

Submission  
No 22

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

**Organisation:** Clarence Valley Conservatorium

**Date Received:** 24 July 2024

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Clarence Valley Conservatorium welcomes the opportunity to submit to the Inquiry. As a key provider of music education in the Clarence Valley region, we are deeply committed to nurturing musical talent and providing comprehensive music education to students of all ages. We believe our experiences and insights can offer valuable perspectives on the current state and future needs of arts and music education in New South Wales.

The Clarence Valley Conservatorium is a member of the Association of NSW Regional Conservatoriums and receives partial funding through the Regional Conservatoriums Grants Program.

Currently, Conservatorium tutors work with more than 1000 students each week, across a wide range of ages, from young people through to those who are not so young.

Over the years, I have noticed a significant decrease in the importance placed on music education and the rising costs associated with music education.

Schools have become much less focused on music activities, leading to a decline in the number of programs available for school students to learn music. Research consistently shows that early exposure to music education enhances cognitive development, improves academic performance, and fosters social and emotional growth.

Advanced students in regional areas often have limited opportunities for further development, such as access to specialist teachers, advanced ensembles, and performance opportunities.

The Clarence Valley Conservatorium is a significant employer within the Clarence Valley arts space, providing opportunities for steady employment to musicians and musician-educators within our region. Currently, 17 people are employed by the CVCon across a variety of employment methods - not to mention providing a performance space for local, national and international musicians.

It is imperative that musicians are provided the opportunities to continue to teach music. We would like to see a greater focus placed on pedagogy at the tertiary level and more focus placed on regional areas to attract teaching staff to regional conservatoriums.

The RCGP has remained stagnant over the last 10 years. This is despite Regional Conservatoriums meeting and exceeding KPM and targets designed by the NSW Department of Education. A significant increase in the costs of doing business has occurred over the last several years and the RCGP has not kept up with this - leaving CVCon in a perilous financial situation each year. An increase in funding to the RCGP would allow the CVCon to maintain and improve services delivered to the Clarence Valley community and schools.

The Clarence Valley Conservatorium is housed in two buildings in Grafton. One building is purpose-built and is ideal, but the secondary building is a converted house that is not fit for purpose. We'd like to remove this secondary building and replace it with a new building - connected to our main building and providing a suitable home for music lessons in the Clarence Valley. Our plans are now ready to be presented and we are actively seeking funding - but it will be an expensive project. I've attached some photos to give an idea of the sub-standard space.

The CVCon wholeheartedly supports the work of the Association Of NSW Regional Conservatoriums and its Committee. A more significant support of the ANSWRC by the NSW

government would be an advantageous outcome. This could take the form of a person funded to manage the Association business.

The Clarence Valley Conservatorium strongly believes that arts and music education are critical components of a well-rounded education and essential for the cultural enrichment of our society.