

Submission
No 9

INQUIRY INTO ARTS AND MUSIC EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Organisation: Victorian Music Teachers' Association Inc

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The current music education learning landscape across primary, secondary and tertiary levels

The reality is that the current music education landscape, across all tiers, is inconsistent and inequitable.

We anticipate other submissions will focus on classroom music contexts and how curriculum priorities are delivered in these settings. We collectively support the concerns raised in these areas, and call for intervention and attention in this regard.

However, we seek to use our submission to advocate specifically for instrumental and ensemble music across the primary, secondary and tertiary levels. In their *Survey of Primary Teachers, Music Education: Right From The Start* found that instrumental music programs were found in 59% of respondent schools.

Instrumental music is often a user-pays extra-curricular activity facilitated in 1:1 or group tuition/rehearsal settings by personnel who are either employed as teaching staff or contracted as sessional staff. As a result, these programs are rarely accessible to *all* students, and certainly, in Victoria and New South Wales, this additional supplement to the classroom curriculum is not supported in Government schools.

As such, whether or not young people have access to this is entirely dependent on a variety of factors, including financial viability, resourcing and the views of school leadership. Whether or not a particular suburb, school or student has access to quality music education should not be predicated on their budget allocation, scope of facilities or whether the Principal deems it a valuable branding tool.

Access to quality music education is not a privilege, it is a right.

Additionally, though the Music Education: Right From The Start - *Sound Investment* report shows the mandated classroom curriculum in New South Wales is accessible, and well supported by the regional conservatorium network, the same cannot be said for the instrumental and ensemble music specialisation. Aside from Queensland, this disparity is replicated in all other Australian states.

Suggested Solution

This inconsistency of delivery and inequity of access in New South Wales could be mitigated through establishment of a state-wide instrumental music program delivered in Government schools.

The Music Teachers Association of New South Wales is well placed to support the allocation of qualified, accredited and compliant teaching staff for this program, as well as ongoing professional learning.

Coincidentally, this is an initiative that could also be similarly supported if implemented in other states.

Initial teacher education courses in the tertiary sector and ongoing professional development

A key recommendation in the *Alberts: The Tony Foundation* submission to the *2022 National Cultural Policy* was the increased provision of support and training for teachers (current and pre-service) in delivering quality sequential music education.

Additionally, their findings in the *Sound Investment* report demonstrate noticeable gaps between training and practice, including greater emphasis in tertiary courses on music 'performance' as opposed to teaching, as well as a lack of meaningful collaboration with professional development associations.

Furthermore, their *Initial Teacher Education* report shows that on average, only eight hours of compulsory music education is offered in a primary teaching degree, down 53% since 2009, with an average of only 42 hours spent across an entire music specialisation degree where that is accessible.

Alarming, 58% of surveyed universities report students in these degrees do not observe or participate in music lessons while on practicum, and the limited compulsory hours of music education in a generalist primary degree results in students requesting additional hours for this specialisation.

Suggested Solution

Initial teacher education courses delivered in New South Wales could be strengthened through access to specialised professional development and the opportunity to observe or participate in music lessons whilst on practicum.

The Music Teachers Association of New South Wales is well placed to provide these opportunities, recognising the specialised nature of instrumental music teaching.

Coincidentally, this is an initiative that could also be similarly supported if implemented in other states, as professional learning and ongoing quality assurance through accreditation practices are key cornerstones of seven of the organisations in this collective.

The role of music teaching associations and music organisations

Each state manages classroom teacher registration and accreditation broadly through governing bodies, substantiated by legislation that mandates this. However, the instrumental music teaching sector is largely unregulated across Australia.

The classroom teaching registration bodies and curriculum authorities are unable to cater for the highly specialised nature of the sector, only further hindered by the inconsistency in how programs are delivered - if at all - in schools across the country.

The various Music Teaching Associations were formed to fill this gap, seeking to offer rigorous accreditation procedures as a means of self-regulation, supplemented by access to ongoing quality professional learning, sector advice, collegial networking and more. These organisations are formed *by* instrumental music teachers *for* instrumental music teachers and their learning communities.

This support has a far greater impact, encompassing any creative individual who engages in the teaching of music. As outlined in the Alberts: The Tony Foundation submission to the *2020 Inquiry into Australia's creative and cultural industries and institutions*, music education is critical to any efforts in the broader music industry.

As a foundational element in the ecosystem, it builds both potential future creative professionals and stakeholders who will engage with, support and benefit from, music as an artform. Furthermore, the economic and social benefits of supporting music education also encompasses employment opportunities for educators, or for creative professionals to supplement their artistic output with teaching.

Professional associations like those that form our collective were referenced as key stakeholders in the Music Education: Right From The Start - *a Sound Investment* report (page 31), highlighting the vital role we play in terms of self-regulation and quality assurance, up-skilling of educators and support of an ecosystem that includes school settings across all tiers.

Additionally, they speak to the shift from internal professional learning and support delivered by education departments to external providers, such as the organisations this collective represents.

Quality music education, as defined by the Alberts Tony Foundation Music Education: Right from the Start advocacy initiative, requires the extended delivery of a multi-modal, disciplined, rigorously-scaffolded and carefully sequential educational experience that spans 5-10 years and which is *delivered by a teacher with knowledge and skills in music learning*.

Suggested Solution

A strategic partnership between the New South Wales Education Standards Authority (NESA) and the Music Teachers Association of New South Wales would help to fill the 'specialisation' gaps inherent in the current regulatory system and promote quality music education in all school settings, both classroom and instrumental.

The establishment of such a partnership would officially recognise the importance of organisations like the Music Teachers Association of New South Wales, expand upon the vital service that NESA already provides and enhance the professionalism of the instrumental music teaching sector.

Coincidentally, this is an initiative that could also be similarly supported if implemented in other states, though New South Wales would be at the pioneering forefront.

An inclusive approach to supporting teachers, principals and school communities in delivering quality music education

We have already established in this submission the significant inequity that exists in instrumental music teaching; that it is often only accessible to school communities with funding and resources.

Further to this, the Music Education: Right From The Start - *a Sound Investment* report outlines the disparity in delivery across the various schooling sectors; Government, Independent and Catholic. The report also speaks to the difficulty for schools in smaller regional and remote towns to deliver quality music education. Additionally, it references the lack of knowledge for school leaders on the benefits of music education and the means to evaluate the outcomes of music programs.

Earlier in this submission, a suggestion was made around an Instrumental Music Program funded for implementation in Government Schools around New South Wales. This initiative would help to mitigate the financial and resourcing barrier for schools, however it would also be a formal acknowledgement of the benefits of music education, alleviating the discretionary issue with school leaders.

The Instrumental Music Program would easily be aligned with NESA classroom music curriculum, with specialised application for the sector as supported by the Music Teachers Association of New South Wales, ensuring both quality accreditation and professional learning opportunities for teachers alongside integrated and meaningful outcomes for students.

The Music Teachers' Association of New South Wales, and the forthcoming parent national body across Australia, are also in a position to provide support to learning communities by advising school leadership and department heads on employment conditions, connecting personnel with relevant curriculum resources and maintaining a register of accredited teachers that can be reliably engaged in these settings.

Suggested Solution

Further to the previously suggested strategic partnership between the New South Wales Education Standards Authority (NESA) and the Music Teachers Association of New South Wales, a similar collaboration could occur formally with the Regional Conservatoriums across the state.

The Conservatoriums would continue to exist as 'lighthouse' institutions for quality music education, and with the support of the Music Teachers Association of New South Wales, could expand their reach through use of technology; online lessons, masterclasses and more.

This would strengthen the delivery of curriculum-aligned quality instrumental music education instruction and enhance the professional pathways for young musicians in New South Wales across metropolitan and regional areas, regardless of whether students attend Government, Independent or Catholic schools.

Coincidentally, this is an initiative that could also be similarly supported if implemented in other states, though New South Wales would be at the pioneering forefront.

Recognising the commendable approaches to music education interstate & internationally

The timetabling of music ensemble rehearsals as a class and strong correlation with sporting culture in the United States, ensures vibrant and diversified instrumental music education offerings. Music Hubs in the United Kingdom support local government schools to enable widespread access to quality music education.

The Music Education: Right From The Start team reported that in Canada, the level of music studied at university is very high and that music education is delivered by specialist trained teachers - making them world leaders in this space.

In Australia, our closest competitor in this regard is Queensland, where higher value and perception of music education in schools exists, translating to improved support and professional development for teachers and musical achievement and engagement from students.

Second to this from an *instrumental music perspective* is Western Australia, Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory, where Government-supported Instrumental Music Programs are in place. It should be noted that the South Australian Government has also recently made a commitment to improving music education in the state, though the impact this will have on instrumental music specifically is unknown.

A Parliamentary Inquiry similar to this one was conducted in Victoria back in 2013, and though some of the recommendations have been implemented, the profession is still experiencing issues that predate the Inquiry and align with the challenges being faced in New South Wales.

Suggested Solution

Further to the previously suggested establishment of an instrumental music program funded by the Government in New South Wales, this collective suggests engaging with Queensland music education stakeholders regarding the comparative strength of their commitment. Additionally, engaging with South Australia for their new approach to music education and with Victoria in regards to their previous Inquiry findings and recommendations, would be worthwhile.

Suggestions actions to address identified barriers in achieving quality music education for all

As outlined in the *Alberts: The Tony Foundation submission to the 2020 Inquiry into Australia's creative and cultural industries and institutions*, quality music education barriers include some of what we have touched on in this submission. This includes systemic inequality, insufficiencies in adequately trained teachers and a lack of a shared understanding of the place music education should have in delivering a higher standard of education for every Australian school student.

From a specifically instrumental/ensemble music perspective, there has traditionally been a lack of shared vision within our community on what constitutes an appropriate level of music education training. The collective is committed to forming a national federation or body of music teaching associations and music organisations to coordinate and collaborate on such matters as the setting of

quality standards for the teaching of music and music teacher education, to support the monitoring of standards, quality assurance and accreditation currently undertaken separately at state level.

It is worth noting in the *Inquiry into the extent, benefits and potential of music education in Victorian schools: Committee Final Report* (page 139), the Committee comments as such regarding professional standards for instrumental music teachers:

However, the Committee notes that professional standards are a matter for the instrumental music teacher profession to determine. Accordingly, the Committee encourages the professional associations that cover instrumental music teachers in Victoria to consider whether there would be benefit in developing professional standards for instrumental music teachers working in Victorian schools.

The Victorian Music Teachers' Association have established Instrumental Music Teaching Standards that align with the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership and Victorian Institute of Teaching standards, applying these in a relevant and rigorous way for the profession. As part of the collective, this resource would be shared to help form a nationally-recognised benchmark for profession-specific teaching standards.

Suggested Solution Summary

- Combat inconsistency of delivery and inequity of access in New South Wales by establishing a state-wide instrumental music program delivered in Government schools
- Strengthen initial teacher education courses by partnering with the Music Teachers Association of New South Wales to provide specialised professional development and observation/participation opportunities whilst on practicum.
- Fill the 'specialisation' gaps inherent in the current regulatory system to support all stakeholders through a strategic partnership between the New South Wales Education Standards Authority (NESA) and the Music Teachers Association of New South Wales.
- Expand the 'lighthouse' benefits of the Regional Conservatorium network through the support of the Music Teachers Association of New South Wales, ensuring broadened reach for all stakeholders.
- Engage with key stakeholders in other Australian states, acknowledging the importance of music education.



In Conclusion

This collective thanks the Joint Select Committee for the opportunity to contribute to this Inquiry. We would welcome any chance to meet virtually with the Committee to elaborate on matters raised in our submission should that be helpful.

Sincerely,

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