

**Submission
No 34**

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

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Date Received: 24 July 2024

Inquiry into Arts and Music Education and Training in New South Wales

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1. Terms of Reference.

Amongst broad ranging terms of reference these comments relate principally to Item 1 (b) the Quality and Effectiveness of Music Education and Training.

2. A Segmentation of the Music Training Sector:

The breadth of the Terms of Reference suggests a broad objective to ensure development of a robust cultural sector with well-prepared professional participants. While laudable, this ignores one of the greatest potential attributes of music education, particularly early music education. In this connection it is helpful to segment the sector, reflecting the increasing narrowness and focus as student ages increase.

a. Primary School Education

At the primary level the issue is not to prepare future potential professionals, but to enable the broad benefits to society in general that early music programs can achieve. This submission supports the view that early music education can have a particular benefit not only in raising educational attainments in non-music related fields but also, and equally importantly in assisting sound societal benefit through mental stimulation, development of respect and responsibility as well as collaborative skills. There is much evidence to support this position and other submissions will undoubtedly refer to available research. In support of this contention this submission will draw attention to two cases, one evidence based and the other anecdotal (but none-the-less impressive).

- (i) **Australian Children's Music Foundation** work in Western NSW: As part of its work in disadvantaged schools the ACMF has sent a musician to Hilston School in western NSW to both work with primary age children and their teachers. The reports seen, while anecdotal in nature, are clear in their expressions of beneficial outcomes. A copy of an internal report forms Attachment 1. This convincing and often moving report demonstrates the results which can be achieved through dedicated musical professionals working not only with primary students but also with their teachers. This type of involvement, whether in disadvantaged or better resourced schools has the benefit of replicability.

- (ii) **ACO Foundations** is a program of the Australian Chamber Orchestra which has been operating for a number of years. No doubt the ACO will comment in detail. This reference is included to draw additional attention to the report on the program's outcomes. See <https://www.aco.com.au/learning-and-engagement/schools-programs/aco-foundations>
- The importance of this report lies in its data driven analysis which provides clear evidence of the broad educational benefits of a focussed music program at primary level. The program is very resource intensive and expensive to run. It is therefore unlikely to form the basis for widespread replicability. Nonetheless it provides clear evidence of the significant benefits of music education at the primary level.

b. Secondary and Non-School Providers (Youth Orchestras etc)

The intent in segmenting the music education sector into four elements is to underline the continuum, or pipeline in which various organisations operate. While a broadly based curriculum in all primary schools would bring massive benefits such as suggested above, clearly at secondary level and within the non-school environment of youth orchestras, district bands, Sydney Eisteddfod and the like a somewhat smaller contingent will be influenced and affected through the programs. At this level however it is clear that alongside a number of starting points for young musicians to move to higher levels, there is still an important influence on those who wish solely to benefit from including music in their lives, alongside alternative professional or other careers.

In this space it is particularly important to express the importance of, particularly Sydney Youth Orchestras. Belying its name this organisation operates NSW wide, including in Western Sydney and the regions as far afield as Broken Hill. Its audition process covers some 1000 individuals programs. Such an organisation is, thus, both an extension to a broad based primary program and a training program for those who may wish to pursue music as a career. The range of collaborations with other organisations is also extensive and very valuable. The flagship orchestra also has a role to play in promoting NSW's cultural richness on its regular overseas visits.

Support at this level may reach a somewhat smaller number of students, but the societal and educational benefits continue. And since a vibrant cultural scene requires many supporters, the work done at this stage enhances cultural life in NSW.

c. Tertiary and Pre-professional Music Education

Conservatoria whether within or outside, the university system, are “end-of-pipeline” operations. In capital cities it might be argued they should not be a high focus, if at all, in the Government’s arts funding considerations. Consideration might be given to the extent to which these organisations are turning out musicians and composers for a sector where job opportunities are limited.

In defence of regional conservatoria, however, there is an argument for support to enhance local cultural life. A good example of this is the Orange Regional Conservatorium which is forging a sound regional cultural life through the likes of the Orange Chamber Music Festival.

d. Arts8 Music Organisations

The eight national arts training organisations are clearly federally focussed. Music is a vital part of all the organisations. Two, Australian National Academy of Music (ANAM) and Australian Youth Orchestra (AYO) however, stand out as professional training grounds for high level professional musicians. ANAM, as a performance oriented organisation turns out high quality musicians who are likely to fill important roles in orchestras and ensemble around the world. It is thus very important in ensuring a vital and robust cultural scene in Australia. As an organisation it warrants remaining on the NSW Government’s radar because of its regular major collaborations locally, a recent example of which was the Sydney Symphony Orchestra’s performance of Schoenberg’s Gurrelieder in the Sydney Opera House.

AYO, however, is somewhat unique in that it is not only a youth orchestra but also operates the “Music in Me” program to mentor music teachers Australia wide. Thus AYO is intimately involved in the full range of music education, both in NSW and Australia wide and hence leverages all the benefits of music education from primary through tertiary. AYO also plays a role in developing music industry skills with programs to enhance arts management skills, music journalism and composition. Recent innovative developments to prepare pre-professional musicians for likely portfolio careers and improve their musical communications beyond tradition performance, through Momentum Ensemble programs, also deserves particular emphasis. AYO also plays a role in promoting Australian arts and culture overseas through regular international tours.

3. Conclusion

Across the broad spectrum of music education and training there are many organisations which play significant roles, only a few of which are mentioned here. Overall it is the writer's view that attention to the primary segment with funding and curriculum development across all schools has the greatest potential to provide desirable outcomes, both societal and cultural.

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Attachment 1: August 2008 Report on ACMF Hillston Program

ACMF MUSIC PROGRAMME AT HILLSTON CENTRAL SCHOOL

I first went to Hillston Central School in October 2007. I went into every primary class, and gave each class a 'one-off' music lesson. The response of the children and the teachers were hugely positive, and it was agreed that I would go back, to set up a music programme at the school. This would involve writing lesson plans for each year group, providing resources for the teachers, and training the teachers – teaching them how to teach the programme.

There is no way I could have guessed what would happen at this little place.

There are about 120-140 children in the primary school. Most of these children come from farming families. Children regularly have days off to help on the farm – to put up fences, or to castrate lambs. Many children travel 80 – 100 kilometres to get to school. Music was pretty low on their list of important things. Most children listened to the radio, but had never seen a musical instrument, let alone played one, or learnt about music as a subject.

Six months down the track, huge things have happened. Of the six classes, four of them now have regular music lessons. (One of the teachers left the school, and was replaced, but the new teacher is willing to start the kids off on the programme. One of the teachers is a little unwilling, but we're working on her...)

In the classes that have had regular music lessons, the children are now reading musical rhythm notation fluently, and clapping and playing four bar patterns on untuned percussion instruments. They are reading rhythms in canons, and also memorising them.

Children are playing simple chime bar pieces in two or three parts – reading what they have to play, and doing so in groups.

Children are listening to all sorts of music – classical, jazz, folk, and contemporary – and learning about the instruments they hear.

When I went out there past trip, I took my cello to play to the children. Most of these children had never seen an instrument like this, let alone played one. I went in every class and talked about it, and played to them. They also could sit and have a turn. The response was humbling. Every child listened spellbound as I played Bach to them. One year five boy said "That's the most beautiful thing I have ever heard in my life. Please,

please, Rachel, play us more.” In the year five class, 24 children sat for 15 minutes as I played most of a Bach solo cello suite to them. They were transfixed. Every child in the school tried the cello – the most shy, the children who were autistic – every child.

Year four have now decided, unprompted by their teacher, to start the day listening to some of “Rachel’s music” – classical music. I have taken Mozart, Ravel, Bach, Tchaikovsky and other composers up there. Apparently the favoured piece the last month was Ravel’s Bolero.

Last visit, the primary school has its’ first ever music assembly. The headmistress turned up to see what was happening (this doesn’t often happen, I am told), as did a number of parents (usually no parents come to assemblies). I also noticed a number of the high school teachers came, and the year 7 and 8 music students were there too. Every class performed. Music certificates were handed out. Children sang. It was truly wonderful!

This little primary school, with very few resources, and out in the middle of next-to-nowhere has a thriving music programme! Children who can hardly read are reading music, and their sense of self-esteem has taken a huge step forward. Children who are autistic, or who have terrible behaviour problems are being included in groups, and are enjoying what they do. The school now has a choir of 60 children – who have elected to join. Children are singing in the playground. Children are listening and discussing classical music. The children are noticeably much calmer as they listen to classical music. The teachers are learning new skills and passing these things on to the children they are teaching. And the parents are also showing their support by turning up to see what is going on.

I think that I will not ever know just how important this programme is to these children, because they can’t truly articulate it. I am treated like a celebrity up there – I am followed by packs of children, they whoop with joy and excitement when I walk into the classroom, they will do anything for me. In short – they absolutely LOVE what the ACMF is doing in their school. And we must continue.

Rachel Scott