape in New South Wales and the tertiary education pipeline that is essential to ensure it thrives. Initially, the chapter sets out the nature and diversity of the creative arts industry. Next, it discusses stakeholders' concerns with the tertiary education pipeline to the industry, including the diminishing number of university and Vocational Education and Training creative arts courses, the cost these courses, and the role of independent education and training organisations. The chapter concludes with a brief discussion on the importance of affordable accommodation for tertiary education students.

### **The creative arts industry landscape**

**6.1**      The creative arts landscape in New South Wales is dynamic and multi-faceted. The following sections outline the current state of the visual arts and live arts and entertainment sectors. Later, there is a discussion about the skills that creative arts workers need to have a successful portfolio career.

#### **Visual arts sector**

**6.2**      Arts organisations and creative professionals play a crucial role in education and skill development across the sector, acting as key facilitators of 'cultural enrichment and innovative thinking'.<sup>467</sup> Inquiry participants highlighted the 'critical' role the sector plays in supporting the cultural needs of young people and society as a whole, as well as providing vital career pathways for cultural workers.<sup>468</sup>

**6.3**      The arts sector consists of:

- public and regional galleries
- public and regional museums
- art spaces and university galleries.<sup>469</sup>

**6.4**      The committee heard that many schools in New South Wales rely upon arts organisations to deliver education programs in addition to providing services to the community. This is examined in Chapter 3.

**6.5**      Inquiry participants noted that cultural engagement in museums and galleries informs student learning across many curriculum areas, not just creative arts.<sup>470</sup> Mr Brett Adlington, Chief Executive Officer, Museums and Galleries of NSW, explained:

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<sup>467</sup> Submission 91, National Art School, p 5.

<sup>468</sup> Submission 23, Museums and Galleries of NSW, p 2.

<sup>469</sup> Submission 23, Museums and Galleries of NSW, p 2.

<sup>470</sup> Submission 23, Museums and Galleries of NSW, p 2; Submission 53, National Association for the Visual Arts Ltd, p 5.

Access to cultural material held in museums and galleries can help students have a deeper understanding of many other parts of the school curriculum, including First Nations history, the environment, social histories, languages and cultures, and also building social cohesion...<sup>471</sup>

**6.6** Further to this, the committee heard that arts organisations play a vital role as social spaces for children and young people that are 'democratic, accessible, safe and free'.<sup>472</sup>

**6.7** There was also some discussion about the role arts organisations play in the broader cultural ecosystem. For example, Museums and Galleries of NSW observed that these organisations provide:

- critical career pathways for artists and cultural workers
- exhibition opportunities for visual artists
- industry placements to staff and volunteers.<sup>473</sup>

**6.8** In evidence to the committee, Ms Anne Loxley, Executive Director, Arts and Cultural Exchange (ACE), further explained the role of arts and cultural institutions, such as ACE, in fostering a vibrant creative arts sector:

Places like ACE play a very big role in place-based education for people to be creating their own cultural events, their own exhibitions, their own music events with their own art and their own music and also playing producing roles. At ACE we also play a really big role in upskilling early career screen creatives from marginalised and diverse backgrounds, both in below-the-line crew training and in creative skills in the screen industry.<sup>474</sup>

**6.9** Stakeholders proposed that arts organisations receive dedicated funding to deliver programs aligned with arts education to continue providing arts education and skills development across the sector.<sup>475</sup>

### **Live arts and entertainment sector**

**6.10** The live arts and entertainment industry comprises of a diverse range of art forms, including music, drama and dance. Occupations in the sector are both on and off the stage and span performing, creative, technical and production roles.<sup>476</sup> The committee heard that the Australian screen and audio industries have experienced significant growth over the last five years.<sup>477</sup>

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<sup>471</sup> Evidence, Mr Brett Adlington, Chief Executive Officer, Museums and Galleries of NSW, 30 July 2024, p 61.

<sup>472</sup> Submission 23, Museums and Galleries of NSW, p 3.

<sup>473</sup> Submission 23, Museums and Galleries of NSW, p 1.

<sup>474</sup> Evidence, Ms Anne Loxley, Executive Director, Arts and Cultural Exchange, Member, Western Sydney Arts Alliance Working Group, 30 July 2024, p 60.

<sup>475</sup> Submission 23, Museums and Galleries of NSW, p 4; Submission 53, National Association for the Visual Arts Ltd, p 5.

<sup>476</sup> Submission 55, Live Performance Australia, p 2.

<sup>477</sup> Submission 93, Australian Film Television and Radio School, p 4.

Simultaneously, the creative industry in New South Wales has suffered an acute skills shortage.<sup>478</sup>

- 6.11** Stakeholders told the committee that skills shortages in the screen, performing arts, and festival industries have been exacerbated by COVID-19.<sup>479</sup> In particular, the pandemic disproportionately affected production technicians for live productions, and professionals in 'below-the-line' jobs in the screen industry. Many creative professionals with these skills have not returned to these industries.<sup>480</sup>
- 6.12** The committee heard that shortages in crew, production, and front-of-house roles are now 'acute' in both metropolitan and regional areas.<sup>481</sup> According to AFTRS, nearly 60 per cent of productions in 2023 were under-crewed in New South Wales.<sup>482</sup>
- 6.13** Additionally, NIDA stated that these problems exist across the non-profit and commercial sectors and across art forms, including live music.<sup>483</sup>
- 6.14** As a result of the shortages, staff in regional areas work as 'all-rounders', that is across technical disciplines, and are shared across regions. In some cases, shows are being cancelled due to a lack of suitably qualified workers. Moreover, the shortages are causing workers to burn out and places them at risk of leaving the industry.<sup>484</sup>
- 6.15** The committee received evidence that the slow rate at which people can be trained or upskilled was hampering industry growth and creating critical skills gaps.<sup>485</sup>
- 6.16** One suggested remedy to the skills shortages was to have more on-the-job and practical training opportunities for recent graduates. This would allow graduates to gain workplace skills that could be readily transferable and support them in their early career development.<sup>486</sup> To facilitate this, Live Performances Australia proposed that the NSW Government provide funding for industry-based placements and traineeships, including for school experience placements, to help performing arts organisations address current skills shortages and build their future workforce.<sup>487</sup>
- 6.17** Similarly, AFTRS noted that partnered programs that combine training with placements or internships are resource intensive. It recommended a dedicated skills fund that incentivises

<sup>478</sup> Submission 42, National Institute of Dramatic Art (NIDA), p 4; Submission 55, Live Performance Australia, p 2.

<sup>479</sup> Submission 92, NSW Government, p 4; Submission 42, National Institute of Dramatic Art (NIDA), p 4; Submission 55, Live Performance Australia, p 1.

<sup>480</sup> Submission 92, NSW Government, p 4.

<sup>481</sup> Submission 42, National Institute of Dramatic Art (NIDA), p 4.

<sup>482</sup> Submission 93, Australian Film Television and Radio School, pp 3-4.

<sup>483</sup> Submission 42, National Institute of Dramatic Art (NIDA), p 4.

<sup>484</sup> Submission 42, National Institute of Dramatic Art (NIDA), p 4; Submission 55, Live Performance Australia, p 3.

<sup>485</sup> Submission 55, Live Performance Australia, p 4.

<sup>486</sup> Submission 55, Live Performance Australia, p 3.

<sup>487</sup> Submission 55, Live Performance Australia, p 4.

partnered and 'joined-up' training could encourage agencies and organisations to work together to identify and address both emergent and longer-term skills needs.<sup>488</sup>

**6.18** Access to arts and music tertiary education courses is examined later in this chapter.

### **A 'portfolio career' and the need for business management skills**

**6.19** Many artists and musicians will have 'portfolio careers' or multiple sources of income due to the nature of the creative sector.<sup>489</sup> There was discussion during the inquiry about the best way to support and foster successful, dynamic careers for young creatives.

**6.20** Numerous stakeholders raised the importance of a strong tertiary education pipeline for the creative arts and expressed concern that this was not occurring in New South Wales. This issue is examined in the following sections.

**6.21** In addition to knowing one's craft, practical experience and industry knowledge, many inquiry participants highlighted the importance of business skills, such as financial management, marketing and administration for individuals working in creative industries. For example, according to Sydney Dance Company, a 'job-ready artist' needs entrepreneurial skills and practical business knowledge, particularly when working in freelance roles.<sup>490</sup>

**6.22** This view was shared by many respondents to the inquiry's online questionnaire who commented who that students need business management skills to be job-ready for careers in the creative arts:

- 'Financial management for budgeting and managing their recordkeeping, administration for diary management, communication for dealing with customers, suppliers and stakeholders, grant application writing for funding sources'.
- 'I feel that understanding their legal rights and obligations to other artists, understanding contracts, self promotion and marketing, how to professionally approach venues, and tax/financial obligations'.
- 'Many people in the arts industries are woefully unprepared for the amount of financial and administrative work that is required to be a successful, responsible artist. Business training should be part of any artistic education, including professional practice like networking, correspondence etiquette, an understanding of the legal requirements placed on creative, and what types of free mental health services are available'.<sup>491</sup>

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<sup>488</sup> Submission 93, Australian Film Television and Radio School, p 5.

<sup>489</sup> Submission 36, Musica Viva Australia, p 2; Submission 38, Orange Regional Conservatorium, p2; Submission 76, Sydney Dance Company, p 3.

<sup>490</sup> Submission 76, Sydney Dance Company, pp 2-3.

<sup>491</sup> Inquiry into arts and music education and training in New South Wales – Online Questionnaire Report, p 18.



## Diminishing tertiary education pipeline

- 6.23** Stakeholders considered a strong, sustainable arts and music tertiary education system essential to providing artists, musicians, creative industry professionals, and technical and production staff to the workforce.
- 6.24** However, it was noted during the inquiry that a career in the creative arts is becoming unattainable, particularly for young people, as there are increasingly few arts and music university and Vocational Education and Training (VET) courses available.<sup>492</sup> Moreover, the available courses are becoming prohibitively expensive.<sup>493</sup>
- 6.25** Similar to the concerns raised in Chapter 2, the committee heard that these cuts were, in part, due to the Australian and NSW Government's focus on Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) to the detriment of the arts.
- 6.26** Again, stakeholders noted that students in rural, regional and remote areas were unduly impacted by the lack of creative arts courses.<sup>494</sup> Inquiry participants expressed concern that this curtailed students' access to the creative arts. For example, Ms Penelope Benton, Executive Director, National Association of Visual Arts, stated that 'enormous changes to the vocational and tertiary education system for visual arts, craft and design' has led to whole modes of practice struggling to exist in several regions'.<sup>495</sup> Access and equality issues are examined in Chapter 7.
- 6.27** Following on, many stakeholders expressed concern that there will be adverse repercussions on culture and vibrancy across the state should pathways to tertiary education in the creative industries continue to diminish. For example, Dr Kathryn Coleman, President, Art Education Australia, commented: 'We don't have artists, we don't have arts workers, we don't have museum educators, we don't have people working in these amazing regional galleries that you have in New South Wales...—without art education'.<sup>496</sup>
- 6.28** Likewise, Dr Thomas Fienberg, Acting Associate Dean Indigenous Strategy and Services and Lecturer in Music Education, Sydney Conservatorium of Music, explained that it crucial for regional universities and VET providers to provide access to music education to ensure that students can 'stay better connected with place and help contribute to the musical life of a community'.<sup>497</sup>

<sup>492</sup> See for example, Submission 23, Museums and Galleries of NSW, p 4; Submission 53, National Association for the Visual Arts Ltd p 2; Submission 5, National Advocates for Arts Education (NAAE), p 2; Submission 42, National Institute of Dramatic Art, p 5.

<sup>493</sup> Submission 59, Music NSW, p 8, Appendix 1, Site Visit Summary Report, p 131.

<sup>494</sup> See for example, Evidence, Dr John Nicholas Saunders, Chair, National Advocates for Arts Education, 30 July 2024, p 10; Evidence, Ms Penelope Benton, Executive Director, National Association for the Visual Arts, 30 July 2024, p 16; Evidence, Dr Kathryn Coleman, President, Art Education Australia, 30 July 2024, p 13.

<sup>495</sup> Evidence, Ms Penelope Benton, Executive Director, National Association of Visual Arts, 30 July 2024, p 16.

<sup>496</sup> Evidence, Dr Kathryn Coleman, President, Art Education Australia, 30 July 2024, p 11.

### Cuts to, and increasing costs of, university courses

- 6.29** The committee heard that universities across New South Wales are increasingly unlikely to offer creative arts courses. For example, inquiry participants observed:
- There is a declining number of fine arts offerings, particularly in regional areas.<sup>498</sup>
  - Bachelor of Music courses are 'hardly offered' in New South Wales universities. Further, the University of New South Wales cut this course in 2024.<sup>499</sup>
  - Many dramatic arts courses at universities have recently been closed or have been 'cut to the bone'. Six universities across Victoria and New South Wales – Monash, Murdoch, La Trobe, Charles Sturt, Newcastle, and Wollongong – have closed or severely diminished their drama departments, while others have increased their class sizes appreciably.<sup>500</sup>
  - There are no university courses for dance education. Rather, the three tertiary dance courses available in New South Wales are all provided by private organisations.<sup>501</sup>
- 6.30** As mentioned in Chapter 1, creative arts courses may be taken in combination with initial teacher education courses. These are usually seen as dual qualifications.<sup>502</sup> Discussion about the creative arts and initial teacher education is examined in Chapter 3.
- 6.31** Several inquiry participants noted that access to arts and music university courses is increasingly difficult for young people who live outside of major cities. Often, students in these areas have limited or, in some cases, no options to study creative courses.<sup>503</sup>
- 6.32** According to Dr John Nicholas Saunders, Chair, National Advocates for Arts Education, the diminishing number of creative arts courses is, in part, due to the prioritisation of STEM subjects at universities. In his evidence, Dr Saunders, explained that the Australian Government's focus on STEM areas and courses over the past ten years has resulted in universities shifting away from arts courses – leading to declining enrolments and more expensive courses.<sup>504</sup>
- 6.33** Likewise, Music NSW, submitted that course contribution costs have significantly increased since the introduction of the Job-Ready Graduates package.<sup>505</sup> The Job-Ready Graduates

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<sup>498</sup> See for example, Evidence, Dr John Nicholas Saunders, Chair, National Advocates for Arts Education, 30 July 2024, p 10; Evidence, Ms Penelope Benton, Executive Director, National Association for the Visual Arts, 30 July 2024, p 16; Evidence, Dr Kathryn Coleman, President, Art Education Australia, 30 July 2024, p 13.

<sup>499</sup> Evidence, Mr Anthony van den Broek, Deputy Chair, Music Teachers' Association of NSW, 30 July 2024, p 33.

<sup>500</sup> Submission 42, National Institute of Dramatic Art, p 5.

<sup>501</sup> Evidence, Ms Diane Grant, Member, Ausdance National, 30 July 2024, p 22.

<sup>502</sup> Submission 92, NSW Government, p 8.

<sup>503</sup> Submission 23, Museums and Galleries of NSW, p 4, Evidence, Dr Kathryn Coleman, President, Art Education Australia, 30 July 2024, p 10; Evidence, Dr John Nicholas Saunders, Chair, National Advocates for Arts Education, 30 July 2024, p 10.

<sup>504</sup> Evidence, Dr John Nicholas Saunders, Chair, National Advocates for Arts Education, 30 July 2024, p 13.

<sup>505</sup> Submission 59, Music NSW, p 7.

package was introduced by the Australian Government in 2021 to reduce the cost of university degrees in areas of national priorities such as engineering, computing, allied health and education.<sup>506</sup> Music NSW raised concerns that this scheme has 'actively sought to drive students away from studies in society and culture'.<sup>507</sup> Further, the committee heard that this has led to declining student enrolments and high levels of student debt.<sup>508</sup>

- 6.34** The committee heard that alongside the declining availability of university courses, there has been a rise of private providers in the tertiary education space. Music NSW expressed concern with the high fees charged by private providers which often result in large FEE-HELP student loans and student debt. This is in contrast to the HECS-HELP debts arising from the 'less expensive' university system.<sup>509</sup>
- 6.35** These sentiments were echoed during Create NSW's consultation with the sector when developing the *Creative Communities* policy. Feedback during this period raised the high cost of tertiary education due to the Job-Ready Graduates reform package which presents financial challenges to students wanting to study in the arts and humanities, in contrast to STEM subjects.<sup>510</sup>

### **Shrinking TAFE NSW pathways**

- 6.36** As outlined in Chapter 1, Vocational Education and Training (VET) courses are another avenue to further arts and music education.
- 6.37** TAFE NSW is a major provider of VET creative arts courses in the state. The committee heard that in addition to diminishing university pathways, there had been 'debilitating' cuts to TAFE NSW targeting arts and studio-based learning in recent years.<sup>511</sup> The National Association for the Visual Arts (NAVA) commented: 'Cuts to visual arts studios and courses have largely been the result of constrained budgets or education policy reforms which prioritise other areas of study'.<sup>512</sup>
- 6.38** A number of stakeholders expressed concern about the costs of completing creative arts courses at TAFE NSW. The schedule of fees for TAFE NSW courses varies depending on various factors, including:
- access to the Smart & Skilled List
  - access to FEE-HELP

<sup>506</sup> Australian Government, Department of Education, Job-ready Graduates Package 'Improving higher education for students' (July 2024) <https://www.education.gov.au/job-ready/improving-higher-education-students>.

<sup>507</sup> Submission 59, Music NSW, p 7.

<sup>508</sup> Submission 59, Music NSW, p 7.

<sup>509</sup> Submission 59, Music NSW, p 8.

<sup>510</sup> Submission 92, NSW Government, p 5.

<sup>511</sup> Submission 53, National Association for the Visual Arts, p 2.

<sup>512</sup> Submission 53, National Association for the Visual Arts, p 2.

- the NSW Skills Lists, which outlines the skills that are eligible for NSW nomination under the Skilled Nominated visa (subclass 190) and the Skilled Work Regional visa (subclass 491).<sup>513</sup>

**6.39** Smart and Skilled courses and prices are set by the NSW Department of Education.<sup>514</sup>

**6.40** In 2024, TAFE NSW offered:

- four creative arts courses under the fee free initiative, which provides tuition-free training places for eligible students
- numerous creative arts courses for qualifications on the Smart & Skilled List that require learners to pay for part of their tuition
- nine creative courses for qualifications not on the NSW Skills List that require a commercial fee, ranging from approximately \$10,100 - \$21,130, to be paid.<sup>515</sup>

**6.41** On the issue of fees, the National Association for the Visual Arts (NAVA) argued that the introduction of the NSW Smart and Skilled List effectively removed subsidies from Visual Arts programs at TAFE NSW. According to NAVA, this led to reduced course offerings and lowered enrolments, particularly in regional areas who now must travel considerable distances to Sydney, Newcastle or Brisbane for specialised tertiary qualifications in visual arts.<sup>516</sup>

**6.42** Similarly, Mr Andrew French-Northam, Director, Upper Hunter Conservatorium of Music and former Head Teacher of Music at Orange TAFE NSW, stated that the funding model and preference for private providers has 'eradicated' the post school music and arts education offered by TAFE NSW.<sup>517</sup> Mr French-Northam explained that the TAFE NSW music programs in the Central West had previously 'flourished' with consistent enrolment demand and graduates performing at regional, national and international levels. However, Mr French-Northam observed that this stream of 'motivated and well experiences musicians is now severely curtailed.'<sup>518</sup>

**6.43** During evidence to the committee, Ms Penelope Benton Executive Director, National Association of Visual Arts, commented that without subsidies TAFE NSW is no longer making it an 'attractive or viable pathway or option to study'.<sup>519</sup>

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<sup>513</sup> Evidence, Dr Raffaele Marcellino, Executive Director, Education and Skills - Sydney, TAFE NSW, 23 August 2024, p 49; Investment NSW, *NSW Skills Lists*, 2024, [<https://www.nsw.gov.au/visas-and-migration/skilled-visas/nsw-skills-lists>].

<sup>514</sup> Evidence, Ms Janet Schorer PSM, Chief Delivery Officer, TAFE NSW, 23 August 2024, p 49.

<sup>515</sup> Answers to questions on notice, TAFE NSW, received 30 September 2024, pp 2-3.

<sup>516</sup> Submission 53, the National Association for the Visual Arts, p 4.

<sup>517</sup> Submission 86, Mr Andrew French-Northam, p 7.

<sup>518</sup> Submission 86, Mr Andrew French-Northam, p 7.

<sup>519</sup> Evidence, Ms Penelope Benton Executive Director, National Association of Visual Arts, 30 July 2024, p 18.

- 6.44** Indeed, during a site visit to the National Art School (NAS) in Darlinghurst, a student informed the committee that the TAFE NSW one-year Diploma of Visual Arts course, which previously cost approximately \$800, is now around \$10,000.<sup>520</sup>
- 6.45** The committee heard these type of fee increases could impact on a student's ability to engage in further creative arts education, not only at NAS, but also as at the National Institute of Dramatic Art (NIDA) and the Australian Film Television and Radio School (AFTRS).<sup>521</sup>
- 6.46** Stakeholders advocated for the government to reduce barriers to creative arts TAFE NSW courses. For example, Mr Joe Muller, Managing Director, MusicNSW, proposed that the NSW Government reduce the course fees in the VET sector.<sup>522</sup>
- 6.47** Likewise, NAVA called for urgent improvements in the quality and accessibility of visual arts education across all levels including that the policy change which enforced subsidies alignment with the NSW Smart & Skilled List be reversed.<sup>523</sup>
- 6.48** TAFE NSW advised that it was 'mindful' of affordability concerns.<sup>524</sup> However, Ms Janet Schorer PSM, Chief Delivery Officer, TAFE NSW, explained that the organisation has to charge fees once subsidies, such as Smart & Skilled, are unavailable:

In general terms for us at TAFE NSW, obviously fee-free and other subsidies that are provided by governments, State and Federal, enable us to provide that training at no or low fee. Once that subsidy is not available, we're in a position where we need to charge fees.<sup>525</sup>

- 6.49** Ms Schorer continued: "There is obviously help to be able to accrue a loan and pay that off to assist with the affordability, but it is the case that we do have a pricing schedule and a need to charge for those particular courses once they are no longer subsidised in either form by the Government".<sup>526</sup>
- 6.50** Additionally, TAFE NSW provided examples of TAFE NSW enrolments that have improved despite course costs, such as:
- between 2021 and 2023 TAFE NSW government-funded enrolments in the creative arts courses increased by 16 per cent to 10,500<sup>527</sup>
  - TAFE NSW saw a spike in government-funded enrolments in 2023 in the creative arts field associated with the government's fee-free program<sup>528</sup>

<sup>520</sup> Appendix 1, Site Visit Summary Report, p 133.

<sup>521</sup> Appendix 1, Site Visit Summary Report, p 133.

<sup>522</sup> Evidence, Mr Joe Muller, Managing Director, MusicNSW, 30 July 2024, p 29.

<sup>523</sup> Submission 53, National Association for the Visual Arts Ltd, p 3.

<sup>524</sup> Evidence, Ms Janet Schorer PSM, Chief Delivery Officer, TAFE NSW, 23 August 2024, p 49.

<sup>525</sup> Evidence, Ms Janet Schorer PSM, Chief Delivery Officer, TAFE NSW, 23 August 2024, p 49.

<sup>526</sup> Evidence, Ms Janet Schorer PSM, Chief Delivery Officer, TAFE NSW, 23 August 2024, p 49.

<sup>527</sup> Evidence, Ms Janet Schorer PSM, Chief Delivery Officer, TAFE NSW, 23 August 2024, p 48.

<sup>528</sup> Evidence, Ms Janet Schorer PSM, Chief Delivery Officer, TAFE NSW, 23 August 2024, p 48.

- while ceramics is a full-fee course the demand for the course is so strong that there are waiting lists.<sup>529</sup>

### **Access to other tertiary education and training facilities**

- 6.51** As outlined in Chapter 1, students may choose to cultivate their creative skills by undergoing further training at either:
- a national arts training organisation, such as the National Institute of Dramatic Art (NIDA) and the Australian Film Television and Radio School (AFTRS)
  - a national Performing Arts Partnership organisation, like Bell Shakespeare, Bangarra, MusicaViva and Sydney Dance Company
  - an independent tertiary education provider, such as NAS and the Australian institute of Music.
- 6.52** These institutions and others play a crucial role in the New South Wales arts and music ecosystem by supporting talent and providing pathways into professional careers in the industry.
- 6.53** In addition, these organisations can play a significant role in delivering creative arts programs in schools and supporting the professional development for teachers. These programs are discussed in Chapter 3.
- 6.54** There was discussion during the inquiry about opportunities and costs to study at these organisations, particularly NIDA and AFTRS.
- 6.55** In its submission, NIDA raised a number of concerns about its funding and fees, including:
- NIDA does not receive any ongoing funding from the NSW Government.
  - In the higher education space, NIDA does not receive funding for any Commonwealth supported places thus its students pay almost double the fees of students who attend the Victorian College of the Arts and Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts.
  - NIDA's VET offerings are exclusively funded by its 'very high' student fees.
  - NSW VET funding settings 'effectively lock NIDA out' of developing VET offering and charging lower fees.<sup>530</sup>
- 6.56** In the VET space, NIDA proposed that the NSW Government unlock opportunities for 'exemplary private providers such as NIDA to be considered for core operational and per-head support'.<sup>531</sup>
- 6.57** The committee heard that there is a growing need for hyperlocal content makers and skilled regional producers across the country, especially outside of capital cities in the radio and audio

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<sup>529</sup> Evidence, Dr Raffaele Marcellino, Executive Director, Education and Skills - Sydney, TAFE NSW, 23 August 2024, p 49.

<sup>530</sup> Submission 42, National Institute of Dramatic Art (NIDA), pp 3-4.

<sup>531</sup> Submission 42, National Institute of Dramatic Art (NIDA), p 4.

sector.<sup>532</sup> AFTRS reported that its Flexible Delivery Framework allows for the delivery of a modular version of AFTRS' Graduate Diploma in Radio and Podcasting (GDRP), where students can choose to participate in person or online and choose between one to four subjects per semester, allowing them to remain learning and working in their regional homes.<sup>533</sup>

- 6.58** Under this flexible training option, AFTRS students are also able to participate in placements at local regional radio stations to provide them with industry-based learning. AFTRS reported that their regional graduate employment is forecast to grow from 2024 onwards to meet this need for regional radio talent.<sup>534</sup>
- 6.59** AFTRS acknowledged this level of flexibility is critical to ensuring regional participation and inclusivity, however, it noted that it is challenging for smaller arts training organisations and the traditional conservatorium model of full-time learning.<sup>535</sup> To support this endeavour, AFTRS recommended the establishment of a New South Wales working group on flexible arts learning including micro-credits, badging and online learning for practical courses.<sup>536</sup>

## Student accommodation

- 6.60** Numerous inquiry participants raised the importance of having affordable accommodation for tertiary creative arts students. A key concern was that the lack of affordable student accommodation was a further barrier to students, particularly regional students, wanting to study tertiary arts and music courses. Moreover, the committee heard that not addressing cost of living pressures for these students will leave the creative community '... consisting increasingly of artists and creatives from wealthier backgrounds'.<sup>537</sup>
- 6.61** Inquiry participants reported that, in particular, the prohibitive cost of living is a critical barrier for those wanting to study at Sydney-based arts training organisations,<sup>538</sup> noting many are located in the Eastern and Central parts of the city. The committee received evidence that key arts training providers such as AFTRS, NIDA and NAS do not have student accommodation options like universities.<sup>539</sup>
- 6.62** The committee heard that students wanting to relocate to Sydney must independently find accommodation in a highly competitive market and faced with high cost of living and 'astronomical rent'.<sup>540</sup> For example, a student at AFTRS said that they paid \$750 a week for a one-bedroom through private student accommodation. Another AFTRS student told the

<sup>532</sup> Submission 93, Australian Film Television and Radio School, p 8.

<sup>533</sup> Submission 93, Australian Film Television and Radio School, p 8.

<sup>534</sup> Submission 93, Australian Film Television and Radio School, p 8.

<sup>535</sup> Submission 93, Australian Film Television and Radio School, p 8.

<sup>536</sup> Submission 93, Australian Film Television and Radio School, p 8.

<sup>537</sup> Submission 23, Museums and Galleries of NSW, p 4.

<sup>538</sup> Submission 93, Australian Film Television and Radio School, p 6; Submission 42, National Institute of Dramatic Art, p 8.

<sup>539</sup> Submission 93, Australian Film Television and Radio School, p 5; Submission 42, National Institute of Dramatic Art, p 8.

<sup>540</sup> Submission 93, Australian Film Television and Radio School, p 5; Submission 42, National Institute of Dramatic Art, p 8.

committee that they live at home with their parents because they could not afford other accommodation.<sup>541</sup>

- 6.63** Separately, a student at the Australian Institute of Music (AIM) that she had previously been commuting from Maitland to study at AIM due to the high cost of living in Sydney.<sup>542</sup>
- 6.64** It was suggested to the committee that accommodation for Sydney-based arts training organisations be subsidised to alleviate the pressures on these students.<sup>543</sup>

### Committee comment

- 6.65** The creative arts landscape in New South Wales is dynamic and multi-faceted. Throughout the inquiry it became clear the important and unique role arts, culture and creative industries play in New South Wales not only to economy, but to our society. Creative industries inspire and invigorate us, creating social cohesion and strengthening our sense of community.
- 6.66** We acknowledge the work of the NSW Government for recognising and investing in the importance of creative industries through the *Creative Communities* policy, which recognises the contribution of the creative industries and commits to a whole-of-government approach to advocate for, invest in, and enable the creative and cultural ecosystem across the state to realise its potential.
- 6.67** We received evidence of the significant role arts organisations, such as public galleries and museums, play in creating social and educational spaces for children and young people. We also heard that these arts organisations are vital in providing critical career pathways for artists as well as providing industry placements.
- 6.68** Another key aspect of the creative industry is the live arts and entertainment sector. This vibrant sector has experienced significant growth in the past years, however we heard that at the same time it is experiencing acute skills shortages.
- 6.69** The committee heard from stakeholders about the acute skills shortage that New South Wales is facing in the creative industry, particularly in areas such as crew, production and front-of-house roles. We acknowledge that the creative sector faced many challenges during the COVID pandemic period and that as a result, many skilled workers permanently left the industry. We acknowledge the resilience of the creative industry and while it is promising to hear that there has been a recent boom in the Australian screen and audio industries, we are concerned that there are insufficient skilled workers to cater to this significant growth. We are also concerned that many secondary school students are unaware of the opportunities available to them in these areas of skills shortage.
- 6.70** We also heard that many artists and musicians will have 'portfolio careers' due to the nature of the creative sector. We note that in addition to one's craft and practical experience, stakeholders highlighted the importance of business skills and financial management, to support creatives in the workforce.

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<sup>541</sup> Appendix 1, Site Visit Summary Report, p 131.

<sup>542</sup> Appendix 1, Site Visit Summary Report, p 131.

<sup>543</sup> Submission 93, Australian Film Television and Radio School, p 6.



- 6.71 In order for this state to be a vibrant creative hub, creative industries must be supported to grow and thrive. To strengthen industry pathways and training for the next generations of creative workers we urge the NSW Government to fund training opportunities for recent graduates and school experience placements in the creative industry, with a focus on building business and financial skills.
- 6.72 As such, we recommend that the NSW Government fund industry-based placements and traineeships including for school experience placements to help performing arts organisations address current skills shortages and build their future workforce.

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**Finding 8**

The creative arts landscape in New South Wales is dynamic and multi-faceted. Recent NSW Government initiatives, such as the *Creative Communities* policy, have been essential to invigorating this space. However, it is vital to address the acute skills shortage in the creative industry.

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**Recommendation 20**

That the NSW Government fund industry-based placements and traineeships including for school experience placements to help performing arts organisations address current skills shortages and build their future workforce.

- 6.73 The committee acknowledges that for arts and music to flourish it is essential that we not only support the current infrastructure and working artists, but also nurture the pipeline of future creatives, arts practitioners and audiences. This can be achieved by strengthening arts education in schools and providing equitable access to arts experiences for all young people.
- 6.74 It is clear that arts and music education and training is facing significant challenges across all levels of education in New South Wales. Evidence received during this inquiry demonstrated that pathways for tertiary arts and music education have diminished. Moreover, those courses that are available are often expensive or inaccessible.
- 6.75 We were shocked and occasionally, saddened, to hear of the barriers facing students who wish to pursue their passions and further their education and training in the arts and music. We were struck by the scope of cuts to university courses in the arts and music, particularly in the regions and the cost of courses at universities, training institutions and TAFE NSW.
- 6.76 We recognise that for many, there will be various and differing paths to studying and training in the creative arts space. It is however, of the utmost importance that whatever pathway an individual takes, it is of their own design and choosing, not because there was no other option available.

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**Finding 9**

Formal pathways for tertiary arts and music education and training in New South Wales are diminishing, making it harder and more expensive for students to pursue their passion for arts and music.

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- 6.77** In this context, we are concerned by the pervasive narrative that arts and music are less valuable, and the shift towards prioritising STEM courses at universities, leading to cuts to arts and music courses, declining enrolments and increase in student debt. The introduction of the Job-Ready Graduates package has greatly impacted students wanting to study in the arts and humanities, causing them to face serious financial challenges. We recommend that the NSW Government make representations to the Australian Government to address the cuts to university courses in the arts and music and increase HESC-HELP and FEE-HELP support for student studying courses in these areas.
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**Recommendation 21**

That the NSW Government make representations to the Australian Government to address the cuts to university courses in the arts and music and increase HESC-HELP and FEE-HELP support for students studying courses in these areas.

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- 6.78** The committee is further concerned that the introduction of the NSW Smart and Skilled List has contributed to significant fee increases for TAFE NSW courses. In particular, we were astonished to hear stories of students having to pay up to \$10,000 for a TAFE NSW course that previously cost \$800. Ultimately, these increases have further eroded the pathways to tertiary education in the creative arts sector. As such, we recommend that the NSW Government review the courses on the NSW Smart & Skilled List and reduce the course fees in the VET sector for courses in arts and music, including consideration of expanding access to courses with a focus on building business and financial skills relevant to a career in the creative industries.
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**Recommendation 22**

That the NSW Government review the courses on the NSW Smart & Skilled List and reduce the course fees in the Vocational Education and Training sector for courses in arts and music, including consideration of expanding access to courses with a focus on building business and financial skills relevant to a career in the creative industries.

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- 6.79** The committee also received significant evidence about the crucial role other tertiary institutions and training organisations, such as the National Art School (NAS), National Institute for Dramatic Arts (NIDA) and the Australian Film Television and Radio School (AFTRS), play in our cultural ecosystem.
- 6.80** In addition to supporting talent and providing pathways into professional careers in the industry, these organisations also assist in delivering creative arts programs and support the professional development of teachers in the creative subjects.
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- 6.81** The committee had the opportunity to visit a number of these great institutions and see firsthand the incredible work and passion of both staff and students.
- 6.82** The committee heard from these institutions that the nature of the higher education space means that they may not receive funding for any Commonwealth supported places so that students pay almost double the fees than students in other jurisdictions. We also received evidence that there are opportunities in the VET space for these institutions to receive support from the NSW Government. As such we urge the NSW Government to explore opportunities for exemplary private providers such as NAS, NIDA and AFTRS to be considered for core operational and per-head support, as part of a broader strategy towards lowering fees for students.

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**Recommendation 23**

That the NSW Government explore opportunities for exemplary private providers, such as the National Art School, National Institute of Dramatic Art and the Australian Film Television and Radio School, to be considered for core operational and per-head support, as part of a broader strategy towards lowering fees for students.

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- 6.83** We note that there is a growing need for hyperlocal content makers and skilled regional producers across the country, especially outside of capital cities in the radio and audio sector.
- 6.84** One great initiative we learned about to support the growth of skills in this area, was AFTRS' Flexible Delivery Framework. This allows for the delivery of a modular version of AFTRS' Graduate Diploma in Radio and Podcasting (GDRP), where students can choose to participate in person or online and choose between one to four subjects per semester, allowing them to remain learning and working in their regional homes.
- 6.85** Noting we heard that there are skills shortages in regional areas in the creative industry in general, we were pleased to hear of that such modes of study are available to ensure not only regional economic growth but also allow creatives to remain close to home and foster creative spaces locally. Every student in the state deserves this opportunity to learn flexibly while continuing to live and contribute to their local communities. To support this, we recommend that the NSW Government establish a working group of a diverse range of relevant stakeholders, including young people, on flexible arts learning including micro-credits, badging and online learning for practical courses.

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**Recommendation 24**

That the NSW Government establish a working group of a diverse range of relevant stakeholders, including young people, on flexible arts learning including micro-credits, badging and online learning for practical courses.

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- 6.86** The committee was shocked to hear about the challenges tertiary creative arts students face when trying to secure affordable accommodation. We received evidence that the lack of affordable student accommodation was a further barrier to students, particularly regional students, wanting to study tertiary arts and music courses.

- 6.87** We heard that for those wanting to study at Sydney-based arts training organisations, the prohibitive cost of living is a critical barrier as AFTRS, NIDA and NAS do not have student accommodation options like universities.
- 6.88** We were shocked by stories of students who are left to fend for themselves in a highly competitive market such as Sydney. It is unacceptable that affordable student accommodation is not available to those pursuing studies in creative arts at Sydney-based arts training organisations. A creative education should not be only available to those with the luck or fortune to live close by or have the means to pay. As such we recommend that the NSW Government consider opportunities to subsidise accommodation for Sydney-based arts training organisations to alleviate the pressures on these students.

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**Recommendation 25**

That the NSW Government consider opportunities to subsidise accommodation for Sydney-based arts training organisations to alleviate the pressures on these students.

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## Chapter 7 Enhancing access to creative arts

This chapter details access and inequality concerns regarding arts and music education raised during the inquiry. The chapter initially overviews the importance of ensuring all students can access quality creative arts education. It then explores key accessibility and equity issues including the disparity between public and private schools and the growing trend towards the user-pays model to fund creative arts programs in schools. The chapter then summarises evidence regarding regional access to arts and music, including the role of regional conservatoriums. The chapter concludes with discussion about arts and music in Western Sydney, the preservation of non-Western art forms and the importance of creative arts to First Nations students and artists.

### Access and inequality of arts and music education

**7.1** As discussed throughout the report, there was a clear consensus amongst inquiry participants that all children and young people in New South Wales deserve a high-quality creative arts education. Many inquiry participants highlighted that access to quality arts and music education is not a privilege, it is a right and should be afforded to all students:

- Access to quality music education is not a privilege, it is a right.<sup>544</sup>
- Schools are the most effective and equitable delivery mechanism to ensure that every student has access to a quality, ongoing and sequential arts education.<sup>545</sup>
- Access to quality music education from an early age is not only critical to a thriving music sector, it is a human right.<sup>546</sup>
- Access to quality music education for all NSW students should be the goal of the NSW Government.<sup>547</sup>

**7.2** Stakeholders observed that providing rich and fulfilling creative arts opportunities in school were increasingly important as private lessons, particularly music lessons, were often expensive and, consequently, out of reach of many people in the community.<sup>548</sup> For example, Music NSW commented:

Private instrument tuition is prohibitively expensive for many families and, in NSW, where classroom music is not offered at every school, this means that students who cannot afford to pay are shut out of these opportunities and future opportunities in music.<sup>549</sup>

**7.3** Inquiry participants expressed significant concern that access to arts and music education and training is inequitable across the state.<sup>550</sup> For example, Sydney Youth Orchestras described the

<sup>544</sup> Submission 9, Victorian Music Teachers' Association Inc, p 2.

<sup>545</sup> Submission 41, The Balnaves Foundation, p 3.

<sup>546</sup> Submission 28, Australian Youth Orchestra, p 4.

<sup>547</sup> Submission 36, Musica Viva Australia, p 6.

<sup>548</sup> Submission 36, Musica Viva Australia, p 6; Submission 49, Sydney Youth Orchestras, p 4.

<sup>549</sup> Submission 59, Music NSW, p 6.

<sup>550</sup> See for example, Submission 69, Kodály NSW, p 4; Submission 58, Australian Music Association, p 9.

delivery and approach to music education in New South Wales, as 'inconsistent, unstandardised, inequitable, and patchy'<sup>551</sup> and reaching a 'crisis' point'.<sup>552</sup>

- 7.4** The committee heard that the disparity in creative arts education and training was most evident between students at public and private schools and between residents who live in or outside of major cities.<sup>553</sup> Moreover, it was suggested that access issues are compounded by socio economic factors, availability of resources and the cost of living crisis.<sup>554</sup>
- 7.5** Inquiry participants identified a range of other access and equality concerns, such as a lack of a conservatorium in Western Sydney. There was also discussion about the need to better support the non-Western arts and music.
- 7.6** The committee also received evidence about the barriers to access, lack of inclusion and discrimination that people with disability face, across all levels of education and in both metropolitan and regional areas, by artists and audiences with disability.
- 7.7** Ms Elizabeth Martin from Accessible Arts, the peak arts and disability organisation in New South Wales, told the committee: 'While there has been a lot of progression over the last few years, including increased awareness within the broader community, there remain numerous barriers that people with disability face to accessing arts and culture as audience, artists, students or employees'.<sup>555</sup>
- 7.8** Accessible Arts in its submission highlighted this lack of access, saying:

At present there appears to be a lack of awareness across education institutions regarding:

1. The need to create accessible education programs for students with disability and how to practically provide ongoing support.
2. The need to provide content within arts and music education curriculums that includes knowledge building and practical implementation of accessibility features within creative works and programs such as Auslan, captioning, audio description, accessible costume and set-building design, etc.<sup>556</sup>

- 7.9** Finally, the committee received evidence about strengthening First Nations engagement in creative arts.

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<sup>551</sup> Submission 49, Sydney Youth Orchestras, p 2.

<sup>552</sup> Submission 49, Sydney Youth Orchestras, p 2.

<sup>553</sup> Submission 99, Professor Goetz Richter, p 3, Submission 69, Kodály NSW, p 2; Submission 47, Association of NSW Regional Conservatoriums, p 3.

<sup>554</sup> Submission 79, Heaps Decent, p 1; Submission 49, Sydney Youth Orchestras, p 1.

<sup>555</sup> Evidence, Ms Elizabeth Martin, Chief Executive Officer, Accessible Arts NSW, 23 August 2024, p 9.

<sup>556</sup> Submission 37, Accessible Arts, p 3.

## The disparity between public and private schools

**7.10** Inquiry participants told the committee that, in general, there is a disparity in the provision of creative arts education delivered at private, often Independent and Catholic, and public schools. This inequality was driven by a range of factors, including funding and resourcing and the cultural value placed on the creative arts by the school and its local community.

**7.11** The committee heard that the quality and availability of creative arts education varied widely between public and private schools. For example, the Association of NSW Regional Conservatoriums, stated that while arts and music education is 'thriving' in the private school system, in the public system it is now only accessible to those who are willing or able to pay.<sup>557</sup>

**7.12** This view was echoed by Kodály NSW, who in its submission stated that the current state of music education in primary schools is 'incredibly inequitable', noting the differences between private school where often a music specialist is employed compared to public schools:

Most private schools employ a Music specialist who has the capacity to deliver a rigorous and comprehensive Music learning experience for those students fortunate enough to have the means to attend such a school. By contrast, the majority of public schools in NSW have no such Music specialist and the responsibility for teaching Music falls to the classroom teacher.<sup>558</sup>

**7.13** Evidence from stakeholders suggested that, in large part, this situation is driven by resourcing, especially the availability of specialist music educators, music tutors and the cost instruments.<sup>559</sup>

**7.14** Stakeholders highlighted that the allocation of resources is highly inequitable across the school systems. This is reflected in evidence provided by the Australian Music Association, the industry body representing wholesalers, importers, manufacturers, retailers, and associated businesses for music products in Australia:

One retailer that deals extensively with school accounts reported that in a typical year, 20% of sales will be to public schools, 20% to Catholic systemic schools, and 60% to independent schools. This is in contrast with 63% of NSW students attending public schools, 21% attending Catholic schools, and 16% attending independent schools.<sup>560</sup>

**7.15** Sydney Catholic Schools has recently implemented the Amadeus program to address some of these concerns. The program is discussed in the case study below.

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<sup>557</sup> Submission 47, Association of NSW Regional Conservatoriums, p 3.

<sup>558</sup> Submission 69, Kodály NSW, p 3.

<sup>559</sup> Submission 89, Mr Nathan Hagarty, p 2; Submission 69, Kodály NSW, p 3.

<sup>560</sup> Submission 58, Australian Music Association, p 9.

**Case study – Sydney Catholic Schools and the Amadeus Music Education Program<sup>561</sup>**

Sydney Catholic Schools is in its third year of its large-scale initiative, the Amadeus Music Education Program, which employs a music specialist in every primary school and provides schools with classroom music instruments.

The Amadeus Music Education Program was conceived to address some of the barriers to participation in music education, including equity of access due to location and inconsistency of initial teacher education, particularly in primary schools. It ensures that all students can access a high-quality, consistently delivered music education, regardless of their location, cultural background or socio-economic status.

There are three components to the program:

1. A qualified specialist classroom music teacher in every primary school.
2. Students from Years 3 - 8 learn an orchestral instrument with an industry tutor in small group tuition once a week.
3. Students play in an ensemble weekly.

Each student in the program has an instrument to take home and practice and there is a very minimal/nominal hire fee.

Every year, 5,000 music students will graduate from the program and another 5,000 students will enter it. As a result, more musicians will be contributing to the arts, entertainment and education industries. Additionally, graduates who have benefited from their music literacy will carry their aptitude for abstract thinking and problem-solving into professions across all industries and sectors.

**7.16** Many inquiry participants supported initiatives to enhance the delivery of creative arts education in New South Wales public schools. In particular, opportunities to reduce the cost of instruments. For example, respondents to the inquiry's online questionnaire commented:

- 'Have good quality music education in all schools, not just private schools. Subsidise cost of music tuition and have an affordable instrumental rental or access program'
- 'Make funding opportunities equitable across the country, not city centric and not so competitive.'
- 'Subsidised learning opportunities'
- 'Funding schools to have and maintain musical instrument libraries that can be hired by families at low cost, Structured primary school based programs, Arts Unit opportunities extended to regional areas'
- 'More funding of instruments in primary school bands so parent's [sic] don't need to purchase them.'
- 'Greater access to instruments and online resources.'
- 'Make it more affordable, not just for the elite. More access to hire or borrow instruments'.<sup>562</sup>

<sup>561</sup> Submission 105, Sydney Catholic Schools, pp 4-5; Evidence, Mrs Jacinta Adamson, Supervisor, Amadeus Music Education Program, Sydney Catholic Schools, 23 August 2024, p 19.

<sup>562</sup> Inquiry into arts and music education and training in New South Wales – Online Questionnaire Report, p 7-8.



- 7.17** There was some discussion on the issue of space and storage at schools for instruments and arts resources. The committee heard of an instance where a P&C association fundraised for ten years for a performing arts demountable so that students did not have to leave school grounds to participate in dance and band programs.<sup>563</sup> The committee also heard stories of parents storing instruments in their own cars because there is no storage on site.<sup>564</sup>
- 7.18** Following on, stakeholders advocated for public school students, particularly those in Creative and Performing Arts (CAPA) high schools, to receive similar resources, infrastructure and performance opportunities as private school students. A respondent to the inquiry's online questionnaire remarked:
- "They [CAPA schools] need the funding that provides them with the same resources, infrastructure and opportunities that private schools do. This means rehearsal rooms, dance studios, teachers, guest artists, instruments and performing opportunities both nationally and internationally. Across the world students travel and experience the arts. In Australia it is only private schools that do that."<sup>565</sup>
- 7.19** Likewise, another online questionnaire respondent commented that high schools could deliver better outcomes for gifted students in the CAPA streams 'With proper funding for purpose-built classrooms and performance facilities. More funding for specialised equipment and specialised teachers trained to deliver the curriculum'.<sup>566</sup>
- 7.20** The committee heard that Bulli High School had taken an innovative approach funding and delivering creative arts education. This approach is explored in the case study below.

#### **Case study - Bulli High School<sup>567</sup>**

Bulli High School is a comprehensive, coeducational high school in the Northern Illawarra area which has approximately 1,092 students.

Bulli High School has an impressive Creative and Performing Arts (CAPA) education program, including:

- Arts and music teachers who are also creative arts practitioners.
- An in-demand Visual Arts program. In fact, almost 75 per cent of the Year 9 cohort is taking either Visual Arts, Visual Design or Photography.
- Bullseye Record - its own record label.
- The Bulli High School class of 2024 had four nominations for ArtExpress and one for Encore.

<sup>563</sup> Evidence, Ms Gemma Quinn, Chief Executive Officer, Federation of Parents and Citizens Associations of New South Wales, 23 August 2024, p 36.

<sup>564</sup> Evidence, Ms Gemma Quinn, Chief Executive Officer, Federation of Parents and Citizens Associations of New South Wales, 23 August 2024, p 36.

<sup>565</sup> Inquiry into arts and music education and training in New South Wales – Online Questionnaire Report, p 13.

<sup>566</sup> Inquiry into arts and music education and training in New South Wales – Online Questionnaire Report, p 13.

<sup>567</sup> Appendix 1, Site Visit Summary Report, pp 138-139.

The committee heard that the Bulli community recognises and appreciates creative arts, especially visual arts and music. As a result, Bulli High School has buy-in from parents and others to provide a comprehensive Creative Arts curriculum.

Based on this support, Bulli High School operates the successful Multiverse program that engages alumni and the community to provide funding and opportunities for students. For example:

- as part of the program, the school may reach out to former students who are now musicians or music producers to help produce a record of students' music.
- Multiverse features a number of other programs, including an Artist in Residence and Scientist in Residence.

As a public school, Bulli High School's innovative approach towards funding is based on leveraging the expertise and connections of alumni, parents and the local community to fundraise and build broader networks that support students' creative endeavours.

## User-pay model for activities in New South Wales public schools

**7.21** The committee heard concerns about the user-pay model used to fund certain creative arts programs in New South Wales public schools. Inquiry participants noted that the current system places a financial burden on parents and carers which is at odds with the expectation that the curriculum is delivered for free at public schools.<sup>568</sup>

**7.22** Evidence received during the inquiry noted that parents, through P&C associations, are often heavily engaged in funding extracurricular arts and music activities in public schools. For example, the committee received evidence that parents are running barbecues, canteens, band and dance programs, all with a view to make sure they provide a 'rich and healthy public education landscape' for their children.<sup>569</sup>

**7.23** Inquiry participants noted the 'enormous' amounts of fundraising P&C associations do, not just for creative arts but for other parts of the curriculum, including books and resources.<sup>570</sup> Ms Kelly Marks, Research/Industrial Officer, Australian Education Union, NSW Teachers Federation Branch, called this 'shameful' and argued that such resources should be provided by the government.<sup>571</sup>

**7.24** Similarly, Ms Gemma Quinn, Chief Executive Officer, Federation of Parents and Citizens Associations of New South Wales, told the committee that parents should no longer play the role of the NSW Department of Education by providing arts and music in public schools.<sup>572</sup>

<sup>568</sup> Submission 94, Australian Education Union - NSW Teachers Federation Branch, p 6.

<sup>569</sup> Evidence, Ms Gemma Quinn, Chief Executive Officer, Federation of Parents and Citizens Associations of New South Wales, 23 August 2024, p 32.

<sup>570</sup> Evidence, Ms Kelly Marks, Research/Industrial Officer, Australian Education Union, NSW Teachers Federation Branch, 23 August 2024, p 33; Evidence, Ms Gemma Quinn, Chief Executive Officer, Federation of Parents and Citizens Associations of New South Wales, 23 August 2024, p 33.

<sup>571</sup> Evidence, Ms Kelly Marks, Research/Industrial Officer, Australian Education Union, NSW Teachers Federation Branch, 23 August 2024, p 33.

<sup>572</sup> Evidence, Ms Gemma Quinn, Chief Executive Officer, Federation of Parents and Citizens Associations of New South Wales, 23 August 2024, p 32.

**7.25** Further, the committee heard that while the Arts Unit in the NSW Department of Education facilitated extra-curricular arts and music activities, these were generally paid for by parents, many of whom already have the means for private lessons. Helen Perris explained:

The Arts Unit ensembles, camps and workshops are generally paid for by the parents, and accessible by application or audition only. They are extension activities for the elite students, most of whom are already engaged in private music lessons. What opportunities are available to the children in New South Wales who do not have the means for private tuition?<sup>573</sup>

**7.26** Additionally, it was noted that non-school creative activities such as youth choirs or ensembles take 'a large weight off' the formal education system by providing high quality extra-curricular activities. However, these opportunities are only available to children whose parents can afford to pay extra for these activities, with other children having to miss out.<sup>574</sup>

**7.27** Due to reliance on parents paying, several inquiry participants argued that arts and music education was becoming 'elitist'.<sup>575</sup> Similarly, it was noted that every child has a right to access a high-quality arts education at school:

Maybe it's time to really rethink who has access. It shouldn't be, in my mind, an elite experience; it should be an expectation that every child has the right, as in the UNESCO declaration, to access a full range of high-quality arts experiences at school—by their teacher, who knows and loves and cares about them.<sup>576</sup>

**7.28** This view was further highlighted by the Australian Education Union - NSW Teachers Federation Branch who noted that whether a primary school student is receiving quality music education comes down to 'chance or fortune'.<sup>577</sup>

## Regional access to arts and music

**7.29** As outlined in previous chapters, there are many barriers to accessing arts and music education and training in New South Wales. Throughout the inquiry, the committee heard that these barriers are only further exacerbated in regional or remote areas.<sup>578</sup>

**7.30** A key issue raised by stakeholders was the limited access to arts and music teachers outside of major cities. Several noted that this challenge reflected the broader issue of teacher shortages facing the whole state. However, inquiry participants observed that it was even harder felt in regional and remote areas.<sup>579</sup>

<sup>573</sup> Submission 88, Helen Perris, p 3.

<sup>574</sup> Submission 2, Sydney Conservatorium of Music, pp 3-4.

<sup>575</sup> Submission 49, Sydney Youth Orchestras, p 1; Submission 13, Musical Futures International, p 12.

<sup>576</sup> Evidence, Dr Christine Hatton Director of Research, Drama Australia, 30 July 2024, p 25.

<sup>577</sup> Submission 94, Australian Education Union - NSW Teachers Federation Branch, p 6.

<sup>578</sup> Evidence, Mrs Debra Batley NSW Chair, Australian Society for Music Education, 30 July 2024, p 37; Submission 23, Museums and Galleries of NSW, p 4.

<sup>579</sup> Submission 48, Australian Society for Music Education - NSW Chapter, p 10.

- 7.31** For example, Ms Emily Albert, Executive Director, Alberts and Head of Music Education, remarked '... we can't even get teachers, let alone music teachers' when discussing the challenge of attracting and retaining trained teachers, especially specialist music teachers, to regional schools.<sup>580</sup>
- 7.32** This view was reflected by Mrs Debra Batley, NSW Chair, Australian Society for Music Education, who commented: 'As someone who lives in a regional area, music education in regional areas is hard to staff. A personal experience—I drove my daughter 210 kilometres a week for cello lessons for eight years...'.<sup>581</sup>
- 7.33** Inquiry participants noted that it was a similar situation for Visual Arts teachers. The committee heard that due to the significant shortage of Visual Arts teachers in primary and secondary schools, teachers are often required to teach outside their subject area. In some cases, Visual Arts classes are being collapsed altogether in regional areas.<sup>582</sup>
- 7.34** Separately, it was observed that it is expensive for pre-service teachers to complete placements in regional, rural and remote schools.<sup>583</sup>
- 7.35** The committee also heard about the critical role regional galleries and museums play in providing arts education. Inquiry participants noted that for many young people in regional areas, museums and galleries are their only access to experience cultural content.<sup>584</sup>
- 7.36** Inquiry participants suggested that increased funding and support could improve access to arts and music education in regional areas, such as:
- providing additional funding to schools in regional New South Wales<sup>585</sup>
  - increasing incentives and scholarships for pre-service music teachers to complete placements in regional/rural and remote schools, leading to permanent employment in non-metropolitan schools following graduation<sup>586</sup>
  - increasing support for regional galleries and museums.<sup>587</sup>

### **The role of regional conservatoriums in music education**

- 7.37** As outlined in Chapter 1, there are 17 regional conservatoriums in New South Wales which deliver music education to children and adults on a fee-paying basis.<sup>588</sup> The conservatoriums are

<sup>580</sup> Evidence, Ms Emily Albert Executive Director, Alberts and Head of Music Education: Right from the Start, 30 July 2024, p 37.

<sup>581</sup> Evidence, Mrs Debra Batley NSW Chair, Australian Society for Music Education, 30 July 2024, p 37.

<sup>582</sup> Submission 53, National Association for the Visual Arts Ltd, p 2.

<sup>583</sup> Submission 48, Australian Society for Music Education - NSW Chapter, p 10.

<sup>584</sup> Submission 23, Museums and Galleries of NSW, p 2; Submission 53, National Association for the Visual Arts Ltd, p 5.

<sup>585</sup> Submission 36, Musica Viva, p 1.

<sup>586</sup> Submission 48, Australian Society for Music Education - NSW Chapter, p 9.

<sup>587</sup> Submission 53, National Association for the Visual Arts Ltd, p 5; Submission 23, Museums and Galleries of NSW, p 3.

<sup>588</sup> Submission 92, NSW Government, pp 15-16.

independent, not-for-profit charitable organisations, working both within and outside the formal education system in regional areas.<sup>589</sup>

**7.38** The committee heard that regional conservatoriums provide an 'essential service' in supporting high quality music education in regional, rural and remote communities in New South Wales.<sup>590</sup> For many inquiry participants, regionals conservatoriums are seen as the main provider of instrumental music tuition, providing access to music that schools alone cannot provide.<sup>591</sup> Regional conservatoriums also provide ensemble direction and mentoring of classroom music teachers.<sup>592</sup>

**7.39** Stakeholders noted that regional conservatoriums are seen as critical components of the local community by promoting connectedness and wellbeing.<sup>593</sup>

**7.40** The committee heard that often regional conservatoriums 'light the spark' for students' interest in music and to foster their passions through further study. Indeed, Professor Matthew Hindson, Acting Dean & Head of School and Associate Dean Education, Sydney Conservatorium of Music, shared his experience as a young student at Wollongong Conservatorium of Music and the role it played in nurturing his love for music:

In fact, I had a very unhappy high school experience because music wasn't the done thing. But Wollongong Conservatorium saved me. I used to go there and have lessons, and do theory classes and orchestra and all that sort of stuff after school. I got my first composition lessons there. If it wasn't for Wollongong Conservatorium—I write music for orchestras and ballet companies all around the world. It's a big part of my job. I wouldn't be where I am today had it not been for that.<sup>594</sup>

**7.41** The committee heard that regional conservatoriums face multiple challenges in providing the above services, including:

- difficulty recruiting skilled music educators due to unattractive remuneration and shortage of qualified teachers
- limited funding
- poor or unsuitable infrastructure.<sup>595</sup>

**7.42** The committee had visited two regional conservatoriums, the Hume and Wollongong Conservatoriums of Music. The role of these regional conservatoriums, their benefits and challenges are discussed in the case studies below.

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<sup>589</sup> Submission 47, Association of NSW Regional Conservatoriums, p 4.

<sup>590</sup> Submission 47, Association of NSW Regional Conservatoriums, p 4; Submission 48, Australian Society for Music Education - NSW Chapter, p 11.

<sup>591</sup> Submission 48, Australian Society for Music Education - NSW Chapter, p 11.

<sup>592</sup> Submission 48, Australian Society for Music Education - NSW Chapter, p 11.

<sup>593</sup> Submission 48, Australian Society for Music Education - NSW Chapter, p 11.

<sup>594</sup> Evidence, Professor Matthew Hindson, Acting Dean & Head of School and Associate Dean Education, Sydney Conservatorium of Music, 30 July 2024, p 58.

<sup>595</sup> Submission 47, Association of NSW Regional Conservatoriums, pp7- 8; Submission 45, Wollongong Conservatorium of Music pp 5-6.

**Case study - Hume Conservatorium of Music<sup>596</sup>**

The Hume Conservatorium of Music, located in Goulburn is the 'centre' for music education in the Southern Highlands and Tablelands of New South Wales.

In July 2024, the conservatorium had almost 1,200 enrolments and its programs encompassed:

- onsite music theory and practical lessons
- music tuition at schools and early centres in the region
- individual and group lessons
- ensembles and performance opportunities.

In August 2024, the committee visited the Hume conservatorium. The committee met with staff, students and parents who shared their stories about the positive impact the conservatorium has had on them personally and the local community as a whole. Many students noted that their time at the conservatorium had helped improve their mental health and confidence, as well as foster a community of young creatives in the region.

The committee also heard about the challenges facing the conservatorium including significant funding concerns that impact its ability to hire full time staff and conduct building maintenance.

**Case study - Wollongong Conservatorium of Music<sup>597</sup>**

Wollongong Conservatorium of Music or 'WollCon' is one of the largest regional conservatoriums in New South Wales and celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> year in 2022.

As of July 2024, WollCon had approximately 1,299 active students and employed 89 staff. WollCon services a large geographic area, from Berry in the South to Coledale in the North, it also runs programs on the Far South Coast of NSW in Bega and Pambula.

WollCon delivers programs to a wide range of age groups and all abilities, including:

- early years music and music therapy
- individual tuition to group and ensemble activities
- music theory and composition classes
- community music and highly advanced flagship ensembles
- concerts, events and performances.

In addition to the above programs, WollCon delivers programs in approximately 25 local schools. WollCon also offers childcare to students with children so that they can continue their studies.

In November 2024, the committee met with staff and toured the facility. The committee was introduced to one student who was studying the drums at WollCon because their school did not offer drums lessons.

The committee also participated in some early music education activities by playing the drums along to songs composed by early childhood music teachers at WollCon. These songs form part of the 'Get

<sup>596</sup> Submission 54, Hume Conservatorium of Music, Site Visit Summary Report, Appendix One of this report of this report, pp 129. This case study is based on the content of the submission and the site visit report.

<sup>597</sup> Submission 45, Wollongong Conservatorium of Music; Site Visit Summary Report, Appendix One of this report of this report, pp 133-134. This case study is based on the content of the submission and the site visit report.

Them Young' project, an initiative to create accessible and free music resources to families by making the songs publicly available on YouTube.

- 7.43** As previously mentioned, many inquiry participants reported that funding is a 'huge challenge' for regional conservatoriums.<sup>598</sup> Regional Conservatoriums receive funding through a program called the Regional Conservatorium Grants Program (RCGP).<sup>599</sup> The remaining funding largely coming from private funding sources and individuals.<sup>600</sup> The committee heard that under the RCGP, regional conservatoriums receive approximately \$7 million across the 17 regional conservatoriums.<sup>601</sup>
- 7.44** Mr David Francis, CEO, Wollongong Conservatorium of Music and President of the Association of NSW Regional Conservatoriums (ANSWRC), explained that while the RCGP is NSW Treasury money, it was administered by the NSW Department of Education.<sup>602</sup>
- 7.45** Further, the NSW Department of Education advised that its role was to support regional conservatoriums through funding. However, the Department does not dictate how the conservatoriums use the money.<sup>603</sup>
- 7.46** Inquiry participants advocated for a stronger relationship between regional conservatoriums and the NSW Department of Education. Mr Francis commented:
- We would love to see the Department of Education advocating more strongly for our work internally. Their default appears to be, "We are the administrators of the grant," as opposed to, "You're an important part of our program and we're going to advocate for your work."<sup>604</sup>
- 7.47** A key issue raised regarding the RCGP was that the core funding has not been reviewed for over ten years.<sup>605</sup> The committee heard that the RCGP funding awarded to regional conservatoriums is less than 50 per cent of the sum invested by local communities in music education across New South Wales.<sup>606</sup>

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<sup>598</sup> See for example; Submission 17, Central Coast Conservatorium, p 3; Submission 47, Association of NSW Regional Conservatoriums, p 9; Submission 46, Riverina Conservatorium of Music, p 2; Wollongong Conservatorium of Music, p 9.

<sup>599</sup> Submission 47, Association of NSW Regional Conservatoriums, p 5.

<sup>600</sup> Submission 47, Association of NSW Regional Conservatoriums, p 3.

<sup>601</sup> Evidence, Mr David Francis, CEO of Wollongong Conservatorium of Music and President of the Association of NSW Regional Conservatoriums (ANSWRC), 30 July 2024, p 42.

<sup>602</sup> Evidence, Mr David Francis, CEO of Wollongong Conservatorium of Music and President of the Association of NSW Regional Conservatoriums (ANSWRC), 30 July 2024, p 42.

<sup>603</sup> Evidence, Dr Sylvia Corish Executive Director Student Support and Specialist Programs, NSW Department of Education, 23 August 2024, p 59.

<sup>604</sup> Evidence, Mr David Francis, CEO of Wollongong Conservatorium of Music and President of the Association of NSW Regional Conservatoriums (ANSWRC), 30 July 2024, p 43.

<sup>605</sup> Submission 47, Association of NSW Regional Conservatoriums, p 5; Submission 45, Wollongong Conservatorium of Music, p 9.

<sup>606</sup> Submission 47, Association of NSW Regional Conservatoriums, p 5.

- 7.48** Under the RCGP, regional conservatoriums are required to report against key performance measures (KPM) to the NSW Department of Education, reporting for example how many schools regional conservatoriums operate in and how many school children are being taught.<sup>607</sup>
- 7.49** The committee heard that these KPMs increase by 15 per cent each triennium. However, Mr Francis noted that funding has not similarly increased.<sup>608</sup> On this point, Wollongong Conservatorium raised concerns that the requirement for growth within the RCGP was not sustainable and should be removed, particularly if funding is not increased.<sup>609</sup>
- 7.50** According to Mr David Francis, the funding for regional conservatoriums 'has not quite kept track with CPI over the period since 2009 to present'.<sup>610</sup>
- 7.51** Further to this, the committee heard that 'unrealistic' growth targets within the RCGP sets recipients up for failure, as well as drive poor decision making.<sup>611</sup> On this point, Wollongong Conservatorium of Music expressed the view that the growth imperative within the RCGP arguably encourages volume at the expense of deep, good quality engagement with music and disregards regional nuances.<sup>612</sup>
- 7.52** Overall, inquiry participants called for more funding for regional conservatoriums. This was evident in responses in response to the online questionnaire which included the following remarks:
- 'Fund the regional Cons to provide teaching, concerts, shows, enrichment etc, so they can offer decent salaries to attract good staff!'
  - 'More funding for Regional Conservatoriums.'
  - 'Financially support Conservatoriums, offer programs and scholarships for regional students'
  - 'Provide funding to employ regional Conservatoriums to provide services for orchestras and band opportunities for regional schools'
  - 'More funding to regional conservatoriums to provide programs to public schools'.<sup>613</sup>
- 7.53** Inquiry participants identified that infrastructure was another significant challenge facing regional conservatoriums. Key concerns included:

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<sup>607</sup> Evidence, Mr David Francis, CEO of Wollongong Conservatorium of Music and President of the Association of NSW Regional Conservatoriums (ANSWRC), 30 July 2024, p 43.

<sup>608</sup> Evidence, Mr David Francis, CEO of Wollongong Conservatorium of Music and President of the Association of NSW Regional Conservatoriums (ANSWRC), 30 July 2024, p 43.

<sup>609</sup> Submission 45, Wollongong Conservatorium of Music, p 9.

<sup>610</sup> Evidence, Mr David Francis, CEO of Wollongong Conservatorium of Music and President of the Association of NSW Regional Conservatoriums (ANSWRC), 30 July 2024, p 43.

<sup>611</sup> Submission 45, Wollongong Conservatorium of Music, p 9.

<sup>612</sup> Submission 45, Wollongong Conservatorium of Music, p 9.

<sup>613</sup> Inquiry into arts and music education and training in New South Wales – Online Questionnaire Report pp 14-15.



- some buildings are old, not fit for purpose, are not accessible or require significant maintenance<sup>614</sup>
- certain conservatoriums do not have security of tenure in their facilities<sup>615</sup>
- certain conservatoriums are located in areas with poor digital connectivity and infrastructure.<sup>616</sup>

**7.54** There was also some discussion about the challenge for regional conservatoriums to recruit suitable qualified teachers due to a lack of supply.<sup>617</sup>

**7.55** The committee heard that conservatoriums had to compete with 'garage teachers' who charge a lower rate than conservatorium teachers but who may not be qualified and risk the student being taught incorrectly.<sup>618</sup>

**7.56** Furthermore, inquiry participants noted that recent increases to New South Wales teacher wages have raised expectations among freelance music educators which regional conservatoriums cannot match, further constraining the supply of teachers for conservatoriums.<sup>619</sup>

**7.57** In addition, the committee received evidence that funding cuts within the education means there is less money available for schools to engage the services of regional conservatoriums. The Association of Regional Conservatoriums was concerned that this would further limit access to music education in the classroom.<sup>620</sup>

**7.58** To address these issues, the Wollongong Conservatorium of Music suggested that it, along with other regional conservatoriums could be the musical equivalent of a 'teaching hospital'.<sup>621</sup> In its submission, the organisation proposed that regional conservatoriums could complement tertiary music education by having university students or cohorts of trainees undertake placements at their facilities.<sup>622</sup>

**7.59** Wollongong conservatorium said this model would greatly enhance the tertiary level music education and training while allowing the next generation of musicians and educators the opportunity to live and work in regional areas.<sup>623</sup>

<sup>614</sup> Submission 47, Association of NSW Regional Conservatoriums, p 9, Submission 101, Tamworth Regional Conservatorium of Music p 3.

<sup>615</sup> Submission 47, Association of NSW Regional Conservatoriums, p 9; Submission 45, Wollongong Conservatorium of Music, p 10; Submission 17, Central Coast Conservatorium, p 3.

<sup>616</sup> Submission 47, Association of NSW Regional Conservatoriums, p 9.

<sup>617</sup> Submission 17, Central Coast Conservatorium, p 3; Submission 101, Tamworth Regional Conservatorium of Music, p 3.

<sup>618</sup> Submission 17, Central Coast Conservatorium, p 3.

<sup>619</sup> Submission 47, Association of NSW Regional Conservatoriums, p 10; Submission 17, Central Coast Conservatorium, p 31.

<sup>620</sup> Submission 47, Association of NSW Regional Conservatoriums, p 9.

<sup>621</sup> Submission 45, Wollongong Conservatorium of Music, p 8.

<sup>622</sup> Submission 45, Wollongong Conservatorium of Music, p 8.

<sup>623</sup> Submission 45, Wollongong Conservatorium of Music, p 8.

- 7.60** More broadly, the Association of NSW Regional Conservatoriums observed that the current economic climate and cost of living crisis will put pressure on a family's ability to pay for music education, meaning that only those with considerable levels of disposable income will be able to access music education.<sup>624</sup>
- 7.61** Similarly, Mrs Debra Batley NSW Chair, Australian Society for Music Education commented: 'Music tuition is one of those things— when we're talking about conservatoriums, when there's a drought, that's what gets cut from the family budget. When there are hard times—and they're different issues in regional communities to city communities'.<sup>625</sup>

### **Western Sydney and non-Western forms of arts and music**

- 7.62** Further to the evidence on equitable access to arts and music education, there was some discussion about access in Western Sydney and state of the creative arts sector in the region.
- 7.63** Inquiry participants observed that Western Sydney's arts and creative industries education sector is a 'vibrant and crucial component' of the region's cultural landscape.<sup>626</sup> However, some noted that the sector in Western Sydney faces significant challenges due to limited resources and funding.<sup>627</sup>
- 7.64** Indeed, Ms Mia Patoulios, Chief Executive Officer, Sydney Youth Orchestras, noted that there has been a significant decrease in the number of children learning instruments in Western Sydney.<sup>628</sup>
- 7.65** The committee also heard that there is a gap in qualifications and skills in the creative arts sector in the region.<sup>629</sup> According to a 2023 study conducted by Western Sydney University, this deficiency is primarily attributed to the limited availability of performing and visual arts tertiary education courses and facilities.<sup>630</sup> Currently, Western Sydney is home to only three institutions offering tertiary education in creative arts, this is in contrast to the 17 institutions in Eastern Sydney.<sup>631</sup>
- 7.66** Mr Andrew Overton, Chairperson, Sacred Currents Inc, told the committee that the disparity in access between Western Sydney and Eastern Sydney has not changed very much in the past three decades:

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<sup>624</sup> Submission 47, Association of NSW Regional Conservatoriums, p 9.

<sup>625</sup> Evidence, Mrs Debra Batley NSW Chair, Australian Society for Music Education, 30 July 2024, p 38.

<sup>626</sup> Submission 52, Western Sydney Arts Alliance, p 1; Submission 20, Western Sydney Creative, Western Sydney University, p 3.

<sup>627</sup> Submission 52, Western Sydney Arts Alliance, p 3.

<sup>628</sup> Evidence, Ms Mia Patoulios, Chief Executive Officer, Sydney Youth Orchestras, 30 July 2024, p 48.

<sup>629</sup> Submission 20, Western Sydney Creative, Western Sydney University, p 5; Submission 52, Western Sydney Arts Alliance, p 3.

<sup>630</sup> Submission 20, Western Sydney Creative, Western Sydney University, p 5; Submission 52, Western Sydney Arts Alliance, p 3.

<sup>631</sup> Submission 20, Western Sydney Creative, Western Sydney University, p 5; Submission 52, Western Sydney Arts Alliance, p 3.

In 1987 I was an 18-year-old growing up in Parramatta. I had to travel to places like Paddington and Balmain for my formal arts education. If we fast-forward 37 years later, I think little has changed. That post-school education to improve skills and professional development still remains very limited.<sup>632</sup>

- 7.67** Stakeholders explained that this limited access to training and education in the creative arts, restricts students' opportunities to pursue formal training, resulting in lower skill levels and limited career opportunities in the region.<sup>633</sup>
- 7.68** Some inquiry participants expressed concern that this disparity 'undermines' Western Sydney's efforts to become a hub for growth and economic opportunity.<sup>634</sup>
- 7.69** The Western Sydney Arts Alliance and Western Sydney Creative, Western Sydney University, proposed a range of initiatives to address this perceived shortcoming, including:
- developing and implementing targeted funding programs that recognise the small to medium arts sector as substantial providers of visual and performing arts education in the region<sup>635</sup>
  - fostering partnerships with local arts organisations and schools and tertiary institutions<sup>636</sup>
  - implementing training programs to help build vibrant and skilled creative arts sector in Western Sydney<sup>637</sup>
  - funding arts residency programs in schools to nurture the next generation of creatives.<sup>638</sup>

### **Western Sydney music hubs and non-Western forms of arts and music**

- 7.70** The committee heard about the importance of enhancing the music ecosystem in Western Sydney, especially as a means of preserving non-western forms of arts and music.
- 7.71** The committee received evidence about the dearth of government-supported music education in certain areas of the state. In its submission, Sydney Youth Orchestra observed that there is little to no access to state supported instrumental music education for young people in Western Sydney, the Far West and the far south coast of New South Wales as they are not within areas serviced by regional conservatoriums.<sup>639</sup>

<sup>632</sup> Evidence, Mr Andrew Overton, Chairperson, Sacred Currents Inc, 30 October 2024, p 9.

<sup>633</sup> Submission 20, Western Sydney Creative, Western Sydney University, p 5; Submission 52, Western Sydney Arts Alliance, p 3.

<sup>634</sup> Submission 52, Western Sydney Arts Alliance, p 3; Submission 20, Western Sydney Creative, Western Sydney University, p 5.

<sup>635</sup> Submission 52, Western Sydney Arts Alliance, p 4; Submission 20, Western Sydney Creative, Western Sydney University, p 5.

<sup>636</sup> Submission 52, Western Sydney Arts Alliance, p 4.

<sup>637</sup> Submission 52, Western Sydney Arts Alliance, p 4.

<sup>638</sup> Submission 52, Western Sydney Arts Alliance, p 4; Submission 20, Western Sydney Creative, Western Sydney University, p 5.

<sup>639</sup> Submission 49, Sydney Youth Orchestra, pp 4-5.

**7.72** Following on, Ms Mia Patoulios, Chief Executive Officer, Sydney Youth Orchestras, commented that the lack of a centralised music space in Western Sydney leaves people in the area without an important resource:

I think we see the importance of the conservatoriums within those communities, and it feels that it is very lacking in Western Sydney to have a centralised place where parents can go, and they know that the teachers meet a minimum standard, that there is subsidised support for venue hire for teachers to operate within, and that there is an administrative support network and framework around that. To not have that in Western Sydney, with the largest population of young people, it dilutes, and people are really struggling to find where that is.<sup>640</sup>

**7.73** Likewise, many inquiry participants were supportive of expanding the regional conservatorium network or establishing a 'music hub' in Western Sydney to provide accessible music education to you people in the region.<sup>641</sup>

**7.74** According to Sydney Youth Orchestra, the music hub model would:

- centralise administration, skills and expertise
- allow for a standard set of base requirements of sequential training to be delivered to all children across the state, regardless of educational sector
- coordinate and manage music education across their region
- provide digital infrastructure, connecting every child with an instrumental teacher on any instrument
- offer specialist music classroom teaching
- provide employment pathways.<sup>642</sup>

**7.75** Another issue identified by inquiry participants was the need for more connected pathways and partnerships for those in the music sector in Western Sydney.<sup>643</sup> The committee heard that this is particularly important to reflect the cultural diversity of Western Sydney and create a 'Western Sydney Sound'.<sup>644</sup>

**7.76** The committee heard evidence that non-Western forms of music were not widely promoted in music education compared to western art traditions.<sup>645</sup>

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<sup>640</sup> Evidence, Ms Mia Patoulios, Chief Executive Officer, Sydney Youth Orchestras, 30 July 2024, p 50.

<sup>641</sup> Submission 49, Sydney Youth Orchestra, p 6; Evidence, Ms Mia Patoulios, Chief Executive Officer, Sydney Youth Orchestras, 30 July 2024, p 50; Submission 114, Cultural Arts Collective and Scared Currents Inc, p 3.

<sup>642</sup> Submission 49, Sydney Youth Orchestra, p 6.

<sup>643</sup> Submission 114, Cultural Arts Collective and Scared Currents Inc, p 3.

<sup>644</sup> Submission 114, Cultural Arts Collective and Scared Currents Inc, p 3.

<sup>645</sup> Submission 100, Dr Thomas Fienberg, p 13.

**7.77** Many inquiry participants were supportive of more culturally diverse music traditions being taught formally, both academically and in the community.<sup>646</sup> Ms Mia Patoulios, Chief Executive Officer, Sydney Youth Orchestras told the committee it is a disservice that non-western music is not currently taught in a structured and formal way as it prevents diverse musicians from having clear pathways into the music industry:

I think it's a real disservice that we don't actually have those traditions being taught in a formal sense too. I think that would strengthen the orchestral sector, particularly as an industry, if we actually had musicians that were coming through in a very structured way in those traditions as well. It isn't for want of performing those works but often it is hard to find players that, for example, can read notated music, which is part of that. How are you then able to play this work as an orchestra?<sup>647</sup>

**7.78** While stakeholders noted the beneficial model of conservatoriums, several argued that Western Sydney needed a culturally appropriate space.<sup>648</sup> Dr Thomas Fienberg, Acting Associate Dean Indigenous Strategy and Services and Lecturer in Music Education, Sydney Conservatorium of Music, argued that regional conservatoriums have been historically linked to Western Art traditions and that the very name 'Conservatorium' weakens the network's ability to support culturally diverse and popular music.<sup>649</sup> Further, Dr Fienberg noted that there are different ways of learning music that are relevant to different musical cultures, with not all systems operating under a 'master-apprentice model'.<sup>650</sup>

**7.79** It was noted in evidence that while music degrees are still heavily centred on a 'western-centric approach', there have been some improvements in enhancing cultural diversity in music education.<sup>651</sup> Dr Fienberg observed that the advent of contemporary music practice has made a difference, particularly with the introduction of more digital music components and options.<sup>652</sup>

**7.80** In this regard, Create NSW advised that Sound NSW is developing a contemporary music strategy for New South Wales. The 10-year strategy will involve programs for venues to increase contemporary music performance spaces with the aim to benefiting the breadth of the contemporary music sector, especially culturally and linguistically diverse organisations and artists.<sup>653</sup>

<sup>646</sup> Evidence, Ms Mia Patoulios, Chief Executive Officer, Sydney Youth Orchestras, 30 July 2024, p 52; Evidence, Dr Thomas Fienberg, Acting Associate Dean Indigenous Strategy and Services and Lecturer in Music Education, Sydney Conservatorium of Music, 23 August 2024, p 7.

<sup>647</sup> Evidence, Ms Mia Patoulios, Chief Executive Officer, Sydney Youth Orchestras, 30 July 2024, p 52.

<sup>648</sup> Evidence, Mr Richrd Petkovic, Artistic Director, Cultural Arts Collective, 30 October 2024, p 12; Submission 52, Western Sydney Arts Alliance, p 2.

<sup>649</sup> Submission 100, Dr Thomas Fienberg, p 13.

<sup>650</sup> Evidence, Dr Thomas Fienberg, Acting Associate Dean Indigenous Strategy and Services and Lecturer in Music Education, Sydney Conservatorium of Music, 23 August 2024, p 7.

<sup>651</sup> Evidence, Dr Thomas Fienberg, Acting Associate Dean Indigenous Strategy and Services and Lecturer in Music Education, Sydney Conservatorium of Music, 23 August 2024, p 6.

<sup>652</sup> Evidence, Dr Thomas Fienberg, Acting Associate Dean Indigenous Strategy and Services and Lecturer in Music Education, Sydney Conservatorium of Music, 23 August 2024, p 6.

<sup>653</sup> Evidence, Ms Annette Pitman Chief Executive Officer, Create NSW, 23 August 2024, p 45.

## Strengthening First Nations engagement and representation in the Arts

**7.81** The committee received evidence from Aboriginal inquiry participants about the significance of arts and music in First Nations culture and connection to Country.

**7.82** Professor Deborah Cheetham Fraillon AO FAHA, a Yorta Yorta/Yuin soprano, composer and educator, who gave evidence to the committee in her capacity as Elizabeth Todd Chair of Vocal Studies, Sydney Conservatorium of Music, explained the importance of music education to First Nations children as a way of transferring knowledge and creating a sense of connection and belonging. Cheetham Fraillon said:

I've come here today to impress upon all those here the importance of music education to every child, but in particular to First Nations children. It's only 230-odd years of change that we've witnessed since a time when art and music was practised on a daily basis as a way of transferring and holding onto knowledge. As we say in the Dhungala Children's Choir, one of the groups I lead, "A song is not just a song. It's way our way home. It's how we know we belong."<sup>654</sup>

**7.83** Similarly, Dr Candace Kruger, a Yugambeh Elder, Songwoman and Lecturer at Griffith University, told the committee: 'As a songwoman, I can speak about singing country alive. This is where we feel and are present in the places that we live and the communities that we live amongst'.<sup>655</sup>

**7.84** Bangarra Dance Theatre, Australia's longest standing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander major performing arts company, highlighted the important role the arts play in connecting First Nations people with Country and culture:

For First Nations peoples, the arts are an activation of the ancestral and contemporary worlds that exist alongside each other in a dynamic relationship that affirms identity, connection to Country and to communicating experiences through creative and cultural expressions. Grounded in 65,000 years of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, artistic expression asserts this country's First People's relationship to Place, spirituality, customs, lore, languages and histories.<sup>656</sup>

**7.85** Turning to arts and music education, a number of stakeholders advocated for a culturally responsive and inclusive approach to arts and music education that honour and integrates First Nations knowledges and practices.<sup>657</sup> In particular, the committee heard that First Nations music should be embedded within the New South Wales Curriculum and that doing so would strengthen the sense of belonging for First Nations people. Professor Cheetham Fraillon stated: 'I think that First Nations music being amongst the repertoire and embedded in the

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<sup>654</sup> Evidence, Professor Deborah Cheetham Fraillon AO FAHA, Elizabeth Todd Chair of Vocal Studies, Sydney Conservatorium of Music, 30 October 2024, p 2.

<sup>655</sup> Evidence, Dr Candace Kruger, Lecturer, Griffith University, Yugambeh Elder and Songwoman, 30 October 2024, p 2.

<sup>656</sup> Submission 19, Bangarra Dance Theatre, p 2.

<sup>657</sup> Submission 19, Bangarra Dance Theatre, p 2; Evidence, Dr Candace Kruger, Lecturer, Griffith University, Yugambeh Elder and Songwoman, 30 October 2024, p 2.

curriculum—allowing access to that for every child and every student will only serve to strengthen our sense of our own belonging in this nation<sup>658</sup>

**7.86** This view was shared by Dr Kruger who explained that the inclusion of cultural practice in the classroom helps build community and wellbeing:

I know the inclusion of cultural practice—for me this means within the arts or, more specific, the music classroom—is significant. It helps community and it helps students. It places value and understanding within the wider community for our future. Cultural practice also helps us with wellbeing, and this is inclusive of a song. We feel better when we know and understand and are able to voice our culture. To me, this means singing my culture alive.<sup>659</sup>

**7.87** Further, inquiry participants identified a number of ways arts and music education for Aboriginal students could be improved, as well as ways First Nations leaderships and representation in the arts sector could be strengthened.<sup>660</sup>

**7.88** Key proposals raised by inquiry participants include:

- increasing professional learning opportunities in early learning, primary and secondary levels to support teachers to effectively teach First Nations content within the Arts<sup>661</sup>
- enhancing support structures and expand education opportunities for qualification for Aboriginal artists to reskill in education and outreach<sup>662</sup>
- providing additional government funding and incentives to connect First Nations creative artists and local knowledge holders with music education in schools<sup>663</sup>
- investing in Aboriginal-led education and training programs for visual artists and craftspeople<sup>664</sup>
- investing in First Nations-led education, training, mentorship and skills development programs to support Aboriginal employment and representation in middle-tier jobs, leadership roles, boards, and Aboriginal advisory groups.<sup>665</sup>

<sup>658</sup> Evidence, Professor Deborah Cheetham Fraillon AO FAHA, Elizabeth Todd Chair of Vocal Studies, Sydney Conservatorium of Music, 30 October 2024, pp 5-6.

<sup>659</sup> Evidence, Dr Candace Kruger, Lecturer, Griffith University, Yugambeh Elder and Songwoman, 30 October 2024, p 2.

<sup>660</sup> Submission 53, National Association for the Visual Arts, p 3; Submission 59, Music NSW, pp 12-13; Submission 48 Australian Society for Music Education - NSW Chapter, pp 15-16; Submission 19, Bangarra Dance Theatre, pp 2-3.

<sup>661</sup> Submission 19, Bangarra Dance Theatre, pp 2-3.

<sup>662</sup> Submission 19, Bangarra Dance Theatre, pp 2-3.

<sup>663</sup> Submission 100, Dr Thomas Fienberg, pp 18-19; Submission 48 Australian Society for Music Education - NSW Chapter, p 16.

<sup>664</sup> Submission 53, National Association for the Visual Arts, p 3.

<sup>665</sup> Submission 53, National Association for the Visual Arts, p 3.

## Committee comment

- 7.89** As detailed in previous chapters, the committee received evidence from a number of witnesses that about the many barriers preventing equal access to arts and music education. Notably, we heard that while there is a clear consensus that all children and young people in New South Wales deserve a high-quality creative arts education, the reality is far from this.
- 7.90** The committee is particularly concerned regarding the evident disparity between public and private schools in the provision of arts and music education. We also heard that the availability of specialist music teachers and the cost of instruments, act as further barriers to quality music education in public schools.
- 7.91** We applaud the enormous effort and dedication of staff, parents, P&C associations and local communities to provide resources, time and funds towards improving access to arts and music education, particularly in public primary schools. However, this should not be the case. Parents should not have to play the role of the NSW Department of Education. Equally, a quality arts and music education should not be solely available to children whose parents can afford to pay for extra activities or private classes. No child should miss out on the benefits of a creative education. We believe our previous recommendations regarding opportunities to increase dedicated funded for organisations that deliver arts and music education and training.
- 7.92** Similarly, we are dismayed by the additional barriers facing regional communities' access to arts and music education which are further exacerbated by distance.

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### Finding 10

Economic, geographic, cultural and social barriers prevent equal access to a quality arts and music education for students as well as prospective teachers in New South Wales.

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- 7.93** The committee acknowledges and appreciates the role of regional conservatoriums in providing engagement in music education in regional communities. We were fortunate to visit the Hume Conservatorium of Music and the Wollongong Conservatorium of Music and experience the strong sense of community and commitment fostered at these vital institutions.
- 7.94** It is clear that regional conservatoriums fill a gap in the delivery of music education in regional communities, providing in some cases a lifeline to the local arts and music industries and schools. Noting the above evidence about unequal access to arts and music education in regional areas, these services are essential.
- 7.95** We saw firsthand that the benefits of regional conservatoriums go beyond solely music education, they foster connectedness, wellbeing in the community, nurture the next generation of musicians, and often are a social space for young people. It is regional conservatoriums that often 'light the spark' for students' interest in music and to foster their passions through further study.



**Finding 11**

Regional conservatoriums provide excellent music education and services and foster creativity and connectedness in regional communities in New South Wales.

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**7.96** However, we were concerned by the challenges facing regional conservatoriums, including significant issues regarding funding, challenges with infrastructure and facilities, and recruitment of specialist staff. We note that it is also incredibly difficult to recruit staff in regional areas especially due to a lack of supply and cost.

**7.97** There was an overwhelming call for an increase in funding to regional conservatoriums. We were surprised to learn that funding for regional conservatoriums under the Regional Conservatorium Grants Program (RCGP) has not been reviewed in over ten years. However, regional conservatoriums are required to report against key performance measures (KPM) to the NSW Department of Education, which increase each triennium. The committee acknowledges concerns that the requirement for growth within the RCGP are not sustainable and should be removed, particularly if funding is not increased. As such, we recommend that the NSW Government increase funding to regional conservatoriums and review key performance measures and service gaps, especially around engagement with schools, under the Regional Conservatorium Grants Program, to ensure sustainable future growth.

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**Recommendation 26**

That the NSW Government increase funding to regional conservatoriums and review key performance measures and service gaps, especially around engagement with schools, under the Regional Conservatorium Grants Program, to ensure sustainable future growth.

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**7.98** The committee notes that there are calls for a stronger partnership between regional conservatoriums and the NSW Department of Education. We also heard from regional conservatoriums about innovative ways to enhance the role of conservatoriums, such as the proposal that regional conservatoriums could be the musical equivalent of a 'teaching hospital'. To support the growth of music education and training, we recommend that the NSW Government formalise and strengthen the partnership between the NSW Department of Education and regional conservatoriums and establish innovative models to support and enhance the role of regional conservatoriums, including in conjunction with Create NSW and the NSW Department of Education.

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**Recommendation 27**

That the NSW Government formalise and strengthen the partnership between the NSW Department of Education and regional conservatoriums and establish innovative models to support and enhance the role of regional conservatoriums, including in conjunction with Create NSW and the NSW Department of Education.

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**7.99** Diversity in arts and music is central to the vibrancy of culture in New South Wales. Western Sydney is a rich example of this. In particular, its creative industries education sector is a crucial component of the region's cultural landscape.

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- 7.100** However, we heard that Western Sydney faces significant challenges due to limited resources and funding, as well as gaps in qualifications and skills in the creative arts sector in the region. We note community support for more targeted funding to help creative arts organisations deliver training programs that will invigorate and upskill this sector. Noting the potential and growth of Western Sydney as a cultural hub across the state, as well as internationally, it is imperative that industry support is increased in Western Sydney. As such, we recommend that the NSW Government implement targeted funding programs to small and medium arts and music organisations to deliver training and mentorship programs that will build a vibrant and skilled creative arts sector in Western Sydney.
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### **Recommendation 28**

That the NSW Government implement targeted funding programs to small and medium arts and music organisations to deliver training and mentorship programs that will build a vibrant and skilled creative arts sector in Western Sydney.

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- 7.101** The committee acknowledges the importance of enhancing the music ecosystem in Western Sydney, particularly as a means of preserving non-Western forms of creative arts. However, we note that there are very few government-supported instrumental music education in certain areas of the state, particularly Western Sydney. We also recognise that there is no centralised music space in the region, leaving residents without an important resource for music education and pathways for musicians.
- 7.102** The committee notes the potential of models, such as music hubs and expanding regional conservatoriums, to fill this gap in Western Sydney. It is particularly important that these institutions reflect the cultural diversity of the region and provide opportunities for non-western forms of music to be taught formally. Developing these institutions will support the diverse creativity of Western Sydney and enrich the lives of residents. As such, we recommend that the NSW Government explore opening a Music Hub in Western Sydney, based on the conservatorium model, to provide culturally diverse music education in the region.
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### **Recommendation 29**

That the NSW Government explore opening a Music Hub in Western Sydney, based on the conservatorium model, to provide culturally diverse music education in the region.

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- 7.103** We acknowledge and respect the significance of arts and music in First Nations culture and connection to Country. Equally, we thank the many First Nations people who generously shared their knowledge, expertise and voices with the committee about their experiences.
- 7.104** From their evidence, we recognise the need for a culturally responsive and inclusive approach to arts and music education that honours and integrates First Nations knowledges and practices. Further we heard that First Nations music should be better embedded within the New South Wales Curriculum and that doing so would strengthen the sense of belonging for First Nations people. To further support this goal, we note that stakeholders advocated for additional funding and incentives to connect First Nations creative artists and local knowledge holders with music education in schools. Accordingly, we recommend that the NSW Government to review ways in which First Nations music can be embedded in the New South Wales Curriculum and provide
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funding and incentives to schools to connect with First Nations creative artists to provide music education in schools.

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**Recommendation 30**

That the NSW Government review ways in which First Nations music can be embedded in the New South Wales Curriculum and provide funding and incentives to schools to connect with First Nations creative artists to provide music education in schools.

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## Appendix 1 Site visit summary report

During the course of the inquiry the committee conducted a number of site visits to discuss arts and music education and training with key stakeholders, including schools, tertiary education providers, conservatoriums and national training organisations.

### The Australian Film Television and Radio School (AFTRS)

On 29 July 2024, the committee visited the Australian Film Television and Radio School (AFTRS). AFTRS provides education, training and research to the screen arts and broadcast sector.<sup>666</sup> AFTRS trains over 3,000 individuals per year and offers a range of courses, including:

- four award courses; Bachelor of Arts: Screen Production, Graduate Diploma in Radio & Podcasting, Master of Arts: Screen and Master of Arts: Screen Business
- online and in-person short courses
- industry-partnered training
- co-designed First Nations and Outreach training.<sup>667</sup>

During the site visit, the committee met with:

- Dr Nell Greenwood, CEO
- Matt Ravier, Director Partnerships & Development
- Stephen Murphy, A/g Director, Teaching & Learning
- Sharon Zeeman, Director, People and Culture (via teleconference)
- Robbie Miles, Head of Industry & Alumni Engagement.

The committee also spoke to students and toured AFTRS premises, including the foley, sound and radio studios.

### *Key discussion topics*

During the site visit the committee discussed a range of issues with staff and students, including:

- The various pathways available for studying at AFTRS, particularly AFTRS partnership with TAFE NSW. For example, eligible graduates of TAFE's Diploma of Screen and Media can now be granted Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), providing direct entry into Year 2 of the AFTRS' Bachelor of Arts Screen: Production.<sup>668</sup>
- There were significant concerns about the availability of affordable housing and cost of living pressures in Sydney, particularly for students who relocate to the city to study. One student shared that they live at home with parents because they could not afford other accommodation. Another student said that they paid \$750 a week for a one-bedroom through private student accommodation. The committee heard that while scholarships are offered, these do not cover accommodation, which can often be a barrier to study.
- The committee heard that the post-COVID production boom in New South Wales has resulted in an industry-wide skills shortage. To address this, AFTRS provides industry partnered job

<sup>666</sup> Submission 93, Australian Film Television and Radio School, p 2.

<sup>667</sup> Submission 93, Australian Film Television and Radio School, p 2.

<sup>668</sup> Submission 93, Australian Film Television and Radio School, p 5.

training for students to make sure they are 'job ready'. AFTRS are trying to provide more scholarships to help students to undertake unpaid industry placements for class credit.

### **The National Institute of Dramatic Art (NIDA)**

On 29 July 2024, the committee visited National Institute of Dramatic Art (NIDA). NIDA is Australia's national dramatic arts training institution and offers 13 undergraduate, postgraduate and Vocational Education and Training (VET) courses.<sup>669</sup> NIDA offers the world's largest suite of dramatic arts-related short courses and has around 22,000 enrolments per year. Approximately 95 per cent of Higher Education (HE) graduates and 97 per cent of VET graduates secure employment within six months of course completion.<sup>670</sup>

During the site visit, the committee met with:

- Ms Liz Hughes, CEO of NIDA
- Travis Cardona, Head of First Nations and Outreach
- Christina Alvarez, Head of Special Projects
- David Berthold, Artistic Director in Residence
- Mark Gaal, Deputy Director, Learning & Innovation (VET).

The committee also met with students and toured NIDA's facilities including the costume studio, props and design making studios and theatres. Additionally, the committee observed Diploma of Musical Theatre students practising their tap dancing and musical theatre performances.

### ***Key discussion topics***

During the site visit the committee discussed a range of issues with staff and students, including:

- During the COVID-19 pandemic shutdowns the creative sector suffered which led to fewer industry-based learning opportunities for students. However, now the industry is facing a boom and there are skills and labour shortages, particularly in technical and production roles. Indeed, a 2nd Year student studying a Bachelor of Fine Arts, Technical Theatre and Stage Management noted that many final year students had already worked in theatres, live events and musicals and were in high-demand post-graduation.
- NIDA runs a three-day immersive program in partnership with the NSW Department of Education to upskill high school drama teachers with partial and full VET qualifications.<sup>671</sup> Program participants spoke highly of the program.
- Funding was needed to refurbish NIDA's main theatre and install LED in all of its theatres to be more sustainable.
- There was concern about the proposed redevelopment of a car park adjacent to NIDA that would impact NIDA's functions and access to the backstages of its theatres.
- The pipeline for students to pursue creative opportunities is broken, especially in regional areas, due to the decreasing number of youth theatre productions.
- The importance of creative opportunities for young people to build social cohesion, noting the increase of regional youth crime.
- The lack of affordable student accommodation options.

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<sup>669</sup> Submission 42, National Institute of Dramatic Art, p 1-2.

<sup>670</sup> Submission 42, National Institute of Dramatic Art, p 1-2.

<sup>671</sup> Submission 42, National Institute of Dramatic Art, p 6.

## The National Art School (NAS)

On 29 July 2024, the committee visited the National Art School (NAS). NAS is Australia's leading independent fine art school and offers a Bachelor, Masters and Doctor of Fine Art.<sup>672</sup>

During the site visits, the committee met with:

- Mr Steven Alderton, Director & CEO
- Susan Rothwell AM, Chair, NAS Board of Directors
- Simon Cooper, Deputy Director, Head of Studies
- Dr Chelsea Lehman, Lecturer, Drawing
- Dr Yolunda Hickman, Senior Lecturer, Postgraduate
- Akala Newman, NAS First Peoples Centre/Lecturer Contemporary Indigenous Art
- Dr Molly Duggins, Lecturer in Art History & Theory/Academic English Coordinator
- Dr Hany Armanious, Senior Lecturer, Sculpture.

The committee also met with students and toured the campus and facilities, including observing a live-drawing class and viewing students' individual studio spaces.

### *Key discussion topics*

During the site visit the committee discussed a range of issues with staff and students, including:

- The pathways available to individuals wishing to study at NAS. While approximately two-thirds of students applied to NAS immediately after the HSC, others undertook TAFE's one-year Diploma of Visual Arts first. A student noted that this TAFE course, which previously cost approximately \$800, is now \$10,000.
- NAS undertakes outreach to high schools through the HSC Intensive Studio Practice Program which helps prepare students for their final year of high school.
- There needs to be more value needed to be placed on visual arts in the New South Wales high school curriculum. Many students were dissuaded from taking art because it 'scaled badly' in the HSC.
- NAS has an outreach program run in partnership with Campbelltown Arts Centre where selected students from Western Sydney High Schools undertake a four-day intensive course with mid-career artists. Benefits of this program include students gaining experience and exposure to working as a professional artist, learning about studying opportunities and pathways and the importance of portfolio work.
- The high cost of art materials which are essential for students' craft. Often, students have to work outside of their art field to be able to afford art materials. A student said: 'We'll do anything as long as we can pay for our materials'.
- The lack of available student housing.

## The Australian Institute of Music (AIM)

On 29 July 2024, the committee visited the Australian Institute of Music (AIM). AIM is Australia's first and only creative institute entirely dedicated to music.

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<sup>672</sup> Submission 91, The National Art School, p 1.

The committee met with:

- Mr Julian Gough, Head of Educational Engagement and Learning Design
- Dr Gary Holgate, Head of Learning and Teaching
- Julian Gough, Head of Educational Engagement and Learning Design
- Alison Willard, Head of Student Experience and Success
- Bronte O'Neill, Lecturer and coordinator of Backstage Pass
- Felicity Robinson, Recruitment officer.

The committee met with a panel of students and toured AIM's facilities and was able to observe students mixing music in a studio and students practising a live performance.

### ***Key discussion topics***

During the site visit the committee discussed a range of issues with staff and students, including:

- Students' experiences of learning music in high school and their expectations after graduation. Some students shared that they had private music lessons growing up. Several others noted that they had good music teachers in school who ignited their interest in music.
- Certain students shared that they were discouraged from taking music in high school because it was considered a 'bludge subject' and that taking it would make it harder to get into university. This was in contrast to the experience of AIM students who attended a Creative and Performing Arts high school and said they felt empowered to continue music and make money through their art.
- There were concerns that music was not valued as highly in school as other activities. For example, one student described having a 'fully decked out gym' while 'all five guitars in the school were broken'.
- There was concern about the availability of student accommodation. A student shared that she had previously been commuting from Maitland to study at AIM.
- Students told the committee that while they were aware of the unpredictable nature of the music industry, they do not feel prepared for post-graduation.
- Students often face significant FEE-HELP debt following the completion of their course.
- AIM staff discussed potential career pathways for students, noting that approximately 88 per cent of students get an industry job after graduating but these jobs are 'not sustainable'.
- Often musicians have 'portfolio careers' rather than one job. When asked about the feasibility of graduates wanting to become music teachers, staff noted that many students want to become stars and that becoming a music teacher would not be satisfying.

### **Bowral High School**

On 22 August 2024, the committee visited Bowral High School, a comprehensive coeducational secondary school in the Southern Highlands. Approximately 680 students attend the school, including young people from low socio-economic backgrounds and other disadvantaged groups.

The committee met with:

- Ms Christine Roberts, R/Principal
- Mr David Verdejo, R/Deputy Principal
- Ms Polly Karakasch-Hawker, R/Head Teacher CAPA
- Chloe and Thomas, School Captains.



***Key discussion topics***

During the site visit the committee discussed a range of issues with staff and students, including:

- Bowral High School's Creative and Performing Arts (CAPA) education program. The school has five CAPA staff – two music teachers and three arts teachers – who provide mandatory units of Visual Arts and Music and elective units of Music, Visual Arts and Visual Design. The school has also partnered with the Hume Conservatorium of Music and Vocal Muster to offer students the opportunity to pay for private instrumental and voice lessons during school hours. Additionally, the school supports extracurricular activities such as lunchtime performances and school musicals to promote and engage students in the performing arts.
- The benefits to providing arts and music education and performance opportunities, such as:
  - improving students' academic performance, including increased NAPLAN results
  - increasing students' confidence
  - enhancing students' wellbeing, engagement with school and sense of community
  - supporting students to 'shine' outside of the classroom
  - fostering positive connections with the local community
  - attracting students who may have otherwise attended local private schools and thereby stabilising enrolment numbers.

**Hume Conservatorium of Music**

On 22 August 2024, the committee visited the Hume Conservatorium of Music in Goulburn. The conservatorium is a not-for-profit organisation and the 'centre' for music education in the Southern Highlands and Tablelands of New South Wales.<sup>673</sup> The committee met with Mr Robert Hunt, Chair of the Board of Directors, teachers, students, and parents.

In July 2024, the conservatorium had almost 1,200 enrolments, including students who attend music theory and practical lessons onsite and others who received tuition at schools and early centres in the region.<sup>674</sup> Students can attend individual and group lessons, with group lessons starting at around \$300 per term. Students also have an opportunity to take part in ensembles and are offered a range of performance opportunities.

***Key discussion topics***

During the site visit the committee discussed a range of issues with staff, parents and students, including:

- The positive impacts that the conservatorium has had on them personally and the community as a whole. Many stakeholders noted that their time at the conservatorium had helped improve their mental health and confidence. A number of parents also mentioned the importance of fostering community of young creatives in the region and how their children had found like-minded friends at the conservatorium.
- The conservatorium faces significant funding concerns that impact on its ability to hire full time staff and performing building maintenance. The need for increased funding for the conservatorium was raised.
- The lack of funding for music and arts programs in schools and early education centres has affected on the conservatorium's ability to provide services in the region.

<sup>673</sup> Submission 54, Hume Conservatorium, p 2.

<sup>674</sup> Submission 54, Hume Conservatorium, p 3.

### **Merrylands Public School**

On 2 September 2024, the committee visited Merrylands Public School, a comprehensive coeducational primary school in western Sydney that serves a highly diverse multicultural and multilingual community. Indeed, around 95 per cent of the approximately 584 pupils have English as an additional language/dialect. The school has five support classes – one for children with mild intellectual disability and two moderate disability classes, and two multi-categorical classes. Once a week a qualified music teacher from the Australian Children's Music Foundation (ACMF) spends 30 minutes with each of the five support classes. The committee met with Ms Bronwyn York, Principal of Merrylands Public School, and other staff members, and students of one of the multi-categorical classes who were scheduled to have their music lesson.

#### ***Key discussion topics***

During the site visit the committee discussed a range of issues with staff and students, including:

- During ACMF music lessons students play games, learn music theory, and practise practical music skills.
- Music lessons have many benefits for students, such as aiding their self-regulation, resilience and self-control. Additionally, music education and sensory experiences help students to feel more confident and to express their feelings and emotions through music.
- Students described the lessons as making them feel 'awesome', 'good', 'calm', 'beautiful', 'two thumbs up'.
- Primary school teachers often do not feel confident teaching music and the arts.
- Music and creative and performing arts education is often about finding the right teachers.

### **St Marys North Public School**

On 2 September 2024, the committee visited St Marys North Public School, a comprehensive coeducational primary school in Western Sydney. The school has around 350 students and maintains a strong commitment to advocating for its Aboriginal students and students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

Students in Years 1, 2 and 3 at St Marys North Primary School participate in the ACO Foundations Program. This research-based program has been pedagogically designed to improve students' cognitive, emotional and behavioural development. As part of the program, students in Years 1, 2 and 3 spend 15-20 minutes each day receiving explicit instruction in either violin or cello. Four days per week, classroom teachers use video resources provided by the ACO to guide students through their lessons. Once a week, strings experts teach in-person lessons.

The committee met with:

- Ms Lisa Parello, Principal of St Marys North Public School
- Ms Tara Smith, Director for Learning and Engagement at the Australian Chamber Orchestra (ACO)
- Mr Jason Miezis, Director, Educational Leadership at the NSW Department of Education.

***Key discussion topics***

During the site visit the committee discussed a range of issues with Ms Parello, Ms Smith and Mr Mieziš, including:

- There are significant benefits for students who participate in ACO Foundations Program lessons, such as:
  - improved self-regulation and focus
  - increased resilience and development of a growth mindset
  - an improvement in other education outcomes, including literacy and numeracy.
- The program provides a significant professional development opportunity for teachers.
- The ACO program as a 'game-changer' for students and the school and 'lights the spark' for students to pursue further music and arts educations.

**Sydney Conservatorium of Music**

On 18 November 2024, the committee visited the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, the 'nation's premier tertiary music institution'.<sup>675</sup> The conservatorium offers undergraduate and postgraduate courses in music, including a Bachelor of Music (Music Education).

The committee met with:

- Professor Anna Reid, Dean & Head of School
- Professor Matthew Hindson AM, Deputy Head of School & Deputy Dean (Education)
- Dr Jim Coyle, Lecturer in Music Education, Sydney Conservatorium of Music
- Ms Kirsty McCahon, Strategic Relations Manager
- Cianna Walker, Student
- Anna, Student
- Charlotte, Student.

***Key discussion topics***

During the site visit the committee discussed a range of issues with staff and student including:

- The conservatorium's commitment to conserving all types of music, including Aboriginal and non-Western music.
- The importance of specialist music teachers in rural and regional schools. These teachers 'light the spark' and encourage children and young people to study, perform and enjoy music. For example, a school in Lightning Ridge employed a specialist music teacher approximately six years ago and now offers Music 1, Music 2 and Music Extension.
- Students from diverse backgrounds attend the conservatorium.
- It is critical to support First Nations students and connect them to culture. For example, linking students to Aboriginal organisations, such as the Gadigal Centre.
- Students may audition on a particular instrument, such as guitar or voice. However, during their time at the conservatorium they discover a different passion and move into other areas, like music production.

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<sup>675</sup> The University of Sydney, Sydney Conservatorium of Music, <https://www.sydney.edu.au/music/about.html>.

- There were significant concerns with the draft music syllabuses that was released in October 2024. In particular, it was noted that proposed changes to Music 1 remove music composition from the syllabus, leaving this unit of study only in Music 2.
- The committee also heard about some of the challenges the Conservatorium faces in supporting students to become accredited music teachers, including the UAC requirements regarding HSC results.

### **TAFE NSW Eora (Darlington campus)**

On 18 November 2024, the committee visited TAFE NSW Eora in Darlington, a centre for excellence in Visual and Performing Arts and Aboriginal Studies. The school is supported by staff, Aboriginal Elders and the community and specialises in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and training. Eora's approximately 400-500 students are from First Nations and non-Aboriginal backgrounds. Students come from across Sydney and around the state to complete a variety of VET courses. In 2024, Eora was celebrating its 40 year anniversary.

The committee met with:

- Belinda Craig, Senior Manager Aboriginal Education and Engagement
- Jasmine Robertson, Director Media, Art, Design and Entertainment
- Richard Cass, Director SEN Media, Art, Design and Entertainment
- Leanne Foster, Head Teacher Aboriginal Cultural Arts and Music Eora College.

The committee visited various workspaces, including the pottery and ceramics studio and printmaking studio.

#### ***Key discussion topics***

During the site visit the committee discussed a range of issues with staff and students including:

- The various pathways for students who attend Eora. For example, students may go onto further study, commence a gig portfolio career, enter arts administration roles, or become arts teachers.
- Often, the college provides an opportunity for students to reconnect with the community.
- A point of difference for Eora is that a large number of staff are from Aboriginal backgrounds. Additionally, it is unique for students to study all mediums, including clay, ceramics and painting, in one space.
- Eora has a number of famous alumni, including Roy Kennedy, Henry Wedge and The Donovan Family.
- Eora holds annual exhibitions to showcase students' work. One of the exhibition spaces, Chico's Gallery, is named in honour of a former student.

### **Bulli High School**

On 18 November 2024, the committee visited Bulli High School, a comprehensive, coeducational high school in the Northern Illawarra, situated on Dharawal Country between the escarpment and the ocean, adjacent to Bulli Beach.<sup>676</sup> In 2023, the school had approximately 1,092 students; 45 of whom identified

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<sup>676</sup> Bulli High School, 2023 Annual Report, p 4.

as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and 115 who have a language background other than English. The school features a Support Unit which has four classes for students on the Autism spectrum.<sup>677</sup>

The committee met with:

- Ms Denise James, Principal
- Louise Manks, Head Teacher, Creative and Performing Arts Program
- David Strange, P&C President
- Nadia and Ike, School Captains

The committee visited the school facilities, including the art gallery.

### ***Key discussion topics***

During the site visit the committee discussed a range of issues with staff and students including:

- The Bulli community recognises and appreciates creative arts, especially visual arts and music. Consequently, Bulli High School has buy-in from parents and others to provide a comprehensive Creative Arts curriculum. The school also has high expectations for students, a focus on STEAM, and low teacher turnover, which all contribute to their impressive CAPA program.
- All of the school's arts and music teachers are creative arts practitioners. Additionally, the school is involved in Curriculum Networks Illawarra. This program supports teachers across the Illawarra to collaborate and support each other. It has been particularly successful for Visual Arts teachers.
- The Bulli High School class of 2024 had four nominations for ArtExpress and one for Encore.
- The school has an in-demand Visual Arts program. In fact, almost 75 per cent of the Year 9 cohort are taking either Visual Arts, Visual Design or Photography.
- There was some concern about Initial Teacher Education, particularly for Visual Arts teachers. The committee heard that often graduate or new teachers had little practical experience in the medium that they were teaching, leaving them dependent on YouTube to teach their craft. Consequently, more experienced teachers were giving up their time to tutor graduate and new teachers in these areas.
- There was concern about the lack of Visual Arts teachers. It was noted that previously there were 10 year waiting lists to become Visual Arts teachers, now schools are 'desperate' for these professionals. A contributing factor to this problem was the lack of suitable, relevant tertiary courses in visual arts education.
- Bulli High School operates the successful Multiverse program that engages alumni and the community to provide funding and opportunities for students. For example, as part of the program, the school may reach out to former students who are now musicians or music producers to help produce a record of students' music. Multiverse features a number of other programs, including an Artist in Residence and Scientist in Residence.
- Bulli High School also has its own record label, Bullseye Record.

### **Wollongong Conservatorium of Music**

On 18 November 2024, the committee visited Wollongong Conservatorium of Music, a large music conservatorium in the Illawarra district of New South Wales. In 2024, Wollongong Conservatorium employed 89 staff who delivered a variety of music programs to approximately 1,299 students. The

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<sup>677</sup> Bulli High School, 2023 Annual Report, p 4.

conservatorium also delivers programs in around 25 local schools and provides music theory and composition classes onsite. The conservatorium is an independent charitable organisation which generates about 77 per cent of its income. It also received a Treasury Grant via the NSW Department of Education which represented approximately 14 per cent of its turnover in FY 23.<sup>678</sup>

The committee met with:

- Nicky Sloan, Chair, Wollongong Conservatorium Board
- Terumi Narushima, Member, Wollongong Conservatorium Board & UOW Music Faculty
- Annette Brown, CEO, Wollongong Conservatorium
- Vicky Wallace, Head of Communications, Wollongong Conservatorium
- Sara Ryan, Executive Assistant, Wollongong Conservatorium
- Janet Andrews, HOD ChiME & Music Therapy, Wollongong Conservatorium
- Louise Luke, Interim Program Head In-Schools Program, Wollongong Conservatorium
- Jack Mao, Interim Program Head, Piano, Wollongong Conservatorium.

The committee visited the facilities, including performance spaces and classrooms.

### ***Key discussion topics***

During the site visit the committee discussed a range of issues with staff including:

- The important role that the conservatorium plays in providing a variety of programs to the community, such as the 'Chime' early education program and dementia music therapy. The conservatorium tries to keep the costs of its programs to a minimum to maximise course participation rates.
- The conservatorium provides a space and for ensemble practice and supports performance opportunities which help build community.
- The conservatorium hosts a wide variety of music lessons, including drums and piano, which are particularly popular with children and young people after school. The committee was introduced to a student who was taking drum lessons as their school does not offer this instrument.
- The conservatorium delivers music programs to approximately 2,000 students in schools across the region. For the most part, these in-class and band programs are delivered to Stage 1 classes, and some Stage 2 classes. The teachers are conductors and multi-instrumental teachers who can provide expert-level music education.

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<sup>678</sup> Submission 45, Wollongong Conservatorium, p 2.

## Appendix 2 Submissions

No.	Author	Attachments
1	Name suppressed	
2	Sydney Conservatorium of Music	
3	Maurie Stack	
4	Dr Anita Collins	5
5	National Advocates for Arts Education (NAAE)	
6	Fiamma Kitching	
7	NSW Advocate for Children and Young People	
8	Poetry in Action	1
9	Victorian Music Teachers' Association Inc	1
10	Ms Margaret Moore	
11	The Song Room	
12	NSW Department of Education	
13	Musical Futures International	
14	Sydney Theatre Company	
15	Australian Music Centre	5
16	Mr Christopher Aschman	
17	Central Coast Conservatorium of Music	
18	Moorambilla Voices	
19	Bangarra Dance Theatre	
20	Western Sydney Creative, Western Sydney University	
21	Dr James Humberstone	
21a	Dr James Humberstone	
22	Clarence Valley Conservatorium	1
23	Museums and Galleries of NSW	
24	Bell Shakespeare	
25	Australian School Band and Orchestra Festival	
26	Talent Development Project Inc	
27	Australian Society for Music Education (ASME)	
28	Australian Youth Orchestra	5
29	School Bands Australia	
30	School of Education, Western Sydney University	
31	Professor Jennifer Rowley	

<b>No.</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Attachments</b>
32	The Music Teachers' Association of NSW	
33	Creative Australia	
34	Mr John Garran	
35	Mrs Monique Fruewirth	
36	Musica Viva Australia	
37	The Association of Independent Schools of NSW	
38	Orange Regional Conservatorium	
39	Confidential	
40	Drama Australia and Drama NSW	
41	The Balnaves Foundation	2
42	National Institute of Dramatic Art	
43	Alberts (Music Education: Right from the Start)	3
43a	Alberts (Music Education: Right from the Start)	
44	Visual Arts and Design Educators Association NSW	
45	Wollongong Conservatorium of Music	
46	Riverina Conservatorium of Music	
47	Association of NSW Regional Conservatoriums	1
48	Australian Society for Music Education - NSW Chapter	
49	Sydney Youth Orchestras	
50	Music in Me, Australian Youth Orchestra	5
51	The Australian Children's Music Foundation	1
52	Western Sydney Arts Alliance	
53	National Association for the Visual Arts Ltd	
54	Hume Conservatorium of Music Ltd	
55	Live Performance Australia	
56	Louise Barkl	
57	Art Education Australia	
58	Australian Music Association	
59	Music NSW	
60	Australian Writers' Guild (AWG) and AWG Authorship Collecting Society	
61	School of Education, University of Wollongong	3
62	APRA AMCOS	
63	Coffs Harbour Regional Conservatorium	
64	Mr Richard Tognetti	



<b>No.</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Attachments</b>
65	Dr Jason Goopy	
66	Gunnedah Conservatorium	
67	Accessible Arts	
68	The CREATE Centre, University of Sydney	
69	Kodály NSW	
70	Sydney Eisteddfod	
71	Australian Chamber Orchestra	1
72	Federation of Parents and Citizens Associations of New South Wales	
73	Sydney Dance Company	
74	Northern Rivers Conservatorium	
75	Dance Educators Professional Teachers Association Incorporated	
76	Western Sydney Philharmonic	
77	Catholic Schools Parramatta Diocese	
78	New England Conservatorium of Music	
79	Heaps Decent	
80	Learning for Good	
81	Confidential	
82	Amplify Music Education	
83	Mr Thomas McCorquodale	
84	Gig Based Learning	
85	Campbelltown City Council	
86	Mr Andrew French-Northam	
87	Dr David Roy	
88	Helen Perris	
89	Mr Nathan Hagarty	
90	Monkey Baa	
91	The National Art School	
92	NSW Government	
93	Australian Film Television and Radio School	
94	Australian Education Union - NSW Teachers Federation Branch	
95	Isolated Children's Parents' Association of NSW Inc.	
96	Tanya Poyitt	
97	Association of Artist Managers	
98	Brenda Cumming	
99	Professor Goetz Richter	

<b>No.</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Attachments</b>
100	Dr Thomas Fienberg	3
100a	Dr Thomas Fienberg	3
101	Tamworth Regional Conservatorium of Music	
102	Professor Karen Maras	
103	Vocal Muster Academy	1
104	Name suppressed	
105	Sydney Catholic Schools	
106	Name suppressed	
107	Ms Diane Berger	
108	Name suppressed	
109	Short and Sweet and Turner Theatre	
110	Turner Theatre, Short and Sweet and Come You Spirits	
111	Come You Spirits, The Garden and Short and Sweet	
112	Pacific Opera, Turner Theatre and Short and Sweet	
113	Dr Sue Lane	
114	Cultural Arts Collective and Scared Currents Inc	1
115	Name suppressed	
116	Dr Rachel White	
117	Luke Chapman	
118	Caitlin Sandiford	
119	Dr Emily Wilson and Dr Brad Merrick	
120	Dr Paul Gardiner	
121	Alex Hone	
122	Micheal Anderson	
123	Confidential	
124	Confidential	
125	Drama NSW	

## Appendix 3 Witnesses at hearings

Date	Name	Position and Organisation
<b>Tuesday 30 July 2024</b> <b>Macquarie Room</b> <b>Parliament House, Sydney</b>	Dr Anita Collins	Music Educator, Director, Muse Consulting and Founder, Bigger Better Brains and LearnGauge
	Ms Louise Barkl	National Education Advisor, Music in Me
	Ms Bernadette Heard	National Manager, Music in Me
	Dr John Nicholas Saunders	Chair, National Advocates for Arts Education
	Dr Kathryn Coleman	President, Art Education Australia
	Ms Penelope Benton	Executive Director, National Association for the Visual Arts
	Ms Nicole DeLosa	Co-President Advocacy & Communications, Visual Arts and Design Educators Association (VADEA) NSW
	Ms Gemma Baldwin	Advocacy, State and National Issues, Visual Arts and Design Educators Association (VADEA) NSW
	Ms Amy Gill	Vice President, Drama New South Wales
	Dr Christine Hatton	Director of Research, Drama Australia
	Ms Diane Grant <i>(via videoconference)</i>	Member, Ausdance National
	Ms Lesley Graham <i>(via videoconference)</i>	Ausdance representative on National Advocates for Arts Education, Ausdance National
	Ms Evelyn Richardson <i>(via videoconference)</i>	Chief Executive, Live Performance Australia
Mr Joe Muller	Managing Director, MusicNSW	

<b>Date</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Position and Organisation</b>
	Mrs Debra Batley	NSW Chair, Australian Society for Music Education
	Dr Kirsten Macaulay	NSW Treasurer, Australian Society for Music Education
	Mr Max Holzner	Chair, Music Teachers' Association of NSW
	Mr Anthony van den Broek	Deputy Chair, Music Teachers' Association of NSW
	Ms Emily Albert	Executive Director, Alberts and Head of Music Education: Right from the Start
	Mr Eric Sidoti	Project Lead, Music Education: Right from the Start
	Mr David Francis	CEO of Wollongong Conservatorium of Music and President of the Association of NSW Regional Conservatoriums (ANSWRC)
	Mr Hamish Tait	CEO/Director of the Riverina Conservatorium of Music
	Dr Tracey Callinan	CEO, Regional Arts NSW
	Ms Mia Patoulios	Chief Executive Officer, Sydney Youth Orchestras
	Mr James Pensini	Head of Orchestral Training and Artistic Programming, Sydney Youth Orchestras
	Ms Frances Georgeson	General Manager, Australian Children's Music Foundation
	Mr Rory Alcock	National Partnerships Manager, Australian Children's Music Foundation
	Professor Matthew Hindson	Acting Dean & Head of School and Associate Dean Education, Sydney Conservatorium of Music

Date	Name	Position and Organisation
	Dr Jade O'Regan	Program Leader (Contemporary Music Practice) & Lecturer in Contemporary Music, Sydney Conservatorium of Music
	Mr Alex Masso	Executive Officer, Australian Music Association
	Ms Anne Loxley	Executive Director, Arts & Cultural Exchange
	Ms Leila el Rayes	Producer Youth Engagement, Arts & Cultural Exchange
	Mr Brett Adlington	CEO, Museums & Galleries of NSW
<b>Friday 23 August 2024</b> <b>Jubilee Room</b> <b>Parliament House, Sydney</b>	Dr James Humberstone FRSA	Senior Lecturer in Music Education, Sydney Conservatorium of Music, the University of Sydney
	Dr Thomas Fienberg	Acting Associate Dean Indigenous Strategy and Services and Lecturer in Music Education, Sydney Conservatorium of Music
	Mrs Michelle Leonard OAM <i>(via videoconference)</i>	Moorambilla Voices
	Ms Liz Martin	Accessible Arts NSW
	Ms Natalie Kradolfer	CEO and Co-Founder, Amplify Music Education
	Mr Ricky Kradolfer	Co-Founder & Head Educator, Amplify Music Education
	Ms Catriona Turnbull	Branch President, Kodály NSW
	Mr Joel Copeland	Kodály Australia member and Past National President Kodály Australia
	Mr Carlo Tuttocuore	Education Consultant: Teaching and Learning/School Improvement, The Association of Independent Schools of NSW

<b>Date</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Position and Organisation</b>
	Ms Kelly Borg	Associate Chief Executive: Teaching and Learning, The Association of Independent Schools of NSW
	Mrs Jacinta Adamson	Supervisor, Amadeus Music Education Program, Sydney Catholic Schools
	Ms Eva Spata	Supervisor Performing and Visual Arts Curriculum, Sydney Catholic Schools
	Mr Kevin Carragher	Director of Education and Research, Sydney Catholic Schools
	Miss Brenda Cumming	Music Coordinator K-12, Redeemer Baptist School
	Mr Thomas McCorquodale	Teacher - Music, Cronulla High School
	Ms Kelly Marks	Research/Industrial Officer, Australian Education Union - NSW Teachers Federation Branch
	Ms Gemma Quinn	Chief Executive Officer, Federation of Parents and Citizens Associations of NSW
	Mr Robert Hunt	Member Services Manager, Federation of Parents and Citizens Associations of NSW
	Ms Kim Paino	Chief Strategy and Engagement Officer, Universities Admissions Centre (UAC)
	Ms Annette Pitman	Chief Executive Officer, Create NSW
	Ms Janet Schorer PSM	Chief Delivery Officer, TAFE NSW
	Dr Raffaele Marcellino	Executive Director, Education and Skills - Sydney, TAFE NSW
	Dr Paul Cahill	Executive Director, Curriculum, NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA)

Date	Name	Position and Organisation
	Mr Martin Graham	Deputy Secretary Teaching Learning and Student Wellbeing, NSW Department of Education
	Dr Sylvia Corish	Executive Director Student Support and Specialist Programs, NSW Department of Education
<b>Wednesday 30 October 2024</b> <b>Jubilee Room</b> <b>Parliament House, Sydney</b>	Dr Candace Kruger <i>(via videoconference)</i>	Lecturer Griffith University, Yugambah Elder and Songwoman
	Professor Deborah Cheetham Fraillon AO FAHA	Elizabeth Todd Chair of Vocal Studies, Sydney Conservatorium of Music
	Mr Richard Petkovic	Artistic Director, Cultural Arts Collective
	Mr Andrew Overton	Chairperson, Sacred Currents Inc
<b>Monday 25 November 2024</b> <b>Jubilee Room</b> <b>Parliament House, Sydney</b>	Dr Christine Hatton	Director of Research, Drama NSW
	Ms Amy Gill	Vice President of Professional Learning, Drama NSW
	Mrs Debra Batley	Chair, Australian Society for Music Education (ASME) NSW
	Dr Thomas Fienberg	Vice Chair, Australian Society for Music Education (ASME) NSW
	Mr Owen Nelson	Member, Australian Society for Music Education (ASME) NSW
	Mr Paul Martin	CEO, NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA)
	Dr Paul Cahill	Executive Director, Curriculum, NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA)

## Appendix 4 Minutes

### Minutes no. 1

Thursday 13 June 2024

Joint Select Committee on Arts and Music Education and Training in New South Wales  
Room 1254, Parliament House, Sydney at 3.08 pm

#### 1. Members present

Ms Finn, *Chair*

Dr McGirr, *Deputy Chair* (via videoconference)

Mr Anderson (via videoconference)

Ms Boyd

Ms Butler (via videoconference)

Mr D'Adam (via videoconference)

Ms Hannan

Ms Suvaal (via teleconference)

#### 2. Apologies

Ms Munro

#### 3. Election of Chair and Deputy Chair

The Clerk called for nominations for the Chair.

Mr D'Adam moved: That Ms Finn be elected Chair of the committee.

There being no further nominations, the Clerk declared Ms Finn elected Chair.

Ms Finn took the Chair.

The Chair called for nominations for the Deputy Chair.

Ms Butler moved: That Dr McGirr be elected Deputy Chair of the committee.

There being no further nominations, the Chair declared Dr McGirr elected Deputy Chair.

#### 4. Consideration of terms of reference

The Chair tabled the terms of reference establishing the committee, which reads as follows:

1. That a joint select committee be established to inquire into and report on arts and music education and training in New South Wales, and in particular:
  - (a) the quality and effectiveness of arts and creative industries education, including:
    - (i) progress towards a long-term goal of quality arts and creative industries education
    - (ii) the present level and status of formal arts and creative industries education across all levels, including primary, secondary, and tertiary levels
    - (iii) robust and evidence-based arts and creative industries education in initial teacher education courses in the tertiary sector
    - (iv) the role of arts organisations and creative professionals in education and the development of creative skills across the arts
    - (v) the contribution of the national performing arts training organisations in New South Wales and the adequacy of the support they receive
    - (vi) the efficacy of the current primary and secondary school curriculum in delivering learning outcomes in arts and creative industry-related subjects



- (vii) the availability of support for teachers and principals in delivering quality arts education, and ensuring that an inclusive approach is taken towards resource allocation for regional schools across New South Wales
  - (viii) the most effective approach for the arts, culture, and creative industries to co-ordinate with the education system to support the development of creative skills
  - (ix) ways that students can learn entrepreneurial skills and gain industry experience to ensure they are job-ready
  - (x) measures of success in arts education
  - (xi) factors influencing student decisions to pursue further arts education, including but not limited to course choice, course location and the method of study
  - (xii) notable approaches to arts and creative industries education in other jurisdictions
- (b) the quality and effectiveness of music education and training, including:
- (i) progress towards a long-term goal of quality music education, including actions to address identified barriers
  - (ii) the present level and status of formal music education across all levels, including primary, secondary, and tertiary levels
  - (iii) robust and evidence-based music education in initial teacher education courses in the tertiary sector
  - (iv) the role of regional conservatoriums and creative professionals in music education
  - (v) the efficacy of the current primary and secondary school curriculum in delivering learning outcomes in music related subjects
  - (vi) the availability of support for teachers and principals in delivering quality music education and ensuring that an inclusive approach is taken towards resource allocation for regional schools across New South Wales
  - (vii) the most effective approach for the music and the creative industries to co-ordinate with the education system to support the development of creative skills
  - (viii) ways that students can learn entrepreneurial skills and gain industry experience to ensure they are job ready
  - (ix) measures of success in music education
  - (x) factors influencing student decisions to pursue further music education, including but not limited to course choice, course location and the method of study
  - (xi) notable approaches to music education in other jurisdictions, and
- (c) any other related matters.

2. That the committee report by 29 November 2024.

## 5. Briefing on the resolution establishing the committee and conduct of committee proceedings

The secretariat briefed committee members on the resolution establishing the committee and conduct of committee proceedings.

## 6. Conduct of committee proceedings

### 6.1 Media

The committee noted the Broadcast of Proceedings resolution (as amended by the Legislative Council on 19 October 2022), in particular the provisions relating to the filming, broadcasting, rebroadcasting and photography of committee proceedings, including:

- (4) That unless resolved otherwise by a committee, this House authorises:
- (a) the filming, broadcasting and photography of members and witnesses in committee proceedings:

- (i) by representatives of media organisations, including from around the committee meeting table,
  - (ii) by any member of the public, from the position of the audience, and
- (b) the rebroadcasting of committee proceedings on the Legislative Council and Parliament's social media channels.

## **7. Conduct of the inquiry into arts and music education and training in NSW**

### **7.1 Proposed timeline for the inquiry**

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Anderson: That the committee adopt the following timeline for the administration of the inquiry:

- Submissions close – Thursday 25 July 2024
- Hearings and site visits – July, August and September 2024
- Report deliberative and tabling – November 2024.

### **7.2 Stakeholder list**

Resolved, on the motion of Ms Boyd: That:

- the secretariat circulate to members the Chair's proposed list of stakeholders to be invited to make a submission
- members have two days from when the Chair's proposed list is circulated to make amendments or nominate additional stakeholders
- the committee agree to the stakeholder list by email, unless a meeting of the committee is required to resolve any disagreement.

### **7.3 Approach to submissions**

Resolved, on the motion of Mr D'Adam: That, to enable significant efficiencies for members and the secretariat while maintaining the integrity of how submissions are treated, in the event that 50 or more individual submissions are received, the committee may adopt the following approach to processing short submissions:

- All submissions from individuals 250 words or less in length will:
  - have an individual submission number, and be published with the author's name or as name suppressed, or kept confidential, according to the author's request
  - be reviewed by the secretariat for adverse mention and sensitive/identifying information, in accordance with practice
  - be channelled into one single document to be published on the inquiry website.
- All other submissions will be processed and published as normal.

### **7.4 Online questionnaire**

Resolved, on the motion of Dr McGirr: That the committee use an online questionnaire to capture individuals' views, and that the draft questions be circulated to the committee for comment, with a meeting on request from any committee member if there is disagreement on the questions.

Resolved, on the motion of Dr McGirr: That:

- the committee not accept proformas
- the media release announcing the establishment of the inquiry and emails to stakeholders note that there will be an online questionnaire to capture individuals' views
- that the following wording be included on the committee's website:
  - **Submissions**

Individuals are invited to submit their comments on the terms of reference [here](#) [hyperlink to online questionnaire]. This is a new way for individuals to participate in inquiries and it means we will no longer accept proformas.

Resolved, on the motion of Mr D'Adam: That the secretariat prepare a summary report of responses to the online questionnaire for publication on the website and use in the report, and that:

- the committee agree to publication of the report via email, unless a member raises any concerns individual responses be kept confidential on tabling.

**8. Other business**

Resolved, on the motion of Dr McGirr: That the next meeting of the committee be when the committee conducts a site visit to the Coffs Harbour Regional Conservatorium.

**9. Adjournment**

The committee adjourned at 3.29 pm, *sine die*.

Holly Rivas  
**Committee Clerk**

**Minutes no. 2**

Monday 29 July 2024

Joint Select Committee on Arts and Music Education and Training in NSW  
Guard House, Parliament House, Macquarie Street, Sydney, 9.21 am

**1. Members present**

Ms Finn, *Chair*  
Dr McGirr, *Deputy Chair*  
Mr Anderson  
Mr D'Adam

**2. Apologies**

Ms Boyd  
Ms Butler  
Mrs Hannan  
Ms Suvaal  
Ms Munro

**3. Draft minutes**

Resolved, on the motion of Mr D'Adam: That draft minutes no. 1 be confirmed.

**4. Correspondence**

The committee noted the following items of correspondence:

***Received***

- 17 July 2024 – Email from Dr James Humberstone, Senior Lecturer, Sydney Conservatorium of Music, to secretariat declining witness invitation for the hearing on 30 July 2024 and offering to appear at a future hearing
- 17 July 2024 – Email Mr Ashley Curry, Director of Waterloo Studios, Sydney Film School, declining the committee's offer to visit Sydney Film School for a site visit on 29 July 2024
- 18 July 2024 – Email from Ms Liz Martin, CEO, Accessible Arts NSW, to the secretariat declining an invitation to appear at the hearing on 30 July 2024 and offering to appear at a future hearing
- 19 July 2024 – Email from Ms Venita Poblocki, Secretary and Director of Aboriginal Art Association of Australia, to the secretariat declining an invitation to appear at the hearing on 30 July 2024

- 20 July 2024 – Email from Ms Louise Barkl, National Education Advisor, Music in Me to the secretariat requesting that Mr Bernie Heard, National Manager of Music in Me also appear as a witness on 30 July 2024.

***Sent:***

- 19 June 2024 – Email from Ms Julia Finn MP, Chair, to stakeholders inviting them to make a submission to the arts and music inquiry
- 21 June 2024 – Email from Ms Julia Finn MP, Chair, to stakeholders inviting them to make a submission to the arts and music inquiry
- 22 July 2024 – Letter from Ms Julia Finn MP, Chair, to Mr Alex Greenwich, Member for Sydney, advising that the committee will be conducting a site visit in his electorate
- 22 July 2024 – Letter from Ms Julia Finn MP, Chair, to Mr Ron Hoenig, Member for Heffron, advising that the committee will be conducting a site visit in his electorate.

## 5. Declarations

Dr McGirr declared that his daughter is a graduate of the Australian Film Television and Radio School.

## 6. Site visit to various locations in Sydney

### 6.1 The Australian Film Television and Radio School (AFTRS)

The committee toured AFTRS and was met by:

- Dr Nell Greenwood, CEO
- Matt Ravier, Director Partnerships & Development
- Stephen Murphy, A/g Director Teaching & Learning
- Sharon Zeeman, Director People and Culture (via teleconference)
- Robbie Miles, Head of Industry & Alumni Engagement
- Natalie Pozdeev, Convenor (Graduate Diploma, Radio & Podcasting)
- Simeon Bryan, Discipline Lead BA (Cinematography)
- Max Reidy, Bachelor of Arts Screen: Production, Year 1
- Jude Rowlands, Bachelor of Arts Screen: Production, Year 3
- Misty Fisher, Graduate Diploma in Radio and Podcasting, Graduate Diploma in Radio and Podcasting (via teleconference)
- Catherine van der Rijt, Master of Arts Screen, Year 2.

### 6.2 National Institute of Dramatic Art (NIDA)

The committee toured NIDA and was met by:

- Ms Liz Hughes, CEO of NIDA
- Travis Cardona, Head of First Nations and Outreach
- Christina Alvarez, Head of Special Projects
- David Berthold, Artistic Director in Residence
- Mark Gaal, Deputy Director, Learning & Innovation (VET)
- Imahn Pholi, Bachelor of Fine Arts, Costume 2nd Year
- Alex Mills, Bachelor of Fine Arts, Props 3rd Year
- Caleb Jackson, Bachelor of Fine Arts, Props 3rd Year
- Taylah Crouch, Bachelor of Fine Arts, Technical Theatre and Stage Management 2nd Year.

### 6.3 National Art School (NAS)

The committee toured NAS and was met by:

- Mr Steven Alderton, Director & CEO, NAS
- Susan Rothwell AM, Chair, NAS Board of Directors
- Simon Cooper, Deputy Director, Head of Studies

- Dr Chelsea Lehman, Lecturer, Drawing
- Dr Yolunda Hickman, Senior Lecturer, Postgraduate
- Akala Newman, NAS First Peoples Centre / Lecturer Contemporary Indigenous Art
- Dr Molly Duggins, Lecturer in Art History & Theory / Academic English Coordinator
- Dr Hany Armanious, Senior Lecturer, Sculpture
- Finn Jennings, Bachelor of Fine Art (1st Year), Student Representative Council member
- Moon Kerr, Bachelor of Fine Art (2nd Year), Student Representative Council member
- Lynn Godfree, Bachelor of Fine Art (3rd Year), Student Representative Council member
- Isabella Kennedy, Master of Fine Art (1st Year).

#### **6.4 The Australian Institute of Music (AIM)**

The committee toured AIM and was met by:

- Mr Julian Gough, Head of Educational Engagement and Learning Design
- Dr Gary Holgate, Head of Learning and Teaching
- Julian Gough, Head of Educational Engagement and Learning Design
- Alison Willard, Head of Student Experience and Success
- Bronte O'Neill, Lecturer and coordinator of Backstage Pass
- Felicity Robinson, Recruitment officer
- Lucy Watson, Undergraduate student studying a Bachelor of Music Composition.
- Chloe McWilliam, Undergraduate student studying a Bachelor of Music Theatre
- Gina Lawrence, Undergraduate student studying a Diploma of Music
- Celeste Anchique, Undergraduate student studying a Bachelor of Music Theatre
- Avi Knoll, Undergraduate student studying a Bachelor of Music Composition
- Annelise Waratah, Undergraduate student studying a Bachelor of Music Performance.

#### **7. Other business**

Resolved, on the motion of Mr D'Adam: That the secretariat contact submission author no. 42 regarding the publication status of their submission.

#### **8. Adjournment**

The committee adjourned at 3.54 pm until Tuesday 30 July 2024, 9.15 am, Macquarie Room, Parliament House – Public hearing for inquiry into arts and music education and training in NSW.

Holly Rivas

**Committee Clerk**

#### **Minutes no. 3**

Tuesday 30 July 2024

Joint Select Committee on Arts and Music Education and Training in NSW

Macquarie Room, Parliament House, 9.16 am

#### **1. Members present**

Ms Finn, *Chair*

Dr McGirr, *Deputy Chair*

Mr Anderson

Ms Boyd (until 4.20 pm)

Ms Butler

Mr D'Adam (until 4.27 pm)

Mrs Hannan (until 11.38 am)

Ms Munro

## 2. Apologies

Ms Suvaal

## 3. Correspondence

The committee noted the following items of correspondence:

### *Received*

- 23 July 2024 – Email from Ms Joanna Erskine, Head of Education, Bell Shakespeare, to the secretariat advising that she is willing to appear as a witness at a hearing and inviting the committee to attend the Bell Shakespeare National Teacher Conference and in-school performance program
- 23 July 2024 - Email from Ms Margie Moore OAM, Arts and Education Consultant, to the secretariat advising that she is willing to give evidence at a hearing and that her submission can be published in full
- 24 July 2024 - Email from Mr Eric Sidoti, Project Lead for Music Education: Right from the Start, to the secretariat, advising he is a registered lobbyist, ahead of appearing as a witness at the hearing on 30 July
- 25 July 2024 - Email from Mr Tony Berg, Director, Gresham Partners Limited, to the committee regarding Musica Viva Australia and the Music Education: Right from the Start initiative
- 25 July 2024 - Email from Mr George Brenan, Chief Executive, Hume Conservatorium, to the secretariat, advising that the Hume Conservatorium would be interested in giving evidence to the committee
- 29 July 2024 - Email from Mr Martin Davison, Founder and Director, Schools Bands Australia, to the secretariat, advising that he would be willing to appear as a witness before the committee.

## 4. Submissions

### 4.1 Public submissions

Committee noted that submissions were published by the committee clerk under the authorisation of the resolution appointing the committee: submission nos. 2-25, 27-38, 40, 41, 43-58.

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Anderson: That the committee authorise the publication of submission no. 59.

### 4.2 Partially confidential submissions

Committee noted that following submissions were partially published by the committee clerk under the authorisation of the resolution appointing the committee: submission no. 1.

Resolved, on the motion of Dr McGirr: That the committee keep the following information confidential, as per the request of the author: name in submission no. 1.

### 4.3 Confidential submissions

Committee noted that the following submissions should be considered for confidentiality: nos 26, 39 and 42.

Resolved, on the motion of Mr D'Adam: That the committee keep submission nos. 26, 39 and 42 confidential, as per the request of the author: 26, 39 and 42.

### 4.4 Attachments to submissions

Resolved, on the motion of Ms Munro: That the committee authorise the publication of attachments to submission no. 4.

### 4.5 Extension requests

Committee noted that the following stakeholders have requested an extension to provide a submission to the inquiry:

- Australian Writers Guild
- Accessible Arts

- National Art School
- Association of Artist Managers (AAM) Australia
- Music NSW
- Australian Film Television and Radio School
- NSW Teachers Federation
- The Department of Creative Industries, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport
- Tanya Poyitt
- Mark Scleary
- Edith Cowan University
- Coffs Harbour Regional Conservatorium
- Brenda Cumming
- Kodaly
- Mary Scicchitano

## 5. **Declarations**

Mrs Hannan declared that a relative works for Alberts.

Ms Finn declared that 20 years ago when she was a Parramatta Councillor, the council had a partnership with Arts & Culture Exchange and was on the board for about three years.

## 6. **Public hearing**

### 6.1 **Sequence of questioning**

Resolved, on the motion of Dr McGirr: That the allocation of questions to be asked at the hearing be left in the hands of the Chair.

Witnesses, the public and the media were admitted.

The following witnesses were sworn and examined:

- Dr Anita Collins, Music Educator, Director, Muse Consulting and Founder, Bigger Better Brains and LearnGauge
- Ms Louise Barkl, National Education Advisor, Music in Me
- Ms Bernadette Heard, National Manager, Music in Me.

The evidence concluded and the witnesses withdrew.

The following witnesses were sworn and examined:

- Dr John Nicholas Saunders, Chair, National Advocates for Arts Education
- Dr Kathryn Coleman, President, Art Education Australia.

The evidence concluded and the witnesses withdrew.

The following witnesses were sworn and examined:

- Ms Penelope Benton, Executive Director, National Association of Visual Arts
- Ms Nicole DeLosa, Co-President Advocacy & Communications, Visual Arts and Design Educators Association (VADEA) NSW
- Ms Gemma Baldwin, Advocacy, State and National Issues, Visual Arts and Design Educators Association (VADEA) NSW.

The evidence concluded and the witnesses withdrew.

The following witnesses were sworn and examined:

- Ms Amy Gill, Vice President, Drama New South Wales
- Dr Christine Hatton, Director of Research, Drama Australia

- Ms Diane Grant, Member, Ausdance National (via videoconference)
- Ms Lesley Graham, Ausdance representative on National Advocates for Arts Education, Ausdance National (via videoconference).

The evidence concluded and the witnesses withdrew.

The following witnesses were sworn and examined:

- Ms Evelyn Richardson, Chief Executive, Live Performance Australia (via videoconference)
- Mr Joe Muller, Managing Director, MusicNSW.

The evidence concluded and the witnesses withdrew.

The following witnesses were sworn and examined:

- Mrs Debra Batley, NSW Chair, Australian Society for Music Education
- Dr Kirsten Macaulay, NSW Treasurer, Australian Society for Music Education
- Mr Max Holzner, Chair, Music Teachers' Association of NSW
- Mr Anthony van den Broek, Deputy Chair, Music Teachers' Association of NSW
- Ms Emily Albert, Executive Director, Alberts and Head of Music Education: Right from the Start
- Mr Eric Sidoti, Project Lead, Music Education: Right from the Start.

The evidence concluded and the witnesses withdrew.

The following witnesses were sworn and examined:

- Mr David Francis, CEO of Wollongong Conservatorium of Music and President of the Association of NSW Regional Conservatoriums (ANSWRC)
- Mr Hamish Tait, CEO/Director of the Riverina Conservatorium of Music
- Dr Tracey Callinan, CEO, Regional Arts NSW.

The evidence concluded and the witnesses withdrew.

The following witnesses were sworn and examined:

- Ms Mia Patoulios, Chief Executive Officer, Sydney Youth Orchestras
- Mr James Pensini, Head of Orchestral Training and Artistic Programming, Sydney Youth Orchestras
- Ms Frances Georgeson, General Manager, Australian Children's Music Foundation
- Mr Rory Alcock, National Partnerships Manager, Australian Children's Music Foundation.

The evidence concluded and the witnesses withdrew.

The following witnesses were sworn and examined:

- Professor Matthew Hindson, Acting Dean & Head of School and Associate Dean Education, Sydney Conservatorium of Music
- Dr Jade O'Regan, Program Leader (Contemporary Music Practice) & Lecturer in Contemporary Music, Sydney Conservatorium of Music
- Mr Alex Masso, Executive Officer, Australian Music Association.

The evidence concluded and the witnesses withdrew.

The following witnesses were sworn and examined:

- Ms Anne Loxley, Executive Director, Arts & Cultural Exchange
- Ms Leila el Rayes, Producer Youth Engagement, Arts & Cultural Exchange
- Mr Brett Adlington, CEO, Museums & Galleries of NSW.

The public hearing concluded at 4.45 pm. The public and the media withdrew.



## 7. Adjournment

The committee adjourned at 4.53 pm until Thursday 22 August 2024 (Guard House, Macquarie Street, Parliament House – Site visit to Southern Highlands).

Holly Rivas

**Committee Clerk**

## Minutes no. 4

Thursday 22 August 2024

Joint Select Committee on Arts and Music Education and Training in NSW  
Guard House, Parliament House, Macquarie Street, Sydney, 8.17 am

### 1. Members present

Ms Finn, *Chair*

Mr Anderson

Ms Butler (from 10.03 am, until 2.25 pm)

Mr D'Adam

Mrs Hannan (from 9.47 am, until 2.25 pm)

Ms Munro

### 2. Apologies

Ms Boyd

Dr McGirr, *Deputy Chair*

Ms Suvaal

### 3. Site visit to Bowral High School

The committee toured Bowral High School and was met by:

- Ms Christine Roberts, R/Principal
- Mr David Verdejo, R/Deputy Principal
- Ms Polly Karakasch-Hawker, R/Head Teacher CAPA,
- Chloe and Thomas, School Captains
- Ms Evelyn Mark, Planning Officer, Director's Unit, Arts, Sport and Initiatives, Student Support and Specialist Programs Directorate, NSW Department of Education
- Ms Emma Knott, Administration and Schools and Centres Manager, Hume Conservatorium
- Ms Safija Bristina, Principal, Highlands School.

### 4. Draft minutes

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Anderson: That draft minutes nos. 2 and 3 be confirmed.

### 5. Correspondence

The committee noted the following items of correspondence:

#### *Received*

- 31 July 2024 – Email from Professor Matthew Hindson AM, Acting Head of School and Dean, Sydney Conservatorium of Music, to the secretariat, inviting the committee to visit the conservatorium
- 1 August 2024 – Email from Bethany Wooldridge, Executive Assistant to CEO, National Institute of Dramatic Art (NIDA), to the secretariat, advising that NIDA's submission can be made public
- 2 August 2024 – Email from Mr Mark Cleary, Executive Director, Short and Sweet, to the committee providing additional information about his submission to the inquiry
- 2 August 2024 – Email from Mr Simon Cooper, National Art School (NAS) to the committee providing additional information about NAS enrolment to the committee

- 5 August 2024 – Email from Dr Thomas Fienberg, Lecturer in Music Education, to the secretariat, offering to appear before the committee at a hearing
- 6 August 2024 – Email from Dr John Saunders to the secretariat suggesting that the Australian Teachers of Media (ATOM) National be invited to the next hearing of the inquiry
- 10 August 2024 – Email from Mrs Natalie Brown, Music specialist teacher, Tamworth South Public School, to the secretariat, declining an invitation to appear as a witness at a hearing on 23 August 2024
- 13 August 2024 – Email from Ms Meg Biok, Executive Assistant to Professor Anna Reid, Sydney Conservatorium of Music, to the committee, advising that the Conservatorium is unable to host the committee on 22 August 2024
- 14 August 2024 - Email from Ms Claire Todd, A/Director Strategic Coordination and Commitments, NSW Department of Education, to the committee, providing details of witnesses for the hearing on 23 August 2024
- 14 August 2024 - Email from Ms Liz Martin, CEO, Accessible Arts, to the secretariat, advising that Accessible Arts' submission can be made public
- 15 August 2024 – Email from Ms Anne Fitzgerald, CEO, Talent Development Project Foundation (TDP), to the secretariat, advising that TDP's submission can be made public.

**Sent:**

- 6 August 2024 – Letter from Ms Julia Finn MP, Chair, to Dr Nell Greenwood, CEO, Australian Film Television and Radio School (AFTRS), thanking AFTRS for hosting the committee on a site visit
- 6 August 2024 – Letter from Ms Julia Finn MP, Chair, to Ms Liz Hughes, CEO, National Institute of Dramatic Art (NIDA), thanking NIDA for hosting the committee on a site visit
- 6 August 2024 – Letter from Ms Julia Finn MP, Chair, to Mr Steven Alderton, CEO, National Art School (NAS), thanking NAS for hosting the committee on a site visit
- 6 August 2024 – Letter from Ms Julia Finn MP, Chair, to Mr Julian Gough, Head of Educational Engagement and Learning Design, Australian Institute of Music (AIM), thanking AIM for hosting the committee on a site visit
- 14 August 2024 - Letter from Ms Julia Finn MP, Committee Chair to Mr Gurmeh Singh, MP, regarding site visit in Coffs Harbour electorate
- 14 August 2024 - Letter from Ms Julia Finn MP, Committee Chair to Mrs Wendy Tuckerman MP, regarding site visit in Goulburn electorate.

## 6. Submissions

### 6.1 Public submissions

Committee noted that submissions were published by the committee clerk under the authorisation of the resolution appointing the committee: submission nos. 60-66, 68-72, 74-80, 82-102, 104-112.

### 6.2 Partially confidential submissions

Committee noted that the following submissions were partially published by the committee clerk under the authorisation of the resolution appointing the committee: submission no 103.

Resolved, on the motion of Mr D'Adam: That the committee authorise the publication of submission no. 103, with the exception of identifying and/or sensitive information which are to remain confidential, as per the request of the author.

### 6.3 Confidential submissions

Resolved, on the motion of Mr D'Adam: That the secretariat contact submission authors nos. 73 and 81 regarding the publication status of their submission.

### 6.4 Status of submissions nos. 26, 42 and 67

The committee previously resolved to keep submissions nos. 26 and 42 confidential, as per the requests of the authors. Both authors have advised the secretariat that the submissions can now be made public. Separately, submission no. 67 had been circulated to the committee as a confidential submission, as per the

request of the submission author. The author of submission no. 67 has now advised that the submission can be made public.

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Anderson: That the committee authorise the publication of submission nos. 26, 42 and 67.

#### **6.5 Extension requests**

Committee noted that Ms Alison Ross requested an extension to provide a submission to the inquiry:

#### **7. Online questionnaire report**

Resolved on the motion of Mrs Hannan: That the committee authorise the publication of the summary report of responses to the online questionnaire report.

#### **8. Site visit to Hume Conservatorium of Music**

The committee toured Hume Conservatorium of Music and was met by:

- Mr George Brenan, Chief Executive, Hume Regional Conservatorium
- Mr Robert Hunt, Chair, Board of Directors
- Mr Ed Suttle, Director, Board of Directors
- Shariah Whitfield, Business Manager
- Ms Giselle Newbury, Administration and Community Relations Manager
- Emma Knott, Administration and Schools and Centres Manager
- Garth Prentice, Contemporary Music Manager
- various parents and students.

#### **9. Adjournment**

The committee adjourned at 4.45 pm until Friday 23 August 2024, 8.45 am, Jubilee Room, Parliament House – Public hearing for inquiry into arts and music education and training in NSW.

Holly Rivas

**Committee Clerk**

#### **Minutes no. 5**

Friday 23 August 2024

Joint Select Committee on Arts and Music Education and Training in New South Wales

Jubilee Room, Parliament House, 8.54 am

#### **1. Members present**

Ms Finn, *Chair*

Dr McGirr, *Deputy Chair*

Dr Kaine (substituting for Ms Suvaal, from 8.54 am until 9.15 am)

Mr Anderson

Mr D'Adam

Mrs Hannan (via videoconference)

Ms Munro

#### **2. Apologies**

Ms Boyd

Ms Butler

Ms Suvaal

#### **3. Site visit to Coffs Harbour**

Resolved, on the motion of Dr McGirr: That:

- the committee cancel the site visit to Coffs Harbour on Monday 26 August 2024 and reschedule to a later date, and
- consider seeking an extension to the inquiry reporting date if needed.

#### 4. Public hearing

##### 4.1 Sequence of questioning

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Anderson: That the allocation of questions to be asked at the hearing be left in the hands of the Chair.

Witnesses, the public and the media were admitted.

The following witnesses were sworn and examined:

- Dr James Humberstone FRSA, Senior Lecturer in Music Education, Sydney Conservatorium of Music, the University of Sydney
- Dr Thomas Fienberg, Acting Associate Dean Indigenous Strategy and Services and Lecturer in Music Education, Sydney Conservatorium of Music.

The evidence concluded and the witnesses withdrew.

The following witnesses were sworn and examined:

- Ms Michelle Leonard OAM, Moorambilla Voices (via videoconference)
- Ms Liz Martin, Accessible Arts NSW.

The evidence concluded and the witnesses withdrew.

The following witnesses were sworn and examined:

- Ms Natalie Kradolfer, CEO and Co-Founder, Amplify Music Education
- Mr Ricky Kradolfer, Co-Founder & Head Educator, Amplify Music Education
- Ms Catriona Turnbull, Branch President, Kodály NSW
- Mr Joel Copeland, Kodály Australia member and Past National President Kodály Australia.

The evidence concluded and the witnesses withdrew.

The following witnesses were sworn and examined:

- Mr Carlo Tuttocore, Education Consultant: Teaching and Learning/School Improvement, The Association of Independent Schools of NSW
- Ms Kelly Borg, Associate Chief Executive: Teaching and Learning, The Association of Independent Schools of NSW
- Mrs Jacinta Adamson, Supervisor, Amadeus Music Education Program, Sydney Catholic Schools
- Ms Eva Spata, Supervisor, Performing and Visual Arts Curriculum, Sydney Catholic Schools
- Mr Kevin Carragher, Director of Education and Research, Sydney Catholic Schools.

The evidence concluded and the witnesses withdrew.

The following witnesses were sworn and examined:

- Miss Brenda Cumming, Music Coordinator K-12, Redeemer Baptist School
- Mr Thomas McCorquodale, Music Teacher 7-12, Cronulla High School.

Mr McCorquodale tendered the following document:

- Quantitative data on music classes in schools in the Sutherland Shire

The evidence concluded and the witnesses withdrew.

The following witnesses were sworn and examined:

- Ms Kelly Marks, Research/Industrial Officer, Australian Education Union - NSW Teachers Federation Branch
- Ms Gemma Quinn, Chief Executive Officer, Federation of Parents and Citizens Associations of NSW

- Mr Robert Hunt, Member Services Manager, Federation of Parents and Citizens Associations of NSW.

The evidence concluded and the witnesses withdrew.

The following witness was sworn and examined:

- Ms Kim Paino, Chief Strategy and Engagement Officer, Universities Admissions Centre (UAC)

Ms Paino tendered the following document:

- Joint Select Committee on Arts and Music Education and Training in NSW, UAC submission.

The evidence concluded and the witness withdrew.

The following witness was sworn and examined:

- Ms Annette Pitman Chief Executive Officer, Create NSW

The evidence concluded and the witness withdrew.

The following witnesses were sworn and examined:

- Ms Janet Schorer PSM, Chief Delivery Officer, TAFE NSW
- Dr Raffaele Marcellino, Executive Director, Education and Skills - Sydney, TAFE NSW

The evidence concluded and the witnesses withdrew.

The following witnesses were sworn and examined:

- Dr Paul Cahill, Executive Director, Curriculum, NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA)
- Mr Martin Graham, Deputy Secretary Teaching Learning and Student Wellbeing, NSW Department of Education
- Dr Sylvia Corish, Executive Director Student Support and Specialist Programs, NSW Department of Education

The public hearing concluded at 4.29 pm. The public and the media withdrew.

## 5. **Tendered documents**

Resolved, on the motion of Ms Munro: That the committee accept and keep the following document tendered during the public hearing confidential:

- Quantitative data on music classes in schools in the Sutherland Shire, tendered by Mr Thomas McCorquodale, Music Teacher 7-12, Cronulla High School

Resolved on the motion of Ms Munro: That the committee accept and publish the following document tendered during the public hearing:

- Joint Select Committee on Arts and Music Education and Training in NSW, UAC submission, tendered by Ms Kim Paino, Chief Strategy and Engagement Officer, Universities Admissions Centre (UAC).

## 6. **Other business**

Resolved, on the motion of Mr D'Adam: That the committee write to Multicultural NSW to invite them to make a submission or provide further information about what supports and initiatives are provided for non-western artforms in New South Wales, including music, dance, drama and the visual arts.

## 7. **Adjournment**

The committee adjourned at 4.36 pm until Monday 2 September 2024 (Guard House, Macquarie Street, Parliament House – Site visit to schools).

Holly Rivas  
**Committee Clerk**

**Minutes no. 6**

Monday 2 September 2024

Joint Select Committee on Arts and Music Education and Training in New South Wales

Guard House, Macquarie Street, Parliament House, Sydney at 9.06 am

**1. Members present**Ms Finn, *Chair*Dr McGirr, *Deputy Chair*

Mr Anderson (from 9.06 am)

Mr D'Adam (from 9.06 am)

Ms Munro (from 9.06 am)

Ms Suvaal (from 12.41 pm)

**2. Apologies**

Ms Boyd

Ms Butler

Mrs Hannan

**3. Site visits to public schools****3.1 Merrylands Public School**

The committee toured Merrylands Public School and met with:

- Ms Bronwyn York, Principal, Merrylands Public School
- Mr Chris Charles, Relieving Director, Educational Leadership.

**3.2 St Marys North Public School**

The committee toured St Marys North Public School and met with:

- Ms Lisa Parrello, Principal, St Marys North Public School
- Jason Miezis, Director, Educational Leadership, Eastern Creek Principals Network
- Ms Tara Smith, Director, Learning and Engagement, Australian Chamber Orchestra.

**4. Correspondence**

Committee to note the following items of correspondence:

***Received:***

- 7 August 2024 – Email from Rachel Imms, TAFE Executive Ministerial Liaison, to the secretariat, providing details of who the committee will be meeting on the site visit to TAFE NSW Coffs Harbour Education Campus on 26 August 2024
- 15 August 2024 – Email from Ms Claire Todd, A/Director Strategic Coordination and Commitments, NSW Department of Education, to the secretariat, providing details of who the committee will be meeting on the site visit to Bowral High School on 22 August 2024
- 20 August 2024 – Email from Dr Glenn Hodges, Artistic Director and Head of Agency, Coffs Harbour Regional Conservatorium, to the secretariat, providing details of who the committee will be meeting on the site visit to Coffs Harbour Regional Conservatorium on 26 August 2024
- 20 August 2024 – Email from Ms Lesley Graham, Ausdance representative on National Advocates for Arts Education, Ausdance National, to the secretariat, providing transcript corrections from the hearing held on 30 July 2024
- 22 August 2024 – Email from Mr George Brenan, Chief Executive, Hume Conservatorium of Music, to the committee, highlighting themes discussed at the themes identified on the site visit to Hume Conservatorium of Music
- 22 August 2024 – Email from Mr Richard Lane, Founder/Creative Director /Vocal Teacher, Vocal Muster, to the committee, discussing the Vocal Muster program

- 26 August 2024 – Email from Brenda Cumming, K-12 Music Coordinator, Redeemer Baptist School, to the committee, providing additional information following the hearing on 23 August 2024
- 27 August 2024 – Email from the author of submission no. 81, to the secretariat, requesting that their submission be kept confidential
- 27 August 2024 – Email from Lou Oppenheim, Executive Director, Sydney Dance Company, to the secretariat, advising that submission no. 73 can be made public
- 28 August 2024 – Email from Meg Biok, Executive Assistant to Professor Matthew Hindson AM, Sydney Conservatorium of Music, to the secretariat, providing the details of representatives the committee will be meeting with during the site visit on 2 September 2024.

### *Sent*

- 29 August 2024 – Letter from the Chair, to the Hon Prue Car MP, Member for Londonderry, advising of the committee's site visit to St Marys North Public School on 2 September 2024
- 29 August 2024 – Letter from the Chair, to the Hon Ryan Park MP, Member for Keira, advising of the committee's site visit to Bulli High School on 2 September 2024
- 29 August 2024 – Letter from the Chair, to the Hon Alex Greenwich MP, Member for Sydney, advising of the committee's site visit to the Sydney Conservatorium of Music on 2 September 2024
- 29 August 2024 – Letter from the Chair, to Ms Christine Roberts, Relieving Principal, Bowral High School, thanking Bowral High School for hosting the committee on a site visit
- 29 August 2024 – Letter from the Chair, to Mr George Brenan, Chief Executive, Hume Regional Conservatorium, thanking the Conservatorium for hosting the committee on a site visit
- 29 August 2024 – Letter from Ms Julia Finn MP, Committee Chair to Mr Joseph La Posta, Chief Executive Officer, Multicultural NSW, inviting Multicultural NSW to make a submission to the inquiry.

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Anderson: That the committee keep the correspondence from the author of submission no. 81 regarding their request that their submission be kept confidential dated 27 August 2024, confidential, as per the recommendation of the secretariat, as it contains identifying and/or sensitive information.

Resolved, on the motion of Mr D'Adam: That the committee authorise the publication of correspondence from Mr George Brenan, Chief Executive, Hume Conservatorium of Music, regarding themes discussed on the site visit to the Hume Conservatorium of Music, dated 22 August 2024.

### **5. Status of submission nos. 73 and 81**

Resolved on the motion of Ms Munro:

- That the committee authorise the publication of submission no 73.
- That the committee keep submission no 81 confidential, as per the request of the author as it contains identifying and/or sensitive information.

### **6. Answers to questions on notice and supplementary questions on notice**

Resolved on the motion of Ms Munro: That the committee authorise the answers to questions on notice and additional information received from:

- Ms Bernie Heard, Manager, Music in Me, received on 31 July 2024
- Ms Nicole DeLosa, Visual Arts & Design Educators Association, received on 26 August 2024
- Ms Penelope Benton, Executive Director, National Association for the Visual Arts, received on 27 August 2024.

### **7. Other business**

Resolved, on the motion of Dr McGirr: That the Chair write to the heads of the schools of education at universities in New South Wales, including Charles Sturt University, the University of Sydney, the University of New South Wales and Western Sydney University, to request information about arts and music training during initial teacher education.

**8. Adjournment**

The committee adjourned at 12.51 pm. *Sine die*.

Holly Rivas

**Committee Clerk**

**Minutes no. 7**

Wednesday 30 October 2024

Joint Select Committee on Arts and Music Education and Training in New South Wales

Jubilee Room, Parliament House, Sydney at 4.19 pm

**1. Members present**

Ms Finn, *Chair*

Dr McGirr, *Deputy Chair* (via videoconference)

Mr Anderson (until 5.43 pm)

Ms Boyd (via videoconference)

Ms Butler (via videoconference) (until 5.26 pm)

Mr D'Adam (from 5.08 pm)

Mrs Hannan (via videoconference)

Ms Munro (via videoconference) (until 5.20 pm)

**2. Previous minutes**

Resolved on the motion of Mr Anderson: That draft minutes nos. 4, 5 and 6 be confirmed.

**3. Correspondence**

Committee noted the following items of correspondence:

***Received:***

- 28 August 2024 – Email from Ms Claire Todd, A/Director Strategic Coordination and Commitments, NSW Department of Education, to the secretariat, providing details of who the committee will be meeting on the school site visits on 2 September 2024
- 29 August 2024 – Email from Ms Claire Todd, A/Director Strategic Coordination and Commitments, NSW Department of Education, to the secretariat, providing further details of who the committee will be meeting on the school site visits on 2 September 2024
- 29 August 2024 – Email from Ms Louise Barkl, National Education Advisor, Music in Me, to the secretariat, providing transcript corrections from the hearing held on 30 July 2024
- 9 September 2024 – Email from Mr Thomas McCorquodale, to the secretariat, providing transcript corrections, clarifying evidence, and providing additional information to the committee following the hearing held on 23 August 2024
- 10 September 2024 – Email from Dr John Nicholas Saunders, Chair, National Advocates for Arts Education, to the committee, regarding correspondence sent to Deans of Universities about the inquiry into arts and music
- 13 September 2024 – Email from Mr Carlo Tuttocore, Education Consultant, Teaching and Learning/School Improvement, Association of Independent Schools of New South Wales, to the secretariat, providing transcript corrections for the hearing on 23 August 2024
- 17 September 2024 – Email from Professor Claire Annesley, UNSW, to the secretariat, providing information about arts and music training provided to students during initial teacher education
- 18 September 2024 – Email from Jenna Milligan, Executive Officer, ACU, to the secretariat, providing information to the committee about arts and music training in initial teacher education
- 25 September 2024 – Email from Hayley O'Kane, Executive Assistant, Faculty of Arts and Education, Charles Sturt University, to the secretariat, providing a letter from Professor John McDonald regarding information about arts and music training in initial teacher education



- 25 September 2024 – Email from Brenda Cumming, K-12 Music Coordinator, Redeemer Baptist School, to the secretariat, providing a transcript clarification following the hearing on 23 August 2024
- 25 September 2024 – Email from Ms Kim Paino, Chief Strategy and Engagement Officer, UAC, to the secretariat, providing a transcript correction following the hearing on 23 August 2024
- 26 September 2024 – Email from Professor Alan Davison, Dean, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, UTS, to the committee, providing information about arts and music training in initial teacher education
- 27 September 2024 – Email from Dr Sarah Powell, Senior Lecturer in Creative Arts, Macquarie University, to the committee, providing information about arts and music training in initial teacher education
- 27 September 2024 – Email from Professor Amy Cutter-Mackenzie-Knowles, Executive Dean, Faculty of Education, Southern Cross University, to the committee, providing information about arts and music training in initial teacher education
- 2 October 2024 – Email from Professor Susan Ledger, University of Newcastle, to the committee, providing information about arts and music training in initial teacher education
- 3 October 2024 – Email from Professor Kelly Freebody, University of Sydney, to the committee, providing information about arts and music training in initial teacher education
- 8 October 2024 – Email from Professor Jane Edwards, UNE, to the secretariat, providing information about arts and music training in initial teacher education
- 14 October 2024 – Email from Ms Cianna Walker, Student at Sydney Conservatorium of Music, to the secretariat, declining an invitation to attend a hearing on 30 October, and to meet with the committee at the conservatorium instead
- 15 October 2024 – Email from Emily Albert, Executive Director, Alberts, to the committee, providing additional information to the committee
- 17 October 2024 – Email from Dr Sue Lane, to the committee, providing a submission to the inquiry
- 17 October 2024 – Email from Corina Norman, Dharug Educator, DoE Teacher and Phd Candidate, to the secretariat, advising that she is unavailable to attend the hearing on 30 October 2024
- 17 October 2024 – Email from Dr Sue Lane, to the secretariat, advising that she would like her submission to the inquiry be made partially confidential
- 17 October 2024 – Email from Dr Laura Case, Lecturer in Musicology, Sydney Conservatorium of Music, to the secretariat, advising that she is unable to attend the hearing on 30 October 2024
- 21 October 2024 – Email from Jasmine Seymour, to the secretariat, advising that she is unable to attend the hearing on 30 October 2024
- 23 October 2024 – Email from Jake Magi, to the secretariat, advising that he is unable to attend the hearing on 30 October 2024
- 25 October 2024 - Email from Vyvienne Abla, on behalf of Rhyhan Clapham, advising that he is unable to attend the hearing on 30 October 2024
- 25 October 2024 - Email from Richard Petkovic, to the secretariat, providing a submission to the inquiry
- 30 October 2024 - Email from Jessie Llyod, to the secretariat, advising that she is unable to attend the hearing on 30 October 2024
- 29 October 2024 - Letter from Mr Joseph La Posta, CEO, Multicultural NSW, to the Chair of the committee, providing information to the committee about support for non-western artforms in New South Wales.

### *Sent*

- 9 September 2024 – Letter from the Chair, to Ms Bronwyn York, Merrylands Public School, thanking Merrylands Public School for hosting the committee on a site visit
- 9 September 2024 – Letter from the Chair, to Ms Lisa Parrello, St Marys North Public School, thanking St Marys North Public School for hosting the committee on a site visit
- 9 September 2024 – Letter from Chair to Professor Kelly Freebody, Head of School, Education and Social Work, The University of Sydney, regarding arts and music training provided to students during initial teacher education

- 9 September 2024 – Letter from the Chair to Professor Amy Cutter-Mackenzie-Knowles, Executive Dean, Faculty of Education Southern Cross University, regarding arts and music training provided to students during initial teacher education
- 9 September 2024 – Letter from the Chair to Professor Claire Annesley, Dean, Arts, Design & Architecture, University of New South Wales, regarding arts and music training provided to students during initial teacher education
- 9 September 2024 – Letter from the Chair to Professor Alan Davison, Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, University of Technology Sydney, regarding arts and music training provided to students during initial teacher education
- 9 September 2024 – Letter from the Chair to Professor Deborah Youdell, Dean of School, Macquarie School of Education, Macquarie University, regarding arts and music training provided to students during initial teacher education
- 9 September 2024 – Letter from the Chair to Professor Jane Edwards, Executive Dean, Faculty of Humanities, Arts, Social Sciences and Education, University of New England, regarding arts and music training provided to students during initial teacher education
- 9 September 2024 – Letter from Chair to Professor John McDonald, Executive Dean of Arts and Education, Charles Sturt University, regarding arts and music training provided to students during initial teacher education
- 9 September 2024 – Letter from Chair to Professor Mary Ryan, Executive Dean of Education & Arts, Australian Catholic University, regarding arts and music training provided to students during initial teacher education
- 9 September 2024 – Letter from Chair to Professor Susan Ledger, Head of School, School of Education, The University of Newcastle, regarding arts and music training provided to students during initial teacher education.

Resolved, on the motion of Dr McGirr: That the committee authorise the publication of the following correspondence on the inquiry webpage:

- 17 September 2024 – Email from Professor Claire Annesley, UNSW, to the secretariat, providing information about arts and music training provided to students during initial teacher education
- 18 September 2024 – Email from Jenna Milligan, Executive Officer, ACU, to the secretariat, providing information to the committee about arts and music training in initial teacher education
- 25 September 2024 – Email from Hayley O'Kane, Executive Assistant, Faculty of Arts and Education, Charles Sturt University, to the secretariat, providing a letter from Professor John McDonald regarding information about arts and music training in initial teacher education
- 26 September 2024 – Email from Professor Alan Davison, Dean, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, UTS, to the committee, providing information about arts and music training in initial teacher education
- 27 September 2024 – Email from Dr Sarah Powell, Senior Lecturer in Creative Arts, Macquarie University, to the committee, providing information about arts and music training in initial teacher education
- 27 September 2024 – Email from Professor Amy Cutter-Mackenzie-Knowles, Executive Dean, Faculty of Education, Southern Cross University, to the committee, providing information about arts and music training in initial teacher education
- 2 October 2024 – Email from Professor Susan Ledger, University of Newcastle, to the committee, providing information about arts and music training in initial teacher education
- 3 October 2024 – Email from Professor Kelly Freebody, University of Sydney, to the committee, providing information about arts and music training in initial teacher education
- 8 October 2024 – Email from Professor Jane Edwards, UNE, to the secretariat, providing information about arts and music training in initial teacher education
- 15 October 2024 – Email from Emily Albert, Executive Director, Alberts, to the committee, providing additional information to the committee

- 29 October 2024 - Letter from Mr Joseph La Posta, CEO, Multicultural NSW, to the Chair of the committee, providing information to the committee about support for non-western artforms in New South Wales.

#### 4. **Answers to questions on notice and supplementary questions on notice**

The committee noted that the following answers to questions on notice and additional information were published by the committee clerk under the authorisation of the resolution appointing the committee:

- 9 September 2024 – Email from Mr Thomas McCorquodale, to the secretariat, providing transcript corrections, clarifying evidence, and providing additional information to the committee following the hearing held on 23 August 2024
- 18 September 2024 – Email from Meg Biok, Executive Assistant to Professor Matthew Hindson AM, Sydney Conservatorium of Music, providing an answer to a question on notice from the hearing on 30 July 2024
- 25 September 2024 – Email from Ms Kim Paino, Chief Strategy and Engagement Officer, UAC, to the secretariat, providing a transcript correction and an answer to a question on notice from the hearing on 23 August 2024
- 26 September 2024 – Email from Alison Cantlon, A/Director, Government Support, NSW Department of Education, providing answers to questions on notice on behalf of NSW Department of Education and NSW Educations Standards Authority from the hearing on 23 August 2024
- 26 September 2024 – Email from Dr Fienberg, Acting Associate Dean Indigenous Strategy and Services, Sydney Conservatorium of Music, to the secretariat, providing answers to questions on notice following the hearing on 23 August 2024
- 30 September 2024 – Email from Rachel Imms, TAFE NSW, to the secretariat, providing answers to questions on notice from the hearing on 23 August 2024 and a transcript correction
- 30 September 2024 – Email from Ms Kelly Marks, Research/Industrial Officer, Australian Education Union, NSW Teachers Federation Branch, to the secretariat, providing answers to questions on notice from the hearing on 23 August 2024
- 1 October 2024 – Email from Gael Duplouich, A/Director, Government Relations, Department of Enterprise, Investment and Trade, providing responses to questions taken on notice during the hearing on 23 August 2024

#### 5. **Transcript corrections**

Resolved, on the motion of Dr McGirr: That the committee authorise the publication of correspondence from:

- Mr Thomas McCorquodale, to the secretariat, providing transcript corrections and clarifying evidence, received 9 September 2024, and the secretariat insert a footnote on the transcript from the 23 August 2024 hearing, clarifying the evidence of Mr McCorquodale, as per the correspondence received 9 September 2024.
- Ms Brenda Cumming to the secretariat, providing transcript corrections and clarifying evidence, received 25 September 2024, and the secretariat insert a footnote on the transcript from the 23 August 2024 hearing, clarifying the evidence of Ms Brenda Cumming, as per the correspondence received 25 September 2024.

#### 6. **Public submission**

Resolved, on the motion of Ms Butler: That the committee authorise the publication of submission no. 114.

#### 7. **Partially confidential submission**

Resolved, on the motion of Ms Butler: That the committee authorise the publication of submission no. 113, with the exception of identifying and/or sensitive information which are to remain confidential, as per the request of the author.

#### 8. **Extended reporting date**

The committee noted that the reporting date for the inquiry was extended until 13 December 2024, as agreed to by both Houses.

**9. Return of post-hearing responses**

Resolved, on the motion of Mrs Hannan: That:

- supplementary questions be lodged with the Committee Clerk within one business day, following the receipt of the hearing transcript
- witnesses be requested to return post hearing responses within 7 calendar days of the date on which questions are forwarded to them.

**10. Hearing*****Sequence of questions***

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Anderson: That the allocation of questions to be asked at the hearing be left in the hands of the Chair.

Witnesses, the public and the media were admitted.

The following witnesses were sworn and examined:

- Dr Candace Kruger, Lecturer Griffith University, Yugambeh Elder and Songwoman (via videoconference)
- Professor Deborah Cheetham Fraillon AO FAHA, Elizabeth Todd Chair of Vocal Studies, Sydney Conservatorium of Music.

The evidence concluded and the witnesses withdrew.

The following witnesses were sworn and examined:

- Mr Richard Petkovic, Artistic Director, Cultural Arts Collective
- Mr Andrew Overton, Chairperson, Sacred Currents Inc.

The public hearing concluded at 5.46 pm. The public and the media withdrew.

**11. Adjournment**

The committee adjourned at 5.46 pm until 9.00 am on Monday 18 November 2024 (Sydney Conservatorium of Music – site visits).

Holly Rivas

**Committee Clerk**

**Minutes no. 8**

Monday 18 November 2024

Joint Select Committee on Arts and Music Education and Training in New South Wales

Sydney Conservatorium of Music, Sydney at 9.05 am

**1. Members present**

Ms Finn, *Chair*

Dr McGirr, *Deputy Chair*

Mr Anderson (via teleconference from 9.16 am, until 9.42 am)

Ms Boyd (via teleconference from 9.16 am, until 9.42 am)

Mr D'Adam

Ms Munro

Ms Suvaal (via teleconference from 9.16 am, until 9.42 am)

**2. Apologies**

Ms Butler

Ms Hannan

**3. Previous minutes**

Resolved on the motion of Dr McGirr: That draft minutes no. 7 be confirmed.

**4. Correspondence**

Committee noted the following items of correspondence:

***Received:***

- 24 October 2024 – Email from Ms Claire Todd, A/Director Strategic Coordination and Commitments, NSW Department of Education, to the secretariat, providing details of who the committee will meet on the school site visits on 18 November 2024
- 30 October 2024 – Email from Rachel Imms, TAFE NSW, to the secretariat, providing details of who the committee will meet during the site visit on 18 November 2024
- 7 November 2024 – Email from Ms Meg Biok, Executive Assistant to Professor Anna Reid, Sydney Conservatorium of Music, to the secretariat, providing details about who the committee will meet during the site visit on 18 November 2024
- 8 November 2024 – Email from Sara Ryan, Executive Assistant, Wollongong Conservatorium of Music, to the secretariat, providing details of who the committee will meet during the site visit to Wollongong Conservatorium of Music on 18 November 2024.

**5. Additional hearing on Monday 25 November 2024**

Resolved, on the motion of Dr McGirr: That:

- The committee invite the following stakeholders to make a submission to the inquiry that specifically addresses the consultation during the NSW Curriculum Reform for the arts and music syllabuses:
  - National Advocates for Arts Education (NAAE)
  - Deb Batley, Chair, ASME NSW
  - Dr Thomas Fienberg, Vice Chair, NSW ASME NSW
  - Dr James Humberstone, Senior Lecturer in Music Education, University of Sydney, Sydney Conservatorium of Music
  - Professor Kathryn Marsh, Professor Emerita in Music Education, University of Sydney, Sydney Conservatorium of Music
  - Dr Emily Wilson, Head of Music and Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Education, University of Melbourne
  - Associate Professor Neryl Jeanneret, Principal Fellow, Faculty of Education, University of Melbourne
  - Dr Rachel White, Senior Lecturer, Learning Environments and Pedagogy, School of Education, Western Sydney University
  - Honorary Associate Professor Peter Dunbar-Hall, University of Sydney, Sydney Conservatorium of Music
  - Dr Brad Fuller, music teacher, Saint Augustine's
  - Luke Chapman, school teacher
  - Caitlin Sandiford, school teacher
  - Adrian Lim-Klumpes, music teacher and Musical Director, Shining Stars
  - Kelly Young, President, Drama NSW
  - Professor Michael Anderson, Professor of Creativity and Arts Education in the Sydney School of Education and Social Work, University of Sydney
  - DiAnne McDonald, Head of Drama, Brigidine College St Ives
  - Dr Paul Gardiner, Senior Lecturer, Creativity and The Arts, University of Wollongong
  - Bel Farr-Jones, Head Teacher CAPA, SOM Drama NESAS at NSW Department of Education
  - Alex Hone, High School Music Teacher and Music Representative for the Australian Independent Schools (AIS) Association
- The committee invite the following organisations to appear at the public hearing on 25 November 2024:

- Australian Society for Music Education (ASME) NSW, National Advocates for Arts Education (NAAE) AND Drama NSW (90 minutes)
- NESAs (45 minutes).

Resolved, on the motion of Dr McGirr: That members be provided with a copy of the Chair's draft report in less than 7 calendar days before the scheduled report deliberative date.

## 6. Site visits

The committee toured the Sydney Conservatorium of Music and met with:

- Professor Anna Reid, Dean & Head of School
- Professor Matthew Hindson AM, Deputy Head of School & Deputy Dean (Education)
- Dr Jim Coyle, Lecturer in Music Education, Sydney Conservatorium of Music
- Ms Kirsty McCahon, Strategic Relations Manager
- Cianna Walker, Student
- Anna, Student
- Charlotte, Student.

The committee toured TAFE NSW Eora (Darlington) Campus and met with:

- Belinda Craig, Senior Manager Aboriginal Education and Engagement
- Jasmine Robertson, Director Media, Art, Design and Entertainment
- Richard Cass, Director SEN Media, Art, Design and Entertainment
- Leanne Foster, Head Teacher Aboriginal Cultural Arts and Music Eora College.

The committee toured Bulli High School and met with:

- Ms Denise James, Principal
- David Lamb, Director, Educational Leadership, Wollongong Network, NSW Department of Education
- Louise Manks, Head Teacher, Creative and Performing Arts Program
- David Strange, English Teacher
- Nadia and Ike, School Captains.

The committee toured the Wollongong Conservatorium of Music and meet with:

- Nicky Sloan, Chair, Wollongong Conservatorium Board
- Terumi Narushima, Member, Wollongong Conservatorium Board & UOW Music Faculty
- Annette Brown, CEO, Wollongong Conservatorium
- Vicky Wallace, Head of Communications, Wollongong Conservatorium
- Sara Ryan, Executive Assistant, Wollongong Conservatorium
- Janet Andrews, HOD ChiME & Music Therapy, Wollongong Conservatorium
- Louise Luke, Interim Program Head In-Schools Program, Wollongong Conservatorium
- Jack Mao, Interim Program Head, Piano, Wollongong Conservatorium.

## 7. Adjournment

The committee adjourned at 5.02 pm until 2.00 pm on Monday 25 November 2024 (Macquarie Room, Parliament House – public hearing).

Holly Rivas

**Committee Clerk**

## Minutes no. 9

Monday 25 November 2024

Joint Select Committee on Arts and Music Education and Training in New South Wales  
Macquarie Room, Parliament House, Sydney at 2.03 pm

**1. Members present**

Ms Finn, *Chair*

Dr McGirr, *Deputy Chair* (via videoconference)

Mr Anderson

Ms Boyd

Mr D'Adam

Ms Hannan (via videoconference) (from 2.30 pm)

Ms Munro

**2. Apologies**

Ms Butler

Ms Suvaal

**3. Previous minutes**

Resolved on the motion of Mr D'Adam: That draft minutes no. 8 be confirmed.

**4. Correspondence**

Committee noted the following items of correspondence:

***Received:***

- 12 November 2024 – Email from Richard Petkovic, to the secretariat, providing transcript corrections for the hearing on 30 October 2024
- 13 November 2024 – Email from Ms Debra Batley, Chair of the Australian Society for Music Education, to the committee, inviting the committee to attend a meeting of ASME members to discuss the recent release of the stage 6 music syllabi
- 14 November 2024 – Email from Ms Meg Biok, Executive Assistant to Professor Anna Reid, Sydney Conservatorium of Music, to the secretariat, providing updated details about the site visit on 18 November 2024
- 18 November 2024 – Email from Dr John Nicholas Saunders, Chair, National Advocates for Arts Education, to the secretariat, declining to attend the hearing on Monday 25 November 2024
- 18 November 2024 – Email from Vicky Wallace, Head of Communications, Wollongong Conservatorium, to the secretariat, providing documents entitled 'Music in Schools Programs Overview' and 'Get them Young Handout' following the site visit to the Wollongong Conservatorium on 18 November 2024
- 22 November 2024 – Correspondence from Ms Amy Gill, Vice President, Professional Learning, Drama NSW, to Chair, providing responses to a Student Voice Survey in response to the draft Stage 6 Drama syllabus changes.

***Sent***

- 18 November 2024 – Emails to the following stakeholders from the Chair inviting them to make a submission to the inquiry regarding the NSW curriculum reform and the NSW Education Standards Authority's (NESA) consultation process for the arts and music syllabuses reviews:
  - National Advocates for Arts Education (NAAE)
  - Deb Batley, Chair, ASME NSW
  - Dr Thomas Fienberg, Vice Chair, NSW ASME NSW
  - Dr James Humberstone, Senior Lecturer in Music Education, University of Sydney, Sydney Conservatorium of Music
  - Professor Kathryn Marsh, Professor Emerita in Music Education, University of Sydney, Sydney Conservatorium of Music
  - Dr Emily Wilson, Head of Music and Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Education, University of Melbourne
  - Associate Professor Neryl Jeanneret, Principal Fellow, Faculty of Education, University of Melbourne

- Dr Rachel White, Senior Lecturer, Learning Environments and Pedagogy, School of Education, Western Sydney University
- Honorary Associate Professor Peter Dunbar-Hall, University of Sydney, Sydney Conservatorium of Music
- Dr Brad Fuller, music teacher, Saint Augustine's
- Luke Chapman, teacher
- Caitlin Sandiford, teacher
- Adrian Lim-Klumpes, music teacher and Musical Director, Shining Stars
- Kelly Young, President, Drama NSW
- Professor Michael Anderson, Professor of Creativity and Arts Education in the Sydney School of Education and Social Work, University of Sydney
- DiAnne McDonald, Head of Drama, Brigidine College St Ives
- Dr Paul Gardiner, Senior Lecturer, Creativity and The Arts, University of Wollongong
- Bel Farr-Jones, Head Teacher CAPA, SOM Drama NESAs at NSW Department of Education
- Alex Hone, High School Music Teacher and Music Representative for the Australian Independent Schools (AIS) Association.

Resolved, on the motion of Ms Munro: That the committee authorise the publication of the following correspondence:

- email from Vicky Wallace, Head of Communications, Wollongong Conservatorium, to the secretariat providing documents entitled 'Music in Schools Programs Overview' and 'Get them Young Handout' following the site visit to the Wollongong Conservatorium on 18 November 2024.
- correspondence from Ms Amy Gill, Vice President, Professional Learning, Drama NSW, to Chair, providing responses to a Student Voice Survey in response to the draft Stage 6 Drama syllabus changes.

#### 5. **Tendered document from site visit to the Sydney Conservatorium of Music**

Resolved, on the motion of Ms Munro: That the committee accept and publish the following document(s) tendered during the site visit to the Sydney Conservatorium of Music:

- Draft HSC syllabus compared to current with comments.

#### 6. **Public submissions**

Committee noted that the following submissions were published by the committee clerk under the authorisation of the resolution appointing the committee: submission nos. 21a, 100a, 116-122.

#### 7. **Partially confidential submissions**

Resolved, on the motion of Ms Munro: That the committee authorise the publication of submission no. 115, with the exception of identifying and/or sensitive information which are to remain confidential, as per the request of the author.

#### 8. **Confidential submissions**

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Anderson: That the committee keep submissions nos. 123 and 124 confidential, as per the request of the author as they contain identifying and/or sensitive information.

#### 9. **Attachments to submissions**

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Anderson: That the committee authorise the publication of:

- attachment no 3 to submission no. 43
- attachments to submission no. 122.

#### 10. **Hearing**

##### 10.1 **Return of post-hearing responses**

Resolved, on the motion of Mr D'Adam:



- there be no provision for supplementary questions for the hearing on 25 November 2024
- witnesses be requested to return post hearing responses within 24 hours of the date on which questions are forwarded to them.

***Sequence of questions***

Resolved, on the motion of Ms Boyd: That the allocation of questions to be asked at the hearing be left in the hands of the Chair.

Witnesses, the public and the media were admitted.

The following witnesses appeared under a former oath or affirmation:

- Dr Christine Hatton, Director of Research, Drama Australia
- Ms Amy Gill, Vice President of Professional Learning, Drama NSW
- Mrs Debra Batley, Chair, Australian Society of Music Education (ASME) NSW
- Dr Thomas Fienberg, Vice Chair, Australian Society of Music Education (ASME) NSW.

The following witness was sworn and examined:

- Mr Owen Nelson, Member, Australian Society of Music Education (ASME) NSW.

Ms Gill tendered the following document:

- Drama NSW submission to the inquiry.

Mrs Batley tendered the following documents:

- NSW Government response to NSW Curriculum Review – Final report
- ASME NSW Response to Curriculum Review Consultation, December 2019.

The evidence concluded and the witnesses withdrew.

The following witness appeared under a former oath or affirmation:

- Dr Paul Cahill, Executive Director, Curriculum, NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA).

The following witness was sworn and examined:

- Mr Paul Martin, CEO, NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA).

**10.2 Tendered documents**

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Anderson: That the committee accept and publish the following document tendered during the public hearing:

- ASME NSW Response to Curriculum Review Consultation, December 2019.

**11. Adjournment**

The committee adjourned at 4.38 pm until 10.00 am on Tuesday 10 December 2024 (Room 1043, Parliament House – Report deliberative).

Ms Julia Finn MP  
**Chair**

Holly Rivas  
**Committee Clerk**

**Draft minutes no. 10**

Tuesday 10 December 2024  
Joint Select Committee on Arts and Music Education and Training in New South Wales  
Room 1043, Parliament House, Sydney at 2.06 pm

**1. Members present**

Ms Finn, *Chair*

Dr McGirr, *Deputy Chair* (via videoconference until 2.59 pm)

Mr Anderson (via videoconference)

Ms Boyd (via videoconference)

Ms Butler (via videoconference)

Mr D'Adam

Mrs Hannan (via videoconference)

Ms Munro

Ms Suvaal (via videoconference until 2.31 pm, and then in-person)

**2. Previous minutes**

Resolved on the motion of Ms Munro: That draft minutes no. 9 be confirmed.

**3. Correspondence**

Committee noted the following items of correspondence:

***Received:***

- 26 November 2024 – Email from Thomas Fienberg, to the secretariat, with a transcript correction following the hearing on 25 November 2024
- 27 November 2024 – Email from Amy Gill, Drama NSW, to the secretariat, providing a transcript correction following the hearing on 25 November 2024
- 6 December 2024 – Letter from the Hon Prue Car MP, Deputy Premier of New South Wales and Minister for Education and Early Learning, to the Chair, regarding the response to the Stage 6 Creative Arts Syllabus Consultation.

***Sent***

- 4 December 2024 – Letter from the Chair, to Ms Jasmine Robertson, Director Media, Art, Design and Entertainment, TAFE Eora (Darlington), thanking TAFE NSW for hosting the committee on a site visit
- 4 December 2024 – Letter from the Chair, to Ms Denise James, Principal, Bulli High School, thanking Bulli High School for hosting the committee on a site visit
- 4 December 2024 – Letter from the Chair, to Ms Annette Brown, CEO, Wollongong Conservatorium of Music, thanking Wollongong Conservatorium of Music for hosting the committee on a site visit
- 4 December 2024 – Letter from the Chair, to Professor Anna Reid, Dean & Head of School Sydney Conservatorium of Music, thanking Sydney Conservatorium of Music for hosting the committee on a site visit.

As previously agreed by the committee via email, the correspondence from the Hon Prue Car MP, Deputy Premier of New South Wales and Minister for Education and Early Learning, to the Chair, was published by the committee clerk under the authorisation of the resolution appointing the committee.

Resolved, on the motion of Mr D'Adam: That the committee authorise the publication of the following correspondence on the inquiry webpage:

- 6 December 2024 - Letter from the Hon Prue Car MP, Deputy Premier of New South Wales and Minister for Education and Early Learning, to the Chair, regarding the response to the Stage 6 Creative Arts Syllabus Consultation.

**4. Supplementary submission**

Committee noted that the following supplementary submission was published by the committee clerk under the authorisation of the resolution appointing the committee: submission no. 43a.

**5. Answers to questions on notice**

Committee noted that the following answers to questions on notice were published by the committee clerk under the authorisation of the resolution appointing the committee:

- Answers to questions on notice from the NSW Education Standards Authority, received 27 November 2024.

## 6. Consideration of Chair's draft report

The Chair submitted her draft report entitled '*Arts and music education and training in New South Wales*' which, having been previously circulated, was taken as being read.

### Chapter 2

Resolved, on the motion of Ms Boyd: That the following new paragraph be inserted before paragraph 2.3:

'Arts and music education, training and mentorships provide unique benefits to specific cohorts of vulnerable children and young people, including youth-at-risk, young people from low-socio-economic backgrounds, young people with disability, those living in regional and rural areas and First Nations young people. Programs and initiatives which are specialised for specific vulnerable cohorts fill a gap that general programs often cannot. Stakeholders who spoke about the benefits to these cohorts also emphasised the need for increased funding for specialist programs and initiatives carried out by organisations.'

Resolved, on the motion of Ms Boyd: That paragraph 2.12 be amended by inserting 'The committee also recognises the unique benefits arts and music provides to vulnerable cohorts of children and young people' after 'richly complex creative arts education.'

### Chapter 3

Resolved, on the motion of Ms Munro: That paragraph 3.118 be amended by omitting 'arts and music' and inserting instead 'Visual Arts, Music, Drama and Dance'.

Resolved, on the motion of Ms Boyd: That Recommendation 6 be amended by omitting 'existing' and inserting instead 'and expand'.

Ms Boyd moved : That:

- paragraph 3.122 be amended by inserting 'Many of these programs and initiatives are specialised to support and engage with vulnerable cohorts of young people including youth-at-risk, young people from low-socio-economic backgrounds, young people with disability, those living in regional and rural areas and First Nations young people' after 'deliver creative arts education.'
- Recommendation 7 be amended by inserting 'with consideration of those providing specialist programs to vulnerable cohorts of young people including youth-at-risk, young people from low-socio-economic backgrounds, young people with disability, those living in regional and rural areas and First Nations young people' after 'music education and training'.

Mr D'Adam moved that the motion of Ms Boyd be amended by inserting 'additional' before 'consideration'.

Amendment of Mr D'Adam put and passed.

Original question of Ms Boyd, as amended, put and passed.

Resolved, on the motion of Ms Boyd: That:

- Recommendation 8 be amended by omitting 'and identifies where arts and music programs are not being delivered'.
- the following new recommendation be inserted after Recommendation 8:

#### **'Recommendation X**

That the NSW Government conduct a state-wide audit or assessment to identify areas where arts and music programs are not being delivered.'

Resolved, on the motion of Ms Munro: That:

- a) paragraph 3.127 be amended by inserting ', including that the standards of regulation should take into consideration the ability of non-accredited tutors to deliver basic music tuition where appropriate' after 'adequate regulation of the industry'.
- b) That Recommendation 9 be amended by inserting ', including that the standards of regulation should take into consideration the ability of non-accredited tutors to deliver basic music tuition where appropriate' after 'adequate regulation of the industry'.

## Chapter 5

Resolved, on the motion of Ms Munro: That the following new paragraph be inserted after paragraph 5.84:

'Following the release of the draft Stage 6 Music and Drama syllabuses an e-petition was launched on the NSW Parliament's website calling on the government to implement a "new review process to commence following the release of the NSW Parliamentary Inquiry Report on Arts and Music Education and Training," stating that the petitioners "view the release of these syllabuses as a significant backward step and not representing the values of our members. If not addressed with additional policy safeguards, we forecast a significant decrease in enrolments for Music and Drama courses, leading to ongoing implications for our state's artistic voice and the arts economy." The e-petition received 8,555 signatures in a three-week period.'

[FOOTNOTE: Parliament of New South Wales, Legislative Assembly – Closed ePetition Details, Suspend and remove the draft music and drama syllabuses from circulation and restart the review process with improved policy safeguards, [https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/la/Pages/closedePetition-details.aspx?q=pH7Tit7rg\\_lpbKMGihBUpA](https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/la/Pages/closedePetition-details.aspx?q=pH7Tit7rg_lpbKMGihBUpA)]

Resolved, on the motion of Ms Boyd: That the following new finding be inserted after paragraph 5.95:

### 'Finding X

Practical exams and assessment for performing arts students has long been the hallmark of achieving excellence in their subject areas.'

Resolved on the motion of Ms Munro: That paragraph 5.98 be amended by inserting 'The significant restriction of student choice across the proposed Stage 6 Music syllabuses in content areas and electives for assessment coupled with more rigid, less diverse examination weightings runs contrary to the expert evidence given about what constitutes high quality music education.' after 'The committee acknowledges other key concerns about the proposed changes to draft Stage 6 Music syllabuses, including the decreased flexibility and diversity of choice in focus areas, the removal of composition as a core element of the course, and the increase of written examinations.'

Resolved, on the motion of Ms Munro: That paragraph 5.102 be amended by inserting 'also noting that the process for further NESAs consultation on the Stage 6 Music and Drama syllabuses is unclear to the committee.' after 'process to begin again.'

Ms Munro moved: That paragraph 5.102 be amended by omitting: 'We do not support this stance. Rather, to maintain the NSW Curriculum Reform timeline' before 'international drama and music curricula and research.'

Question put.

The committee divided.

Ayes: Mr Anderson, Ms Hannan and Ms Munro.

Noes: Ms Boyd, Ms Butler, Mr D'Adam, Ms Finn and Ms Suvaal.

Question resolved in the negative.

Resolved, on the motion of Ms Munro: That paragraph 5.102 be amended by omitting 'future' before 'consultation is transparent'.

Ms Munro moved: That the following new recommendation be inserted after paragraph 5.102:

### **Recommendation X**

'That the NSW Education Standards Authority release a second draft of the Stage 6 Music and Drama syllabuses for public consultation before finalisation for the benefit of providing a high-quality education for future students and to maintain professional confidence in the drafting process.'

The committee divided.

Ayes: Mr Anderson, Ms Boyd and Ms Munro.

Noes: Ms Butler, Mr D'Adam, Ms Finn, Ms Hannan and Ms Suvaal.

Question resolved in the negative.

Ms Munro moved: That Recommendation 18 be omitted: 'That the NSW Education Standards Authority ensures the final Stage 6 Drama and Music syllabuses are informed by the views expressed in this report', and the following new recommendation be inserted instead:

'That the NSW Government and the NSW Education Standards Authority ensures the Stage 6 Drama and Music syllabuses are reflective of best, evidence-based practice teaching methodology, content and assessment standards, community expectations and incorporate the feedback provided by community members of the Technical Advisory Groups, Targeted Assessment Consultations and the wider public through the Have Your Say period.'

The committee divided.

Ayes: Mr Anderson, Ms Boyd, Ms Hannan and Ms Munro.

Noes: Ms Butler, Mr D'Adam, Ms Finn and Ms Suvaal.

There being an equality of votes, question resolved in the negative on the casting vote of the Chair.

Resolved, on the motion of Mr D'Adam: That Recommendation 18 be omitted: 'That the NSW Education Standards Authority ensures the final Stage 6 Drama and Music syllabuses are informed by the views expressed in this report', and the following new recommendation be inserted instead:

'That the NSW Government and the NSW Education Standards Authority ensures the Stage 6 Drama and Music syllabuses are reflective of community expectations and incorporates the feedback provided by community members of the Technical Advisory Groups, Targeted Assessment Consultations and the wider public through the Have Your Say period.'

### **Chapter 6**

Resolved, on the motion of Ms Boyd: That:

- a) Recommendation 19 be amended by omitting: 'with a focus on building business and financial skills' after 'That the NSW Government fund industry-based placements and traineeships including for school experience placements'
- b) Finding 8 be amended by inserting 'Formal' before 'Pathways for tertiary arts and music education and training in New South Wales are diminishing making it harder and more expensive for students to pursue their passion for arts and music.'
- c) Recommendation 21 be amended by inserting: 'including consideration of expanding access to courses with a focus on building business and financial skills relevant to a career in the creative industries.' after 'courses in arts and music'.

Resolved, on the motion of Ms Boyd: That Recommendation 22 be amended by inserting 'as part of a broader strategy towards lowering fees for students' after 'per-head support'.

Resolved, on the motion of Ms Boyd: That Recommendation 23 be amended by inserting 'of a diverse range of relevant stakeholders, including young people' before 'on flexible arts learning including micro-credits, badging and online learning for practical courses.'

## Chapter 7

Resolved, on the motion of Ms Boyd: That the following new paragraphs be inserted after paragraph 7.5:

'The committee also received evidence about the barriers to access, lack of inclusion and discrimination that people with disability face, across all levels of education and in both metropolitan and regional areas, by artists and audiences with disability.'

Ms Elizabeth Martin from Accessible Arts, the peak arts and disability organisation in New South Wales, told the committee: 'While there has been a lot of progression over the last few years, including increased awareness within the broader community, there remain numerous barriers that people with disability face to accessing arts and culture as audience, artists, students or employees'.

[FOOTNOTE: Evidence, Ms Elizabeth Martin, Chief Executive Officer, Accessible Arts NSW, 23 August 2024, p 9.]

Accessible Arts in its submission highlighted this lack of access, saying:

*At present there appears to be a lack of awareness across education institutions regarding:*

- 1. The need to create accessible education programs for students with disability and how to practically provide ongoing support.*
- 2. The need to provide content within arts and music education curriculums that includes knowledge building and practical implementation of accessibility features within creative works and programs such as Auslan, captioning, audio description, accessible costume and set-building design, etc.*

[FOOTNOTE: Submission 37, Accessible Arts, p 3.]

Resolved, on the motion of Ms Boyd: That Finding 9 be amended by inserting 'for students as well as prospective teachers' before 'in New South Wales'.

Resolved on the motion of Ms Boyd: That Finding 10 be amended by omitting 'essential' and inserting instead 'excellent'.

Mr Anderson moved: That Recommendation 25 be omitted: 'That the NSW Government consider increasing funding to regional conservatoriums and reviewing key performance measures, especially around engagement with schools, under the Regional Conservatorium Grants Program', and the following new recommendation be inserted instead:

'That the NSW Government increase funding to regional conservatoriums and review key performance measures, especially around engagement with schools, under the Regional Conservatorium Grants Program, to ensure sustainable future growth.'

Mr D'Adam moved: That the motion of Mr Anderson be amended by inserting 'and service gaps' after 'key performance measures'.

Amendment of Mr D'Adam put and passed.

Original question of Mr Anderson, as amended, put and passed.

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Anderson: That Recommendation 26 be omitted: 'That the NSW Government to explore innovative models to enhance the role of regional conservatoriums and strengthen partnerships with the NSW Department of Education', and the following new recommendation be inserted instead:

'That the NSW Government formalise and strengthen the partnership between the NSW Department of Education and regional conservatoriums and establish innovative models to support and enhance the role of regional conservatoriums, including in conjunction with Create NSW and the NSW Department of Education.'

Resolved, on the motion of Ms Boyd: That Recommendation 27 be amended by inserting 'and mentorship' before 'programs that will build.'

Resolved, on the motion of Mr D'Adam: That:

The draft report as amended be the report of the committee and that the committee present the report to the House;

The transcripts of evidence, tabled documents, submissions, correspondence, responses and summary report to the online questionnaire, and answers to questions taken on notice relating to the inquiry be tabled in the House with the report;

Upon tabling, all unpublished attachments to submissions and individual responses to the online questionnaire be kept confidential by the committee;

Upon tabling, all unpublished transcripts of evidence, tabled documents, submissions, correspondence, responses and summary report to the online questionnaire, answers to questions taken on notice related to the inquiry be published by the committee, except for those documents kept confidential by resolution of the committee;

The committee secretariat correct any typographical, grammatical and formatting errors prior to tabling;

The committee secretariat be authorised to update any committee comments where necessary to reflect changes to recommendations or new recommendations resolved by the committee;

Dissenting statements be provided to the secretariat within 24 hours after receipt of the draft minutes of the meeting;

The secretariat is tabling the report at 10.30 am on Thursday 12 December 2024.

**7. Take note debate in the Legislative Council**

The committee noted that Mr D'Adam will move a take note debate for the report in the Legislative Council.

**8. Adjournment**

The committee adjourned at 3.40 pm.

Holly Rivas  
**Committee Clerk**

## Appendix 5 Dissenting statements

**Hon Jacqui Munro MLC, Liberal Party**  
**Hon Kevin Anderson MP, The Nationals**

The Coalition, while largely supportive of the Committee's final report, notes important departures from the Committee's sentiments regarding the draft Stage 6 Music and Drama syllabuses (the syllabuses) proposed by the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA), expressed in Chapter 5.

The Coalition strongly affirms report Findings 6 and 7, that the draft Stage 6 Drama and Music syllabuses do not meet community expectations and need extensive revision, however, believes that the Committee's comments and recommendations do not go far enough to address these findings.

There are four material matters about which the Coalition does not agree with the committee.

Firstly, the Coalition does not believe that the Committee should have stated an outright rejection of widespread calls for the Stage 6 Music and Drama syllabus drafting processes to be halted and commenced again from the beginning.

Secondly, the Coalition does not agree with the statement that the current syllabus drafting process should be continued simply to "maintain the NSW Curriculum Reform timeline".

Thirdly, the Coalition is deeply concerned that Recommendation 19 excludes reference to best, evidence-based practice teaching methodology, content and assessment standards, as was originally proposed by the Coalition and supported by the crossbench.

Fourthly, the Coalition moved a recommendation that "the NSW Education Standards Authority release a second draft of the Stage 6 Music and Drama syllabuses for public consultation before finalisation for the benefit of providing a high-quality education for future students and to maintain professional confidence in the drafting process" which was not supported.

### **Context**

Towards the conclusion of the Arts and Music Education Inquiry the draft Stage 6 Creative Arts syllabuses were released by NESA for public feedback. The proposed content and assessment of the syllabuses led to an outcry of concern from teachers, academics and former students including Australian performing arts icons Tim Minchin, Logie award winning actress Heather Mitchell AM and ARIA award winner Oliver Leimbach of Lime Cordiale. Teachers convened in the hundreds and garnered significant media attention.

The Coalition is grateful for the support of committee members to hold an urgent, additional public hearing to accommodate oral evidence and written submissions from expert members of the community.

During the 'Have Your Say' public consultation period NESA responded pre-emptively to one of the concerns raised by the drama community about the removal of the externally assessed HSC group performance by stating that this proposed change would be reversed.



## Priorities and best practice

The committee received recurring evidence about the importance of NSW as a national and international leader in creative arts education.

Dr Emily Wilson and Dr Brad Merrick submitted that

For 40 years, NSW has led nationally with an inclusive senior secondary curriculum and the highest number of Year 12 music enrolments. The NSW Syllabus is the envy of music teachers across Australia. For everyone who believes in music-for-everyone and access to lifelong engagement in music making as a participant, the statistics speak for themselves. In NSW, 7% of Year 12 students do music, whereas, in Victoria it's 4% and the Victorian situation is replicated across other states.<sup>679</sup>

The Coalition is concerned that adherence to a timeline appears more important than robust syllabus development which puts student outcomes at the heart of decision-making.

## Process of consultation

Evidence received by the committee repeatedly noted the breakdown of communication and trust between NESAs and expert stakeholders engaged through the drafting process including the Technical Advisory Group, critical friends, subject matter officers and syllabus writers.

Dr Christine Hatton stated in her evidence that “The curriculum reform priority two, ‘Draw on the expertise of teachers to ensure the review's outcomes continue to support their work,’ has not been fulfilled.”<sup>680</sup>

Dr Paul Gardiner wrote, “the changes contained in the proposed syllabus are at odds with the intent of the review process.”<sup>681</sup>

Further, the committee took evidence that the syllabuses were contradictory to expert feedback provided, did not reflect the intention of academics cited in the evidence designed to justify the changes and were internally inconsistent, including:

- Professor Michael Anderson: “The writers and several officers within NESAs had produced serviceable drafts for consultation. At the eleventh-hour unknown officers within NESAs changed the drafts that these writers and experts had created and released a disfigured version of the current syllabus. The current draft is unteachable and unworkable and, in my view, will lead to the demise of the subject.”<sup>682</sup>

<sup>679</sup> Dr Emily Wilson, Head of Music, Senior Lecturer, University of Melbourne and Dr Brad Merrick, Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Education University of Melbourne, submission dated 21 November 2024, p3.

<sup>680</sup> Dr Christine Hatton, Director of Research, Drama Australia, evidence at public hearing on Monday 25 November 2024, p2.

<sup>681</sup> Dr Paul Gardiner, Senior Lecturer in Creativity and the Arts at the University of Wollongong, submission dated 21 November 2024, p3.

<sup>682</sup> Professor Michael Anderson, Professor of Arts and Creativity Education, Co-Director of The CREATE Centre, The University of Sydney, submission dated 21 November 2024, p3.

- Dr Rachel White: “There are various aspects of the proposed syllabuses that present confusing or contradictory representations of content or learning.”<sup>683</sup>
- Dr Gardiner: “the academic research (including my own) referenced in the draft to explain and validate the document does not support the details of the syllabus, suggesting a disconnect in the process.”<sup>684</sup>
- Dr Hatton: “The evidence that they have used is actually not evidence at all. They’ve got some of my work there, and I do not support the changes.”<sup>685</sup>
- Dr Feinberg: “In music, similarly, we had 31 academics sign a letter. Many of those are cited in the evidence base. If the evidence base is disputing their citation in the documents themselves, then we’ve got a problem.”<sup>686</sup>

Addressing this clear breakdown in process is at the heart of Coalition’s recommendation to hold a public second draft consultation period.

### **Evidence and a way forward**

Submissions overwhelmingly expressed that NESA’s changes fall well short of best practice and teacher expectations, from consultation to content to assessment, which is why the Coalition believes it was incumbent upon the committee to reflect this sentiment to NESA in Recommendation 19.

Further, every non-government submission received about this matter called for the suspension of the current consultation process and for the syllabus development process to start again, prioritising transparent engagement, expert educational input from practicing teachers and research-led work.

A public second draft consultation period to give confidence to teachers, students, academics and the people of NSW that the Stage 6 Creative Arts syllabuses remain world class.

The Coalition continues to urge the NSW Government and NESA to present a second draft of the music and drama syllabuses for public consultation.

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<sup>683</sup> Dr Rachel White, Senior Lecturer, Learning Environments and Pedagogy, Arts Nexus, School of Education, Western Sydney University, submission dated 21 November 2024, p2.

<sup>684</sup> Dr Gardiner, submission dated 21 November 2024, p2.

<sup>685</sup> Dr Christine Hatton, evidence at public hearing on Monday 25 November 2024, p10.

<sup>686</sup> Dr Thomas Feinberg, Vice-Chair, Australian Society for Music Education NSW, evidence at public hearing on Monday 25 November 2024, p10.





