

Joint Select Committee
Inquiry into Arts and Music Education and Training In New South Wales
Hearing: 23 August 2024
Transcript Questions

TITLE: ENROLMENT DATA

QUESTION 1 PAGE NO 60

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: I want to ask about enrolments. One of the other things that we're hearing is that enrolments are in decline. I don't know whether it's possible to get a data set provided to the Committee, on notice, for the arts, music 1, 2 and extension and VET entertainment in terms of maybe the last five years on a school-by-school basis. How many candidates for each of those courses were there, just to give us an indication of whether there has been—I suppose there are two issues that we are looking at. One is that there has been a decline in enrolments in those areas in the public system as opposed to the private system where there has been capacity to attract skilled teachers. What we are hearing is that the private system is having a much stronger delivery of those learning areas to the public system and that's resulting in an issue around enrolments. Is that data held?

PAUL CAHILL: Yes.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Do you have similar data for the stage five electives for art and music? Are we seeing a similar phenomenon at stage five? It is stage five electives who then go on to do the HSC courses. We are hearing a narrative around a narrowing pipeline of people going into the arts. It may start with a weakness in the stage four experience leading to lower enrolments in the elective stream, leading to lower enrolments in the HSC courses. Could that data be provided on notice?

PAUL CAHILL: The data we can provide really reflects more on year 10 rather than years 9 and 10 because it relates to the record of school achievement because that's the credential part, and that's why we collect and keep that data. But certainly we can provide that as well.

ANSWER

A review of government and non-government enrolments in creative arts courses (Dance, Drama, Music, Visual Arts, VET Entertainment Industry) over the last five years indicates the following:

Enrolments

- There is consistency over time in Year 12 creative arts course enrolments. For government school students, consistently 7% of course enrolments are in creative arts (from 2019 to 2023)¹. For non-government students (students studying at Catholic systemic, other systems, other independent and other recognised schools, and TAFE), it is consistently 6%.
- There is also consistency over time in creative arts elective course enrolments in Year 10. Between 7% and 8% of government school student elective course

¹ Excluding mandatory English.

enrolments are in creative arts. For non-government students, it is between 5% and 7%.

- In Year 12 government school students account for about 55% of total HSC enrolments each year. Student enrolments for most examinable creative arts courses reflect this total HSC composition.
- The proportion of government schools running Year 12 creative arts subjects has been consistent over the past five years, for most subjects.
- Similarly, a consistent percentage of the approximately 400 non-government schools with Year 12 run creative arts subjects.

TITLE: STAGE 6 REVIEW

QUESTION 2 PAGE NO 63

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: In terms of the stage six review, what is the timing of that being finalised and rolled out?

PAUL CAHILL: I will take this on notice and confirm the timing because my memory is not as good as it once was. We are in the process of recruiting, which would typically mean we would be starting a development process that would likely run into '25, probably '26. All things being equal, it's generally an 18-month process. I always keep my fingers crossed that it is a smooth process and that we meet the 18 months, but sometimes it can run into two years. That's pretty much where we're at with that. We deliberately placed that there for a couple of reasons. One is that we wanted to get the foundations right in K-6 and 7-10. The other thing—and this is a very practical thing—is that we wanted to be very mindful of the demands on teachers. Often you would have teachers in 7-10 implementing a syllabus. You don't want them to have to do 11 and 12 at the same time because it's a big job of work.

ANSWER

The development of the Visual Arts 11-12 and Visual Arts Life Skills 11-12 syllabuses will commence in 2025. The final Visual Arts 11-12 and Visual Arts Life Skills 11-12 syllabus's will be released in 2026.

TITLE: SPECIALIST CODES

QUESTION 3 PAGE NO 64, 65

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: I'm sorry if I'm just not understanding how this framework works, but at a primary level you have a teacher and they have different codes, according to different skills that they might have developed on top of their generalist training that they've achieved. Is that correct?

MARTIN GRAHAM: That's right.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Then what kinds of skills can those codes refer to?

MARTIN GRAHAM: They might, for example, have a lot of experience as a choirmaster, and a principal will sign off saying, "Yes, they do all the regional choirs. They've definitely got that skill." If you're another principal looking for someone with choir experience, I can assure you, this is your person. But they won't have two years university choir, which is where in secondary school, to get a music code, you have to have a university degree which has a certain amount of music in it, not just a generalist ITE qualification.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Are there any primary school codes that relate to that specialisation level?

MARTIN GRAHAM: No. There are generally not. Teacher-librarians, for example—there is a position of teacher-librarian, we have a particular code, but in general they are generalists.

SYLVIA CORISH: You can become a teacher-librarian without having qualifications in being a teacher-librarian.

MARTIN GRAHAM: It does get complicated. We can provide more information on that because it is quite a complex area.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: We have got a lot of evidence on that.

Dr JOE McGIRR: We need some clarification on that.

MARTIN GRAHAM: We often have to refresh our memory on this because it is quite a complex deal. The Department of Education has its own language and complexity. We can provide some additional evidence on that.

ANSWER

The NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) accredits initial teacher education (ITE) programs that meet both national standards & procedures and NSW specific requirements. This includes discipline knowledge, and curriculum/pedagogical studies as specified in the NSW Supplementary Documentation: Subject Content Knowledge Requirements (Revised) policy (SCK policy). Such programs prepare graduates to teach NSW syllabuses relevant to the stage of schooling and specific teaching area/s of their ITE qualification.

The SCK policy provides details of the discipline knowledge, and the curriculum and pedagogical studies aligned with the NESA syllabus documents which are required in ITE programs accredited in NSW. NESA accredits an individual as a teacher based solely on completion, or substantial completion, of such an ITE program.

A copy of the policy is available on the NESA website at <https://www.nsw.gov.au/education-and-training/nesa/about/policies-and-procedures/index/subject-content-knowledge-requirements-july-2018>.

Employers have the responsibility for allocating teaching duties to teachers and are not constrained by the NESA advice on the substance of a teacher's qualifications. Teaching areas are only assigned by NESA at the point of initial accreditation, based on study completed, to support employment processes. Recognition of teachers that have re-trained in additional teaching areas throughout their career, and/or are teaching out of field is the remit of employers.

The Department of Education grants approval to teach and relevant subject teaching codes based on the teacher's tertiary qualifications and NESA accreditation decision.

Universities offer a range of specialisations for infants and primary teacher education programs including for primary mathematics, science and technology and languages. Teachers completing these programs are granted an additional teaching code in recognition of their specialisation.

Where a primary or secondary teacher completes additional recognised qualifications in specialisations such as Library, English as an additional language or dialect, Careers, or Special/Inclusive Education the teacher is granted approval to teach the relevant subject and is granted the additional teaching codes to denote their qualifications in the relevant specialisation.

Information on the codes is available on the department's website at <https://education.nsw.gov.au/about-us/careers-at-education/roles-and-locations/roles-at-education/teaching/staffing-procedure-appendices/staffing-codes/staffing-codes-primary>.