

Submission  
No 29

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

**Organisation:** School Bands Australia

**Date Received:** 25 July 2024

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24<sup>th</sup> July 2024

To the members of Joint Select Committee on Arts and Music Education and Training in NSW.

## Executive Summary

### 1. Introduction and Background

School Bands Australia (SBA) supports music education in 30 primary schools, serving 1,500 students weekly with a team of 30 staff. The Band Together Foundation aims to enhance children's lives through high-quality music education, fostering cognitive, emotional, and social development.

### 2. Submission Objective

The submission focuses on examining effective music education approaches in other jurisdictions, specifically the Welsh model, and proposes a similar multifaceted, partnership-led approach to deliver a foundational music education program to NSW Primary School students.

### 3. The Buzz on Band (BoB!) Program

The pBuzz instrument enables Year 2 students to engage in whole-class music making, providing access for all students and classroom teachers. A successful 2023 pilot program in three schools showed students meeting and exceeding Stage 3 K-6 curriculum outcomes in musical skills and knowledge. This program is designed to create 'educated listeners' that will develop future artists and audiences

### 4. Local Manufacture and Social Impact

Inspired by the Welsh model, the BoB! proposal includes the local manufacturing of pBuzz instruments, and the involvement of NDIS enterprises to support employment for disadvantaged groups, mirroring the Welsh success in integrating social value with educational goals.

### 5. Teacher Support and Training

The program offers structured online lessons, resources, and optional in-person professional development for classroom teachers, boosting their confidence and ability to teach music effectively.

### 6. Progressive Instrument Pathway

The BoB! program encourages interest in a variety of musical instruments, not limited to brass, emphasising the importance of early foundation skills in music education. This will give long term cultural benefits of music and arts appreciation, developing future artists and audiences in NSW.

*“No truly cultural pursuit, involving the intellect and the emotions, is complete unless it can be regarded as both an end and a means. It is an end in itself so far as it moves the aesthetic sense, gives immediate pleasure and becomes a part of our being. It is a means in the sense that it should raise us to a higher level, make us capable of going further to accomplish other, more difficult, more pregnant acts of cognition-in short, of developing our own powers and helping to develop those of the community.” (UNESCO, 1956)*

Opening statement from Georges Duhamel’s address at the UNESCO International Conference on the Role and Place of Music in the Education of Youth and Adults Brussels, 29 June to 9 July 1953

### **Background to this submission**

As the Founder and Director of School Bands Australia and Co-Executive Director of the Band Together Foundation, I feel privileged to contribute to this inquiry into the quality and effectiveness of music education in New South Wales (NSW).

My organisation, [www.schoolbands.com.au](http://www.schoolbands.com.au) (SBA), supports music education across thirty primary schools, teaching approximately 1,500 students per week through the efforts of five full-time administration staff and twenty-five peripatetic teaching artists. We have recently established a charitable foundation, the Band Together Foundation ([www.bandtogetherfoundation.com](http://www.bandtogetherfoundation.com)), which is dedicated to enriching the lives of children through the power of music education. Our aim is to provide access to high-quality musical instruction, fostering cognitive, emotional, and social development while instilling a lifelong appreciation for the arts.

We are active members of the Western Sydney Arts Alliance (WSAA) and Australian Society for Music Education (ASME) and have contributed to submissions that will be made by these organisations. With the knowledge that key areas of concern will be ably conveyed by these peak professional bodies, **this submission is being made from the position of a company that has the knowledge, experience, expertise and a product that can provide a whole of Government solution to address the identified shortcomings of Primary School music education in NSW.**

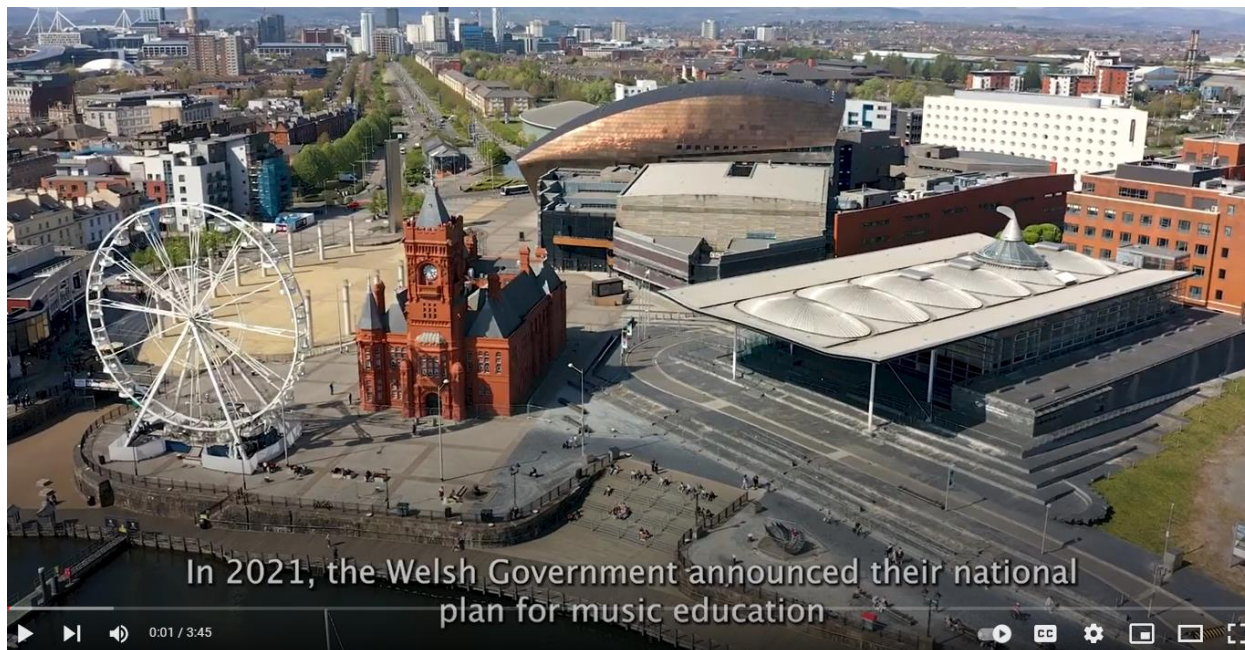
This submission will address the key points of the inquiry by way of examining point (ix) of part (b), being “notable approaches to music education in other jurisdictions”.

The jurisdiction is the nation of Wales, United Kingdom, and our proposal is based on how the Welsh Government developed a multifaceted, partnership led approach that supported their goals of re-vitalising music education policy across the country. Their program was developed as a consequence of an inquiry similar to the NSW Parliamentary Inquiry.

*“...in order to ensure that every child, regardless of their location or financial backing, has an equal opportunity to progress to excellence. The time has come to not simply paper over the cracks but to give sufficient resource and clear direction to the sector.”*

*Bethan Sayed AM, Chair, Hitting the Right Note: Inquiry into funding for and access to music education in Wales*

This four-minute video that gives an overview of the Welsh program - <https://youtu.be/1UuX1lt8yyE?si=Oi4-HTCD0wrHKjEK>



## The instrument

pBuzz is a revolutionary instrument that instantly affords students the opportunity to engage in music making as a whole class group. It creates a deep sensory connection to the playing a music due to the need for students to produce a ‘buzzing sound’ and make physical movements to ‘pitch’ a note.



## School Bands Australia - The Buzz on Band (BoB!)



The Buzz on Band (BoB!) program is designed to introduce Year 2/3 students to music through the innovative use of the pBuzz. This program engages students in whole-class music making, fostering a deep connection to musical learning by requiring students to produce a buzzing sound and physically manipulate the instrument to change notes.

Delivered through a series of structured online lessons, the BoB! program covers fundamental music skills, from making a sound on the pBuzz to reading musical notation and playing simple songs. The program provides comprehensive support and resources to teachers who might have little or no music teaching training and allows them to learn with their students.



## Goals

- **Introduction to Instruments:** Introduce students to music and instruments using the pBuzz.
- **Student Engagement:** Excite students about learning music and instruments.
- **Teamwork:** Encourage working together in a team environment.
- **Curriculum Alignment:** Meet the NSW Arts Curriculum requirements, with reporting and evaluation remaining with the classroom teacher.
- **Fun!:** Allowing students to experience the unique joy of making music as a group

## Outcomes

- **Sound Production:** Making a buzz on the mouthpiece and producing a sound.
- **Breath Control:** Taking deep breaths and controlling breath release.
- **Articulation:** Learning tonguing techniques on and off the mouthpiece.
- **Rhythm and Duration:** Understanding basic rhythm and duration.
- **Note Changing:** Ability to change notes on the pBuzz.
- **Performance:** Playing simple tunes such as "Mary Had a Little Lamb" as a classroom performance, meeting curriculum needs.

SBA conducted the first Australian pilot of the BoB! program in 2023 with outstanding results. Three Western Sydney schools participated in a 5-week program, consisting of five 40-minute lessons. A total of 283 Year 2 students achieved results that met, and in some cases exceeded, the Stage 3 level outcomes of the K-6 curriculum. Namely,

- Students played and moved to a range of music, both as individuals and in group situations
- They demonstrated an understanding of musical concepts (Treble Clef notation and rhythmic notation of semibreve, minim and crotchet) .
- Students listened to and performed a range of familiar and unfamiliar music with a sense of understanding, appreciation and discrimination.

*“Our Year Two students developed their musicality and skills immensely as a result of the BoB! program offered through School Bands Australia. Students thoroughly enjoyed the sessions and developed skills in pitch, beat, rhythm and tone very quickly. Teachers also developed their skills in teaching music and were pleasantly surprised at how quickly students could engage and progress. The program is comprehensive, accessible, inclusive and it worked”.*

*Kelly, Assistant Principal, Year 2 at a Western Sydney public school.*

## The inbuilt added value beyond education

### Australian Manufacture of the pBuzz

In the Welsh model, the pBuzz was manufactured under licence to local companies. We would propose the same in NSW, however, this step is optional, as the component parts can be imported ‘unassembled’.

The Welsh Government Commercial Delivery team (WGCD) procured 53,000 carbon neutral instruments through pMusic Cymru. pMusic Cymru is a consortium including two Welsh social enterprises; Elite Solutions and Merthyr Tydfil Institute for the Blind (MTIB), who are both working alongside Warwick Music Limited, the owner of pBuzz.

These social enterprises include a ‘reserved category’ for sheltered workshops where at least 30% of the employees of those workshops are disabled or disadvantaged workers. This directly contributed to the well-being goals of supporting a more prosperous, more equal, healthier and resilient Wales. The Welsh Government awarded Warwick Music Limited a £500k contract for the production and delivery of pBuzz and pCorder instruments, with assembly taking place at the two sheltered workshops.

*“This contract demonstrates how we can use funding to add social value and promote sustainability. At the same time, we have ensured these instruments will be produced on a national scale and in a way that represents value for money.”*  
*Rebecca Evans, Welsh Minister for Finance and Local Government (Welsh Government, 2022)*

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*In 2022, I worked directly with the pBone Music team who were able to meet fully their commitments under tender from the Welsh Government to manufacture and deliver on-time **53,000 carbon neutral musical instruments for primary school pupils across every local authority in Wales; successfully achieved within just six months.***

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#### Elin Stock

Policy Officer  
Welsh Local Government Association



ELITE Supported Employment is a Welsh ‘NDIS style’ company that works with adults with learning disabilities or those at a disadvantage to access paid employment opportunities.

“I think this is a great example of what social enterprise can achieve in manufacturing,”



says Andrea Wayman, CEO of ELITE Supported Employment. “The fact that this opportunity brought together two social enterprises and a private sector company really demonstrates how collaboration can work.”

MTIB provided sustained employment opportunities for people with disabilities. “It’s new to us and our staff are really enthusiastic about it because it’s something new,” says Richard Welfoot from MTIB, “it’s something they want to get involved in and it’s something different that

they haven’t seen before - and it’s going to be delivered out to all the schools within Wales!”

To view a four minute overview of the Welsh approach to manufacturing , please visit <https://www.gov.wales/innovative-procurement-initiative-makes-noise>

Another added value benefit of this model, is the low carbon footprint achieved through the local manufacturing of the pBuzz as opposed to other instruments that would be shipped from overseas.

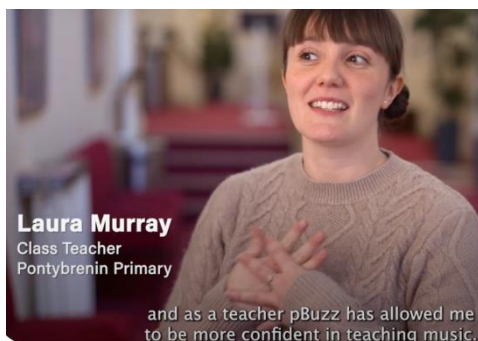




## Classroom Teacher Support

The fun and intuitive nature of the instrument allows a classroom teacher, with no musical background, to learn with their students. Our program includes structured online lessons, resources and support as well as an option for in-person professional development. This method of delivery addresses the accessibility and equity issues faced in rural and remote areas of NSW.

In the pilot program, classroom teachers that took part in the lessons reported that their confidence in using and teaching music had increased as a result of the BoB! Program.



"Using the pBuzz has been really brilliant with the children," says year three teacher, Laura Murray. "They can't wait to start every time we get them out, they're really enthusiastic about it. As a teacher pBuzz has allowed me to be more confident in teaching music. I have no musical experience whatsoever, but learning the pBuzz has really made me feel much more confident to teach music in class. It's really good - between us we're having a great time!" (*Welsh Government, 2022*)

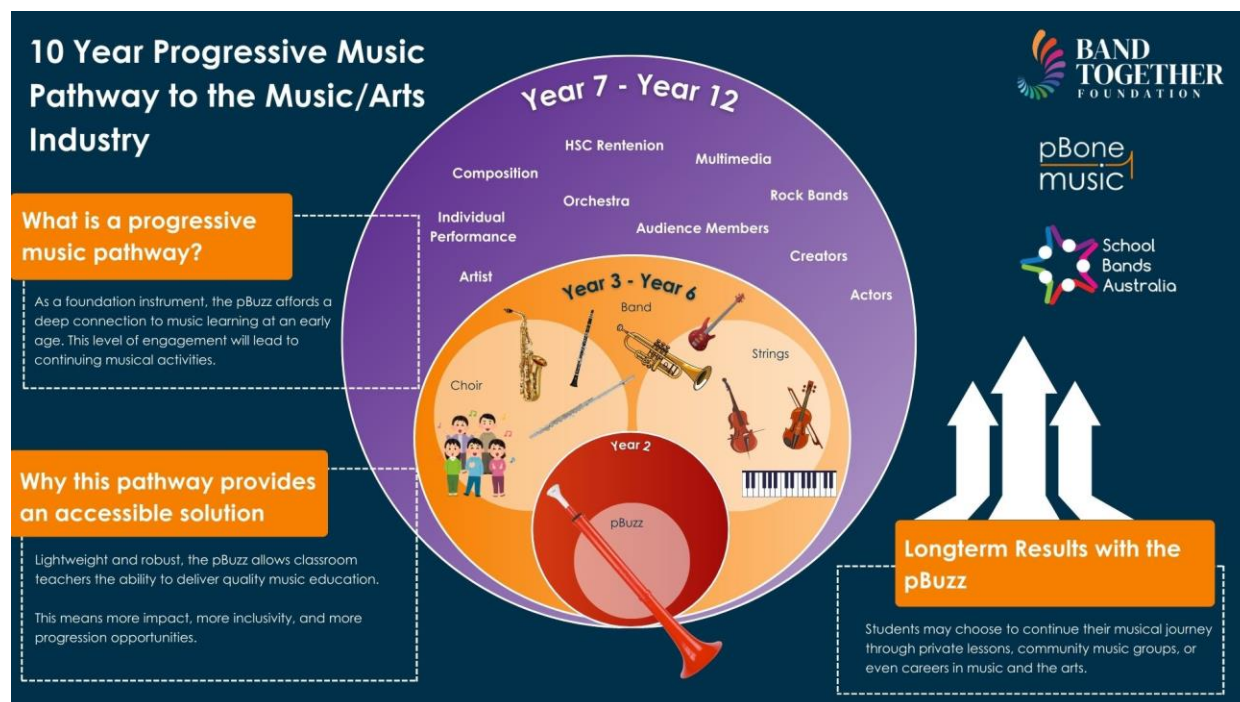
## Progressive Pathway for Music and the Arts

As a 'buzzing' instrument, there is a natural assumption that the p-buzz will generate interest only in the Trumpet and Trombone. Our evidence shows that students who took part in the BoB! Pilot, chose a wide variety of instruments when it came to joining their school band, including woodwind and percussion instruments.

By introducing students to music in a fun and accessible way, the pBuzz helps build fundamental skills such as rhythm, pitch, and music notation. This early exposure not only sparks an interest in music but also enhances cognitive, emotional, and social development.

The skills and enthusiasm developed through the Buzz on Band program can lead to involvement in school bands, choirs, and other musical activities. The sense of achievement and teamwork cultivated by learning an instrument encourages students to pursue further musical opportunities in high school, whether through more advanced instruments or participation in ensembles and performances.

Beyond the classroom, early engagement in instrumental music programs can inspire a lifelong appreciation for the arts. Students may choose to continue their musical journey through private lessons, community music groups, or even careers in music and the arts. The Buzz on Band program lays the groundwork for a sustained engagement with music, enriching students' educational experiences and contributing to their overall personal growth.



## Conclusion

The Buzz on Band program comprehensively addresses the following points under section (b) of the inquiry:

- (i) progress towards a long-term goal of quality music education, including actions to address identified barriers
- (iv) the role of *creative professionals* in music education
- (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
- (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

## COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE



The implementation of the P-buzz in Wales revitalised music education, demonstrating how targeted investment and innovative approaches can achieve high level educational outcomes, with the added value of wider business, community and inclusivity outcomes. The Welsh Government's investment of £13.5 million over three years has ensured equitable access to music education for all children, providing an accessible entry point for young students to learn music.

School Bands Australia's partnership with Warwick Music, the creators of the pBuzz, positions us to deliver the "Buzz on Band" program to primary school students across New South Wales. This collaboration aligns perfectly with the goals of the NSW Government and Department of Education, ensuring widespread access to high-quality music education.

*"Warwick Music Limited is recognised as a leading manufacturer of music education products helping to start the musical journey of over half a million children worldwide. We are delighted to be partnering with Schools Bands Australia and supporting the team with their vision of expanding music provision in NSW schools and ensuring that all children are able to access high-quality music learning."*

Steven Greenall, CEO, Warwick Music Ltd

A comprehensive report on the Welsh program is currently underway. Warwick music will make this available to us upon completion and we would be happy to share these findings with the committee once they are delivered.

Thank you for considering our submission as a potential solution to the questions raised in the inquiry. Please do not hesitate to contact me to discuss this submission or speak with the committee directly at the inquiry.

Yours sincerely,

Martin Davison  
Founder & Director, School Bands Australia  
Co-Executive Director, Band Together Foundation  
Phone:  
Mobile:

## References

NSW Education Standards Authority. (2006) *Creative Arts K–6 Syllabus*

<https://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/k-10/learning-areas/creative-arts/creative-arts-k-6-syllabus>

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Revolutions in Music Education : Historical and Social Explorations, edited by Jane Southcott, et al., Lexington Books/Fortress Academic, 2022. ProQuest Ebook Central, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/uts/detail.action?docID=7026536>

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Welsh Government (2020) *Music services feasibility study*

<https://www.gov.wales/music-services-feasibility-study>

Welsh Government (2022) *Instrument contract with added social value is music to Finance Minister's ears* [Instrument contract with added social value is music to Finance Minister's ears](#) | GOV.WALES

## Additional YouTube videos on the P-buzz

How to Use pBuzz | Instruments for Kids | How to Teach Music with pBuzz

<https://youtu.be/eKfbupivFBc>

Company Video

<https://vimeo.com/605781025>

pBuzz Performance | Schoolchildren Play pBuzz | Whole-class Music

<https://youtu.be/J1wal4VWaQY>

pBuzz being played for the King at Tonga Music Festival

<https://youtu.be/AJY0q1oTrYk?si=00kAiBg9LE44MWwx>