

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

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SUBMISSION

Joint Select Committee on Arts and
Music Education and Training in
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APRA AMCOS

ABOUT APRA AMCOS

APRA AMCOS has been representing Australian songwriters, composers and publishers since 1926. It is the largest music industry body in the region representing the rights of over 119,000 members across Australasia.

APRA AMCOS has a long and successful history of working in partnership with all levels of government to support the development and career paths in the music industry through the cornerstones of live music, digital distribution, local venues, education and global exports.

Over the last fifteen years, APRA AMCOS has initiated and led industry and government co-investment strategies, developing highly regarded capacity building programs, most notably: the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Music Office, SongMakers songwriting program in schools, the Live Music Office to review the impact of policy frameworks and government regulation on the live music sector, SongHubs curated songwriting intensives and the internationally renowned music export program Sounds Australia.

Successive Federal and State Governments have been close collaborators and partners with APRA AMCOS in the development and investment in these programs.

THE OPPORTUNITY

Whether it is a young songwriter in their bedroom writing the next global hit, a composer creating a soundtrack to the next great film or game, artists and musicians producing, recording and performing for a festival, concert or local gig, from Bankstown to Bega, Broken Hill to Byron Bay, there is a pipeline of music talent coming from across NSW.

Contemporary music is Australia's biggest cultural export. Whether it's a live concert in LA, Berlin or Mexico City, an Emmy or Grammy nominated score or album, or billions of streams around the world, Australian music is crossing borders and crossing platforms. Australia has the potential to be a key driver of music exports not just into the major North American and European markets but across the Indo-Pacific region.

Music is unique in its breadth and opportunity – relevant and vital to multiple portfolios including the arts, education, communications, health, innovation, small business, export, regional, indigenous, trade, tourism, the night-time economy and foreign affairs.

- For every dollar spent on live music, three dollars is returned to the community.
- Australia is already in the top ten music markets in the world. We now have the opportunity to become one of the world's great music exporters.
- Contemporary music alone represents well over 50 per cent of all performing arts activity across Australia.
- A Goldman Sachs report into the international music market predicts a booming decade for the music industry, with total music revenue to reach \$163 billion by 2030.
- The Australian music industry has the potential to earn between 5-10 per cent market share of this, but we need to get the policy, investment and industry settings right.

Without songwriting in quality music education for every child, we're robbing our country of the full potential of our talent.

There's so much research showing how music education improves students' grades across all subjects.

Even better, teaching composition and songwriting invests in Australia's intellectual property, so we're creating careers and generating income for the nation.

Not only that but music is often the subject that entices school attendance, especially in low socioeconomic and remote areas.

Education is the first of three pain points hurting the sustainability of our industry and stunting the growth of a major cultural export.

Jenny Morris OAM MNZM, Chair APRA
National Press Club Address, 5 August 2020

In 2020, singer-songwriter, APRA Chair Jenny Morris OAM MNZM gave an address to the National Press Club setting out a vision for Australian music to become a net exporter of music:

"Australia should have a vision to become a net exporter of music. This won't happen overnight and it could well take a decade but you need a clear vision in order to start change now. Aussies have never backed away from a challenge - we need to back ourselves. The potential reward is nation defining."

To achieve this vision, she emphasised the need for there to be government commitment to provide equity of access to quality music education in schools nationally and songwriting as part of the national curriculum.



I finished high school in 2010, and by any standard I was extremely lucky that my school offered music as a subject. Most don't - and those numbers are falling.

The mandated curriculum left me completely uninspired and doubting there was any way I could make a living from music out in the real world. How could I have that impression when what was impressed upon me was that music is a language of the past? Concertos, sonatas, Gregorian chants. I was desperate to find my own musical voice, but was only encouraged to mimic the voices of men that had been dead for centuries.

Instead of focusing on the curriculum, I would lock myself away in a room with a piano, listen to Missy Higgins and write songs.

Imagine the head start I might've had if someone had actually taught me how to do that; how to find my own voice and be a successful musician in today's world.

Sophie Payten (Gordi)
National Press Club Address, 5 August 2020

SONGMAKERS SCHOOL PROGRAM

Bringing students and teachers together with some of the most exciting names in music, SongMakers provides real-world collaborative songwriting experiences, demonstrates the technology processes involved in recording and, importantly, engages with concepts around valuing and respecting intellectual property.

SongMakers is an intensive, real world program about the creative process: over two days, Australia's best songwriters and producers mentor students to create and record new music, right there in the classroom. It creates links between professional songwriters, producers, teachers and young people.

Workshops emulate industry-aligned songwriting processes, transforming classrooms into creative hubs. SongMakers is a tried and tested example of industry engagement in partnership with schools, providing professional scenarios to mentor students. It then uses the mentored creation of students' new work as the springboard to explore issues around the cultural industries, including the importance of being entrepreneurial and collaborative. It's about helping to fast-track the next generation of hit-makers.

Launched in 2013 as a joint initiative between the Australian Government and APRA AMCOS, the SongMakers program creates songwriting collaborations in secondary schools. The program received government funding for 4 years and the APRA Board has continued its funding, in recognition of the program's successes.

The Victorian Government invested in the program for two specialised programs in Shepparton and Wodonga under the Visiting Creative Professionals in Schools program. The Tasmanian Government also ran a pilot program and songwriting is now incorporated as part of the state curriculum.

In 2024, the Victorian Government again invested in songwriting in schools. Their investment of \$2 million dollars has allowed SongMakers to grow the program to include more professional development and a wider variety of programs.

To enhance the benefits from the SongMakers program, APRA AMCOS also supports the broad industry call for there to be universal access to quality, sequential and ongoing music education in all schools.



THE EVIDENCE

Independent longitudinal evaluation by the University of Tasmania found SongMakers to be 'internationally significant in the fields of arts education and vocational education, with few comparable programs demonstrating the kinds of consistent and sustained positive outcomes for students' learning in and beyond music.'

The program increases:

- the range and quality of students' songwriting and general music skills
- students' understanding of the contemporary music industry, including the central importance of songwriting and music production skills
- students' awareness of the diversity of careers in the industry
- students' understanding of, and willingness to try, different creative approaches
- their motivation to pursue a creative career and/or related training on leaving school and their enterprise skills, including in collaboration, goal-setting, working to deadlines and problem-solving.

The program also acts as a catalyst for cultural change in schools, encouraging teachers to create more ways for students to make original music and connect with the industry. As well, it provides a boost for the mid-career professionals who work as mentors, giving them training and networking opportunities which diversify their skills and income.

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people, participation in First Nations-led arts and cultural activity, including songwriting, is integral to connecting with their culture and creating a sense of identity and belonging, improves school attendance and enables them to reach higher levels of educational attainment.

Over 11 years we have taken 40 world class mentors to 280 schools to work with 5000 students and 350 teachers to create over 1100 new works.

Program success include Canberra producer, Taka Perry (now signed to global KOBALT group), regional Queenslander, Tia Gostelow (winner, triple j's indigenous initiative and QLD Music Awards) and regional NSW student, Grace Richardson (signed to UNIFIED management and SONY Australia).

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Hobart College students shine in national SongMakers mentoring scheme

With hopes to break into the music industry, workshops run by high-profile musicians are just the opportunity of a lifetime that aspiring student Chloe Park wanted.

Chloe Park has hopes to break into the music industry, so workshops run by high-profile musicians this week are just the opportunity the aspiring student has dreamed of.

As part of helping Tassie's next generation of global hitmakers, a national mentoring scheme SongMakers, including ARIA Award-winning Katie Wighton, is touring across the state to help students create their own songs.



Ever since she was young, Hobart College student Ms Park has been writing songs and said it was an honour to work with such talent.

"It's very exciting," Ms Park said, "I'm still learning as an artist and with these mentors coming in and teaching us how to write songs and produce them is so amazing.

"I aspire to work with them in the future," she said.

Students are broken into collaboration groups and spend two days with mentors with the job of writing and producing original songs, under real-world conditions.

Songs at Hobart College were produced by Triple J songwriting winner Jackson Phelan and Force and Fury's Asti Holz.

"It felt really special because as someone who wants to be in the music industry, it was a really awesome opportunity to work with people in that field and see what the everyday job looks like," student Isabella Davis said.

"It's been pretty cool, very much out of my comfort zone," she said.

Mentor Katie Wighton said the opportunity shows the value of songwriting, where songs can have a life outside of young artists' bedrooms while learning crucial industry skills.

"I really hope that they look back on these two days either as something that sparked their interest and pushed them to have a career as a songwriter, or coming away from it with a sense of accomplishment," Ms Wighton said.

With so much potential, Ms Wighton said she loves seeing teenagers channelling their feelings into something beautiful.

"Watching the confidence grow from day one to the end of day two, I love that so much," she said.

FLEXIBLE LEARNING PROGRAM

Mental health concerns are more prevalent among adolescents in the wake of the pandemic, placing extra demands on schools to keep students motivated, engaged and enjoying their learning.

A small but growing body of research is starting to complement the findings from the music therapy literature about the benefits to students' wellbeing when songwriting is incorporated into schools. Songwriting can be a site of resilience in schools and help students navigate the social and psychological issues that arise in adolescence.

It can help students connect with their own and others' cultures, and engage those students not drawn to, or able to access, more traditional music education. For First Nations students, participating in First Nations-led arts and cultural activity, including songwriting, improves school attendance and educational attainment.

In 2016, SongMakers delivered its first "Flex" program, working with Wodonga Flexible Learning Centre.

Outcomes from this program included:

- An increased knowledge of, and sensitivity to, the range of factors associated with young people in flexible educational settings for SongMakers mentors
- Teachers noticed a significant improvement in the collaborative nature in which the students began to work
- All students reflected that their confidence to share their ideas grew throughout the program and that they found collaborating with others rewarding
- All students found the critical appraisal, respectful and helpful in developing their performance and writing skills.
- Students' emotional resilience grew
- Students were given a direction for how to hope, plan and achieve future goals
- Students were more positive in the school after the program ended

On the back of this success, SongMakers has since run three more Flexible Learning Programs in schools across Victoria as part of the \$2 million investment into songwriting in schools by the Victorian Government in 2024.



The Hon. Colin Brooks MP, Victorian Minister for Creative Industries, APRA Chair Jenny Morris OAM MNZM, APRA AMCOS Chief Executive Dean Ormston

The Victorian Government is helping to find the next home-grown hitmakers with \$2 million to supercharge songwriting in schools. The Victorian Government's investment will enable over 1400 young people to take part in the program, providing professional development for 200 teachers and provide employment opportunities to over 200 artists and music industry workers.

"We all know Victoria is the undisputed music capital of Australia, and that's not just about attracting the biggest international acts. This program is investing in our next generation of local music talent, helping budding musicians take their music from the classroom to the bandroom and giving them the skills they need to build a career."

– Minister for Creative Industries Colin Brooks

I'm not sure I would be doing music full-time today if it wasn't for the SongMakers program I did in 2015. The experience and networks I gained doing the program really fast-tracked my career and gave me my first glimpse into what working in the music industry looks like.

I think regular music curriculums in schools teach a lot of unnecessary material whilst ignoring the skillsets needed to build a career around it, and that's the big difference that the SongMakers program provides.

Taka Perry, NSW Alumni Mentor

SCHOOL HOLIDAY PROGRAM

In 2022 the NSW Government's Office for Regional Youth invested in SongMakers as a school holiday program. The two-day writing program worked with kids in regional centres across the state including Goulburn, Wagga Wagga, Albury, Coffs Harbour, Merimbula, Bathurst, Lithgow and Parkes.

Mentors included platinum producer/artist and triple j favourite, Taka Perry, whose credits include Ruel, Denzel Curry, Max Frost, and A.GIRL, and Sydney producer/songwriter and multi-instrumentalist Chelsea Warner.

Patternmakers conducted an evaluation of the SongMakers Holiday Program. Patternmakers is a research agency specialising in culture, creativity and community.

One of the key statistics to come from the report was that 90% of holiday program participants say songwriting "improves their mood consistent with evidence that shows arts participation can be a vital tool for protecting the wellbeing of young people."

The SongMakers Holiday program also bridges the gap often experienced by regional and remote schools. By bringing industry professionals into schools and communities, we are eliminating the need for young people and their teachers to leave their communities to find relevant songwriting opportunities.

Another key statistic to come out of the Patternmakers report was that "90% of holiday program participants also said that they have a better understanding of how songs are made – and the workshops have helped demystify music careers and identified pathways for aspiring musicians in regional areas."

"Even if you take all the music out of it, what they did today in terms of teamwork, in being thrown into a group of people you don't know and tasked with performing under such tight timeframes, is an amazing and highly transferable skill."

Parent, NSW Holiday Program 2024

SongMakers showed me that making music was something I could do. The process of songwriting and production was demystified and made possible - something I am unsure where I'd be without.

Learning the tangible skills that go into crafting a song was one thing, but the inspiration I got as a 15 year old to continue making music is priceless. It showed me a career path I would've otherwise not been aware of.

It was such a full circle moment becoming a SongMakers mentor, and I'm so passionate about representing what's possible in the music industry.

Chelsea Warner, NSW Alumni mentor

SONGWRITING ACADEMY

To develop and better equip future songwriters for national and international success, a NSW Government funded elite training organisation should be established in NSW to lead the national research, exploration and teaching of songwriting.

A National Songwriting Academy in NSW would be recognised as the training ground for exceptional young songwriters from across Australia and the region and would be the only professional songwriting training institute of its kind in Australia, and one of few in the world.

The academy would engage the professional skills of established and high-profile Australian and international songwriters to teach the craft of songwriting.

The academy would provide an education program and platform for songwriting collaboration focused on the craft of songwriting in contemporary music creation, screen and digital games music composition and provide songwriters with a unique network of domestic and international professional industry contacts and collaboration opportunities.

A good song creates jobs. Lots of jobs.

Tens of thousands of Australians earn a living from music. A good song also builds Australia's intellectual property assets, generating big incomes - including export earnings, because a good song travels the world finding new performers and new audiences.

And what is a song? At its simplest, it's words to music.

But songs are so much more. They beat humanity's pulse. They're our connection to time and place. Songs are bridges between people – between joy and heartbreak, memory and understanding – connecting generations, and spanning the globe.

Jenny Morris NZM OAM, Chair APRA
National Press Club, 5 August 2020

For decades the music industry didn't need much in the way of government help or support.

The business of the industry was pretty simple and was held together by the gaffer tape of live music, copyright, the sale of music and publishing.

Every now and again an Australian act would make global waves in the US, Europe or the UK and travel the radio waves around the world.

Fast forward to 2023 and the Australian music industry is a world away from the analogue 80s.

Australian music is digital, published and recorded from studios and bedrooms to global audiences.

Australian songwriters and composers are creating the soundtrack to digital games, films and the small screen.

They are living around the nation and around the world, part of a U.S.\$ 90 billion industry that is likely to double by 2030.

Dean Ormston
Chief Executive
APRA AMCOS

