

Submission
No 76

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

Organisation: Western Sydney Philharmonic

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Maximilian Holzner
Chair, Western Sydney
Philharmonic

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The Director

Joint Select Committee on Arts and
Music Education and Training in NSW,
Parliament House,
Macquarie Street, Sydney NSW 2000.
ArtsandMusic@parliament.nsw.gov.au

**ADDRESSED TO THE JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON ARTS AND MUSIC EDUCATION AND TRAINING
IN NEW SOUTH WALES (NSW PARLIAMENT)**

Executive Summary:

This submission from [Western Sydney Philharmonic \(WestPhil\)](#) addresses Terms of Reference 1(b):

- (iv) the role of regional conservatoriums and creative professionals in music education
- (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, and
- (viii) ways that students can learn entrepreneurial skills and gain industry experience to ensure they are job ready

WestPhil and its [Accelerator Program](#) offer an effective working model for the Committee, of how regional orchestras can start and flourish in partnership with students, local schools and university, music teachers and professional musicians to provide accessible orchestral and ensemble experience alongside professionals as part of their music education.

By fostering local talent and creating pathways to professional music careers, WestPhil's program aligns with the objectives of the Joint Select Committee on Arts and Music Education and Training. In addition, it aligns with Create NSW's Creative Communities policy and its commitment to diverse, vibrant and accessible arts and culture.

Introduction:

Founded in 2022 by Max Holzner and launched by Patron Kim Williams AM at the Riverside Theatres, WestPhil aims to develop an advanced orchestral training program for young musicians in western Sydney. Since its inception, WestPhil has made significant strides in achieving its mission. To date, WestPhil has:

- Conducted 8 multi-day workshops and performances, involving over 340 young talented musicians, the majority of whom have carried over to multiple events as a corpus of developing players demonstrating successful retention.
- Engaged more than 30 professional musicians as tutors and mentors.

- Reached an audience of over 2,000 people (with the largest single audience being more than 600) through performances and community events.
- Launched the Accelerator Program for primary school-aged children, to provide weekly private instrumental lessons and ensemble work.
- Established strong partnerships with Western Sydney University (WSU), City of Parramatta Council, STARTTS, River City Voices, Gradus Software and Sydney Eisteddfod.
- Received positive media coverage from major outlets such as the Sydney Morning Herald, Limelight, and ABC Radio.

The Accelerator Program is a vital component of this vision, providing structured pathways for talented primary school-aged musicians to pursue their musical aspirations.

Lessons from WestPhil's Approach:

- **Holistic Music Education**
WestPhil's Accelerator Program is an holistic approach which includes orchestral training, choral education through a partnership with River City Voices, and training in composition. This comprehensive curriculum, supported by cutting-edge digital online delivery via a partnership with Gradus Software's MusicApprentice, ensures that students receive a well-rounded musical education that fosters both their technical skills and creative expression.
- **Community Engagement and Local Pathways**
Central to WestPhil's ethos is the belief in creating local pathways for musical talent. Much like successful sporting codes, WestPhil aims to establish a pipeline that nurtures young musicians from the region. This requires addressing multiple points within the pathway simultaneously, from grassroots to elite levels. By tackling these levels concurrently, WestPhil ensures a continuous and sustainable development of talent, distinguishing itself from other initiatives in the region that have not maintained this comprehensive approach. By providing local students with access to high-quality training and performance opportunities, WestPhil ensures that they can pursue their musical aspirations without leaving western Sydney.
- **Collaboration with Private Teachers and MTANSW**
WestPhil collaborates closely with private instrumental and studio teachers in the region. Through its partnership with the Music Teachers' Association of NSW (MTANSW), the program upskills the music-teaching profession, promotes the profession, and acts as a referral service for teachers. This collaboration enhances the quality of music education and supports the professional development of teachers. MTANSW offers targeted professional development, support, and mentoring, assisting teachers in attaining accreditation.
- **Engagement with Professional Musicians**
WestPhil differentiates itself by engaging top-tier professional musicians to mentor and perform alongside students. Esteemed artists such as Alexander Gavrylyuk and conductors like Fabian Russell have collaborated with WestPhil, providing students in western Sydney with invaluable learning experiences. This engagement ensures that students are exposed to the highest standards of musical excellence.
- **Local Identity and Cultural Relevance**

WestPhil's programs are designed to be culturally relevant and resonate with the local community. The initiative to find a permanent home and establish the only concert hall in Western Sydney suitable for a full-size symphony orchestra underscores the commitment to creating a cultural beacon for the region. This local identity fosters a sense of ownership and pride among students and the community.

- **Strategic Partnerships and Support**

Partnerships with Western Sydney University (WSU), the City of Parramatta Council, and other local organisations have been crucial in supporting WestPhil's initiatives. These partnerships facilitate resource sharing, provide venues for tuition and performances, and help integrate the program into the broader community.

- **Collaboration with STARTTS for Refugee Engagement**

WestPhil, in collaboration with the NSW Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors (STARTTS), provides free orchestral music lessons for refugee children whose previous training in music was disrupted due to war. This initiative not only supports the musical education of refugee children but also helps them and their families build relationships with local teachers, families, and cultural institutions, thereby minimizing the risk of isolation and exclusion. The collaboration with MTANSW in this program, similar to the Accelerator Program, offers targeted professional development, support, and mentoring to music teachers, assisting them in attaining accreditation.

The WestPhil model aligns with The Committee's Terms of Reference:

- **WestPhil enhances Access and Equity**

WestPhil's Accelerator Program enhances access to high-quality music education for students in western Sydney, addressing the equity of access to music education.

- **WestPhil supports Teacher Development**

The collaboration with Gradus Software and MTANSW with the provision of professional development opportunities for local music teachers align with the objective of supporting and enhancing the quality of teaching in arts and music education.

- **WestPhil contributes to Community and Cultural Life and Development**

WestPhil's vision is of an orchestra in western Sydney within the decade. But not a "business-as-usual" orchestra. This will be an orchestra which reaches out into the diverse communities in western Sydney, providing an accessible pathway for talented children and young people into a possible future in orchestra; one which provides local performance at national and international standards. The vision and the work now underway, contributes significantly to the artistic and cultural life in the region. It will help stem the drain of talented young orchestral musicians from the region, who have to otherwise travel to other parts of Sydney and Australia to access these opportunities.

Conclusion

The WestPhil Accelerator Program offers valuable insights into creating sustainable, community-focused pathways for music education. By integrating advanced training, professional mentorship, and strong community partnerships, WestPhil provides a model that can inform and enhance music education policies across New South Wales. The program's success demonstrates the potential for similar initiatives to enrich the cultural landscape and educational outcomes in other regions.