

REPORT ON PROCEEDINGS BEFORE

**JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON ARTS AND MUSIC
EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN NEW SOUTH WALES**

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

UNCORRECTED

At Macquarie Room, Parliament House, Sydney, on Tuesday 30 July 2024

The Committee met at 9:30.

PRESENT

Ms Julia Finn (Chair)

Mr Kevin Anderson

Ms Abigail Boyd

Ms Liza Butler

The Hon. Anthony D'Adam

Ms Judy Hannan

Dr Joe McGirr (Deputy Chair)

The Hon. Jacqui Munro

The CHAIR: Welcome to the first hearing of the Joint Select Committee on Arts and Music Education and Training inquiry into arts and music education and training in New South Wales. I acknowledge the Gadigal people of the Eora nation, the traditional custodians of the lands on which we are meeting today. I pay my respects to Elders past and present, and celebrate the diversity of Aboriginal peoples and their ongoing cultures and connections to the lands and waters of New South Wales. I also acknowledge and pay my respects to any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people joining us today. My name is Julia Finn, and I am the Chair of the Committee.

I ask everyone in the room to please turn their mobile phones to silent. Parliamentary privilege applies to witnesses in relation to the evidence they give today. However, it does not apply to what witnesses say outside of the hearing. I urge witnesses to be careful about making comments to the media or to others after completing their evidence. In addition, the Legislative Council has adopted rules to provide procedural fairness for all inquiry participants. I encourage Committee members and witnesses to be mindful of these procedures.

Dr ANITA COLLINS, Music Educator, Director, Muse Consulting, and Founder, Bigger Better Brains and LearnGauge, affirmed and examined

Ms LOUISE BARKL, National Education Adviser, Music in Me, affirmed and examined

Ms BERNADETTE HEARD, National Manager, Music in Me, affirmed and examined

The CHAIR: Welcome and thank you for taking the time to give evidence. Would you like to start by making a short statement?

ANITA COLLINS: Yes. Good morning and thank you for the invitation to be a witness for this Committee. I'm a music teacher, researcher, writer and presenter in the field of music education with a specialisation in music learning and brain development. I currently work across almost every Australian State and Territory and every education system to support schoolteachers, leaders, policymakers and system leaders to improve the provision of music education for Australian students. My submission focused on the need to capacity-build the New South Wales teacher workforce to be able to confidently and competently deliver quality ongoing and sequential music education to every student.

LOUISE BARKL: Yes, I'd like to make a statement. Thank you also from both Bernie and I to be here as part of this important part of the process. As you heard, Bernie is the national manager of the Music in Me mentoring program, and I'm the national education adviser to that program. We both studied music education in New South Wales. We've both taught music in primary and secondary schools in New South Wales and have continued to work in the music education sector at both the New South Wales and national level. Nearly a decade ago the late Richard Gill's determination to address the continued decline in the quality of music education in schools led to the establishment of the National Music Teacher Mentoring Program, which is now known as the Music in Me mentoring program. He truly believed the greatest impact would be about starting with teachers in the service of teaching and teaching in primary schools, and that we needed to upskill the current workforce so that they gained experience and raised their confidence and their competence to teach music across all primary years.

From the original pilot of the program, which occurred in New South Wales public schools, in metropolitan, regional and remote schools, a core model of mentoring and upskilling general primary teachers to teach music was established, and also ways of adapting that model to meet local needs. We truly believe that we have an opportunity to make a generational change through this inquiry to improve the status and the quality of music teaching and learning in all New South Wales primary schools. Our focus is very much on the implementation and the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom in primary schools.

Our recommendations fall into two categories: solutions that address our observations about the current quality and effectiveness of music education in New South Wales as it relates to primary music education, and also how we propose that the Music in Me program can be scaled to be a bigger part of the solution. We know if you want to improve student outcomes, you improve teacher quality. We believe that mentoring teachers through the Music in Me program could enhance any and every other initiative designed to improve the quality of music teaching and learning in primary schools.

The CHAIR: Bernadette, do you have anything you'd like to add?

BERNADETTE HEARD: No, I'm happy for Louise to speak on both of our behalf.

The CHAIR: Questions?

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: I'll start. Thank you for coming and thank you very much for your submissions. Dr Collins, I think one of the things that stuck out from your submission was in relation to the benefit of music education in and of itself rather than as a path towards a vocation. Could you talk us through what the research is around the overall benefits of music education?

ANITA COLLINS: Yes. It's very clear from about 30 years of research now—and that's neuromusical research, so research that involves the brain—that music learning basically improves how the brain functions, and the more that we can do that in the earlier stages of development for any human, the better it can be. So, basically, particularly before the age of about seven or eight, it makes the brain wire far more effectively. It works faster. It's far more consistent, which is a really, really big issue for kids particularly who are coming from a trauma or disadvantaged background, but also for kids in this day and age where we have devices and things that are shortening our attention span, so the ability for the brain to work more consistently and to maintain attention is even more important than it's ever been.

It assists with synchronisation—again, another really important issue for learning. Basically, it's the ability for the brain to work in a synchronised way to pass messages around as quickly and as effectively and in sync as it can. That's how learning happens. It's actually how memory is made. So, again, it's very important that a child can learn something on a Tuesday and can recall it on a Wednesday, and music learning builds the mechanism in the brain that helps that occur. It helps children be, literally, healthier. Their immune systems are activated. If they're in any kind of emotional distress, it will regulate that distress for them, meaning it will either bring down their cortisol or it will raise their cortisol if they're in a very low state. So, basically, music learning is vitally important as an art form in itself, but it has these proven benefits that lead to all other learning. That's the most important thing for me, as I see it: that we can enhance the entire educational experience of the next generation of Australian children by making sure that music education is seen as that foundational pillar within it.

We have research to back up that it helps it in so many different ways, and it is something we already have within our education system, so it's just utilising that more and more effectively to enhance everything else that's going on, particularly literacy and numeracy. Literacy is very much causally related and improved by music education. So understanding, creating a better working auditory processing system, will help kids when they then go to learn how to speak and then that helps them learn how to read. So they're directly related. We have countless examples of music programs that have been put into schools that have then improved the literacy outcomes for students.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: Do you have any comments in particular around children with disability and the use of music education in early intervention?

ANITA COLLINS: Yes.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: Is there evidence around that?

ANITA COLLINS: There is a lot of research—and I would probably add into that group neurodiverse learners as well—that shows how beneficial music learning can be in, again, helping the brain to function more effectively. Whatever disability or neurodiversity is impacting on the brain, music learning can help to improve that, and it helps them to then be more successful at school, which is not just about their academic achievement but their sense of self, and their self-esteem, as well, is very important. It does many things at once.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: Ms Barkl or Ms Heard, did you want to comment on that basic question about the non-vocational benefits of music education?

LOUISE BARKL: We totally agree with everything Anita has just said. We know that music is a unique way for young people to learn about themselves, to be able to express themselves—perhaps in non-verbal ways—what they learn about themselves, how they interact with their peers, and how they build team-building skills, empathy and their sense of wellbeing. I think that's a very important part of music learning, and it's for every child. We're not talking about a potential vocation. Yes, that might be one possible outcome, but it is for every child, and that joy of learning music. So they can actually make informed decisions as they get older about how they want to interact with music. Maybe they want to continue in secondary school, looking at elective music or learning an instrument. But how are they going to be able to make those informed decisions if every child does not get that opportunity in the classroom? Otherwise, we're relying perhaps on parents or some other community opportunity. But it shouldn't be ad hoc. We're talking about music education for every single child, starting as early as possible.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: I think Ms Heard had something to add.

BERNADETTE HEARD: Further to what my colleagues have noted, I think it's also really important to understand that the majority of graduating generalist primary school teachers do not graduate with a sense of confidence in including music in their classroom, yet we understand that music has these benefits to all areas of learning, and yet the majority of teachers do not feel confident to be able to put that in place in their classrooms. Therefore, the work that we do especially is in ensuring that we can build that confidence and build competence as well for primary school teachers within their classroom, so that they can incorporate music into all aspects of learning.

Dr JOE MCGIRR: Thank you for appearing as witnesses today and for the work you do. Dr Collins, you highlighted in your submission the role of principals and also an issue around the capacity of primary school teachers. Ms Heard, you have just commented on their confidence. You have made comparisons with Victoria, Queensland and South Australia. I wonder if you could expand on those comparisons and give us a sense of where New South Wales sits in relation to those issues? I'm also interested in the Music in Me experience, as well, in other States compared to New South Wales. Can I start with you, Dr Collins?

ANITA COLLINS: Yes, sure. That's a big question. At the moment what I'm seeing across—as I said, I work across all systems but also almost every State. The two most important factors in delivering music education to every child are that well-informed principal and that well-trained teacher. The well-informed principal part is that music education within a school doesn't sit in the timetable. We just go, "We'll put it here," and that's it. It's not an easy thing to do; it requires more parts of the school to be involved. The support of the principal is absolutely vital in that to make sure that music is delivered, ultimately, every single day, that it is part of the curriculum, and that all teachers are doing it. That comes down to what my colleagues have talked about, which is that confidence and competence to do so.

In terms of my experience, New South Wales teachers are the least supported in that confidence and competence when I look at Victoria, South Australia and Queensland as well in the government system in particular. They do get very little time. We have done research into the fact that, across Australia, the average is eight hours in their pre-service teaching. It's 9.39 here in New South Wales, which is a little bit more, but when someone is coming from a background of, "I've never played an instrument, I never sang in a choir and I didn't really have very much music education at school—it wasn't very confidently and competently delivered," to then say, "Now you've got to deliver this subject area," is too much of a stretch for them within their pre-service teaching with such a small amount of time. So it needs to be also supported for in-service teachers, once they're teaching, by the department.

As I said, principals need to be informed about the benefits that are not just about music. It's these broader benefits around literacy, social development and executive function development. All of these are really important for principals to understand so that they can then see the broader impact of music and therefore understand how to support it in the many different ways that they need to. There are two sides of it. South Australia has their music education strategy. They are looking specifically at those two areas and targeting principals and teachers as well with what they need in order to make sure that the students of South Australia get all the value that comes from music education. Queensland has a long history of supporting music and having it in a privileged position within their curriculum—and have had very highly trained teachers through university because they use a specific methodology called the Kodály methodology, which is how they're trained.

Victoria is doing a lot of work within their department to improve and provide support for teachers. I'm also very lucky to have been working with them to develop a tool which then helps define how much the teachers know and how confident they actually are, and then to put PD in place to improve that and then test again with that tool to see how that is travelling—so they're approaching it very much from a data point of view. I think there's a lot of work that can be done here in New South Wales. There's a lot of benefit that New South Wales students can get from this. There's a lot that principals, in the very difficult jobs that they have, could benefit from understanding about where music sits and implementing it in their school. It could improve far more, as I said, than their academic performance, but also behaviour within the school and relationship with parents. It has this far-reaching ability, which I would love to see principals be able to utilise to make their jobs just that little bit easier.

Dr JOE McGIRR: Before we go on to hear about Music in Me nationally, the Kodály—

ANITA COLLINS: Kodály.

Dr JOE McGIRR: What's involved in that? That's in Queensland, you said.

ANITA COLLINS: It's a methodology. It's worldwide. Queensland has adopted it as the methodology that they teach their teachers. That means that there's a continuity across the State—that, when teachers move around, the students are still receiving the same way of teaching music. Here in New South Wales, a lot of teachers are Kodály and what's called Orff trained—it's another methodology. A lot of teachers use those together. There are established methodologies that help with that. Queensland's had a very long tradition of having that as a base methodology that means, as I said, students get the same education out of it.

Dr JOE McGIRR: Are they trained in the methodology or do they get that training when they go into the education system?

ANITA COLLINS: Both.

Dr JOE McGIRR: The education system is committed to continuing that?

ANITA COLLINS: Yes, as are the professional associations within Queensland, so it's very supported within Queensland. There are, of course, other ways of doing it. It just happens to be part of their history and what they've done. They don't get a lot of it, as I said, in pre-service teaching, but they do get a lot of opportunity when they're in-service teachers.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Just to clarify a term that you used, you said that music education for teachers holds a privileged position. What does that mean?

ANITA COLLINS: They have some policies around having a specialist music teacher in every school. We know at the moment there's not one of those because there is a lack of just having enough specialist teachers trained, but they have made sure that it is part of every single school and what they commit to as well. It doesn't mean the other arts aren't delivered; it just means they understand that it is a very important base for—all education comes from music education.

Dr JOE MCGIRR: Can I hear about the Music in Me program nationally?

LOUISE BARKL: In answer to your question there about other States and Territories, through my experience with the Music in Me program over 10 years and in previous roles where I've worked on national music education programs, New South Wales is, I think, the only State or Territory that at any point in time has not had specialist music teachers in primary schools. In all States and Territories now there's a mix. But there have never been specialists there.

We're behind the eight ball right from the start when you combine that with what we know about music within initial teacher education for primary teachers. There is no teaching code in New South Wales for a music specialist in a primary school. Even where there are teachers that can teach as a specialist, they may not even be able to get a job that's an ongoing role in the Department of Education. Our experience has been that we hear about them—if they want to get a permanent ongoing teaching role, they end up looking outside to the non-government sector to get a role like that. There's this spiral of issues there.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Can I jump in there? You haven't recommended that New South Wales adopt a specialist teacher in every school. Why is that?

LOUISE BARKL: We believe it's a combination of upskilling—or, firstly, more music in initial teacher education for primary teachers, upskilling the current workforce and also a role for specialist music teachers. We think about it as a three-prong approach. Because we've seen this generational decline in the quality of music education over decades, if New South Wales said, "Okay, the solution is specialist teachers in all primary schools," I don't think I'll see it in my lifetime. It's a very long-term goal. Plus, we also know, particularly if we think about the research that we've heard Anita speak about, it's also the benefits that music has in other learning. You don't want it to be isolated with one teacher teaching, particularly in those early years of learning. It's how that music learning can impact all learning.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Can I pick up on that? You also recommend mandating 30 minutes a week.

LOUISE BARKL: Yes.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Surely that would be easier to achieve if you had a dedicated music teacher in each school.

LOUISE BARKL: My understanding is that currently that 30 minutes is about what the recommendation is now. But we know a lot of ways that teachers teach music and integrate it into their teaching and learning program across the whole week. It might be 10 minutes here or it might be 10 minutes on another day. We are aware that that is often how music is implemented.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: One of the issues is the crowded curriculum. You've got a lot of other competing—we've only got mandates for numeracy and literacy. If you introduce mandating for music, then other disciplines would expect a similar thing—

LOUISE BARKL: That is in keeping with the syllabus.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: —and you just don't have enough hours in the week to accommodate the full curriculum. That's one of the problems.

LOUISE BARKL: That is the current Department of Education guidelines.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: Ms Barkl, obviously you've pitched this to the Department of Education previously, I would expect.

LOUISE BARKL: I'll let Bernie talk about how Music in Me is a collaboration with education authorities.

BERNADETTE HEARD: Also, just to follow on from that previous point, in our Music in Me summit, which was just last week, we had a fantastic discussion which Anita led as part of a panel about the value of

incorporating 10 minutes a day of music into a generalist primary classroom as a way of switching children's brains on and really preparing them for different areas of learning and the incredible value that there is in having those activities before you do other areas of learning. It's the way to engage children and focus them and prepare them for learning as part of their day, doing that at the start of the day. That's only achievable if the classroom teachers are confident and equipped to deliver that kind of learning as well. There are many fantastic programs out there which we all speak about in our submissions, and our colleagues as well who you'll hear from today, where models of incorporating 10 minutes of learning or small brain breaks and energisers and ways to incorporate music into everyday learning are incredibly effective. The research certainly does demonstrate that as well.

The Music in Me program, when it was first established by Richard Gill nine years ago, as Louise mentioned, was piloted in New South Wales. We now work in a number of different States and jurisdictions in a co-funding model. Our Federal funding supports the national coordination, my role and my colleague. Also it supports the delivery and design of professional learning for mentors, to teach them the art and the craft of being a good mentor and how to follow the structure of our program of how to support teachers in their classroom. I think the beauty of the program is that the teacher who is being mentored, who is seeking that professional learning, doesn't need to leave their classroom or go outside school time or do additional work online. They have a teacher—a mentor—come and work with them side-by-side in their classroom. So they're learning on the job. They're understanding how to manage a noisy music classroom and enjoy all that wonderful activity that happens when that works in your classroom.

We work with different jurisdictions. As I mentioned, in New South Wales we work directly with the Department of Education. The curriculum team work with us very closely, and they send out communications through New South Wales department schools. School leaders or teachers who are interesting in being mentored can then apply. They are then matched up with a mentor from our collective, usually someone who is geographically close to them as well. We know that the program is more effective when there are more than one teacher within the school being mentored. Ideally there are multiples or there are models within our program of a whole school being mentored over a period of time or people being mentored in multiple years. That really does have a great impact on the culture of the school if the teachers are able to support each other in between those mentoring sessions, and ongoing, and share what they're learning and for it to become part of the fabric of the school.

In other States, we work in Victoria, again with the Department of Education, in a lesser capacity. I think we really complement other programs that are happening there, where teachers require deeper learning, so our program is applied to schools in metropolitan and regional areas. In Western Australia, we work in partnership with the ASME, the Australian Society of Music Education, there. They help to identify schools where mentoring would be particularly valuable. We apply a remote model there, so we send a lead mentor to remote areas such as Karratha and they will spend a more intensive period of time there. That really has a very different impact. We're building mentors within those regions now who, in time, will then radiate out across the schools in those areas. In South Australia, our program is very much more we're directly approached by schools who would like to engage that model of learning for their teachers. But, again, we have had a long history in South Australia. There are several schools there where we have, over time, supported and developed the music capacity of the teachers in entire schools, with great results.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: Just following up, what's been the take-up from the Department of Education? Because, Ms Barkl, you said earlier the general decline in music education—while this is a fantastic program, and we totally agree with everything you're saying, there still seems to be a lack of uptake, if you like, and of focus on music education. Is the Department of Education picking it up and helping you to implement? What has been your experience?

BERNADETTE HEARD: We're really grateful for the partnership with the NSW Department of Education. They support the implementation of the program, firstly through having a resource within the curriculum team and someone who supports the administration of the program and ensures that people are matched well and that the schools are able to talk to each other and that side of things. Because of the co-funding model of our program, the Federal funding supports our national coordination and delivery of the mentor training, and our State or jurisdiction partners fund the provision of the mentor.

Usually the mentor is a teacher who is working in a school. That is certainly a really effective thing. It's wonderful professional learning for that teacher as well. But the real cost to the State Government is the time, the provision of a casual teacher to release that mentor when they go into the mentee's school and work with them. I suppose the scale of the program is most significantly limited by the capacity of the State Government, the Department of Education, to fund the provision of mentors. One of the other challenges that we have in growing

the program is finding enough mentors within regions who are able to then support and become mentors and engage with the program.

As Louise mentioned, there are many great music specialist teachers who trained at institutions where music education was their primary area of expertise. However, because most of those teachers have not been able to gain permanent employment in the Department of Education, many of them have left and gone to other areas. We currently draw our mentors directly from the Department of Education. It's finding enough suitable mentors who are at the appropriate level of skill to then engage them within the Department of Education. One of the areas that we would certainly be able to reach more schools and have a greater impact is, firstly, if there is more funding to provide more mentors; and then, secondly, if mentors can be drawn from outside of the Department of Education as well as from within. We really do try very hard to identify great music teachers from all educational systems and engage them as mentors.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Can I ask what the RFF in position is? How many hours of RFF are required to cover teachers in the program? You can take it on notice.

BERNADETTE HEARD: I think it's two hours.

LOUISE BARKL: I believe it's two hours.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Two hours a week?

LOUISE BARKL: Each primary classroom teacher gets released for two hours per week.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: I understand how much RFF—how much relief is required to deliver the program. If you're saying the mentor is meeting with a teacher once every month for half an hour—

BERNADETTE HEARD: The current model with the Department of Education in New South Wales is that a mentor would ideally travel to a school and work with two mentees, individually. They would accrue a quarter of a day per mentee that they are working with—so half a day per visit—and they would visit approximately eight times over the course of the program. Ultimately, the allocation in the budget for the Department of Education in New South Wales is a total of two release days per mentee for the program. This is an abbreviated version of the program. The base model, the original model of our program, was twice as much. This really is designed to be an introductory program or really try to assess where the skill development is most needed. There is an option, I believe, for mentees to do the program again if there's further learning that they could do.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Congratulations on the summit last week. It was excellent.

BERNADETTE HEARD: Thank you.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: There were obviously lots of really enthusiastic teachers there. In terms of the interaction between schools and the department and getting those casuals funded, and even getting those casuals into the classrooms in the first place, how does that work? Are schools coming to you and saying, "We would like help advocating to the department for funding for this"? Can principals fund it from their own budgets? How is that process working, practically, at the moment?

BERNADETTE HEARD: I believe that the provision of the release teacher is funded directly by the school that is hosting the mentor. We're not involved in sourcing casual teachers. I guess there are further options to expand the program where we may directly engage mentors from outside of the department to come in and work as mentors. Obviously, additional funding would be required for that.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Have you found any trends in the last couple of years in terms of principals' ability to actually fund these positions?

BERNADETTE HEARD: Definitely. There certainly are challenges and stresses for schools to, firstly, fund additional casual staff for programs such as this, but we also do see examples where there are real models for showing what this investment can bring as well. For an example, we have a mentor who is in the Cessnock region, whose principal has really taken a leadership role in demonstrating—in supporting all of the schools in the area. They have a specialist music teacher within their school, and that music teacher is now acting as a mentor with a range of schools in that area and lifting the capacity of the entire region. This is a cluster of small schools within small areas. I think, over time, they will see an incredible benefit both for the wellbeing of the students and for the career sustainability of the mentees. We do certainly know anecdotally that by being mentored, by becoming a mentor and by being involved in that kind of really deep professional learning side by side, it has a very positive impact on a teacher's career.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: More specifically, I guess I'm really asking: Has the capacity of schools changed with recent funding changes announced? How has that impacted your program?

LOUISE BARKL: I feel like it hasn't been—correct me if I'm wrong, Bernie. These are observations. It has not so much been the funding; it has been the availability of casuals to be able to release the mentor to do the mentoring. I think that's where one of the solutions we see is, if you open up who can mentor—we've got criteria about what makes a good mentor of music for primary schoolteachers and a selection process et cetera. If we can open up to people that can fulfil those criteria to mentor that may be casual teachers themselves or they might be transitioning to retirement or recently retired—

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: So they don't need to be replaced by other casuals.

LOUISE BARKL: —they would not need to be replaced.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: It is the lack of availability of casuals and also funding that principals can't afford anymore?

LOUISE BARKL: In my experience, it's the former more than the latter, but definitely both.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Do you have any comment on that, Dr Collins?

ANITA COLLINS: I would just say I've observed the same. I would just add a third element into there, which is it's a lot of money, it's a lot of organisation involved. Then if they don't understand the broader value of it, it's in the too-hard basket. So I think that they're the three sorts of elements that are coming together, which a principal would just go, "Not this year", or "Not at the moment". That's impacting the students.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: Dr Collins, if principals had the available funding, what are they saying to you? Would they take it up more?

ANITA COLLINS: Some, yes. Some of them are definitely going, "I hear what you're saying. I understand. I'd love to be able to do this; we just don't have the funding to put it across." However, a lot more of the time I get, "Well, I just can't see the benefit of it. I'm going to be asking my teachers to do something more," which is kind of a back-to-front because actually it's giving them more skills to make their jobs easier. It's a slightly short-sightedness part of—"We don't have the funds but also I can't see the benefit just yet." Those that have looked into the research who I've had contact with, who've had contact with Music in Me, absolutely understand that it is transformational for any school to put music across the school in place.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: How do you see that changing? Is that in pre-service or is that more casuals into the system? How do you help principals in that pathway to providing that music education?

ANITA COLLINS: I think, having worked in tertiary education for 12 years, it moves very slowly. In order to get to the students as quickly and benefit them as quickly as possible, I think it's starting with the in-service aspect of it. There are teachers out there, exceptionally good ones, who could be very beneficial in the Music in Me or another model, who, if we looked at the way they're employed, the casual rates, all of those sorts of things, we could make immediate change in the system very, very quickly within a year—and then actually helping the principals to understand how to implement it, removing the barriers for them to go, "Yes, I want to do this and I want to see and measure the benefit that it's going to have on my school."

Ms LIZA BUTLER: Dr Collins, in Victoria in schools where principals have engaged a specialist music teacher, are there any early learning outcomes or results from those schools? I'm specifically thinking about five- to seven-year-olds, because that's where you set a child's whole learning capability up. Is there data to reflect that the schools that have implemented a specialist music teacher have better early learning outcomes compared to those that haven't?

ANITA COLLINS: Not a specialist music teacher, remembering that is someone who just teaches that. We are beginning to have data around the impact of generalist teachers delivering particularly within that K-2 or P-2 period. That's the most beneficial both for literacy learning but also having music—I have many schools that I work with who are doing the first 10 minutes of a literacy lesson, so not adding more time into the curriculum, just using music at its most appropriate at that age group at the start of the literacy block. It primes their ears for their literacy learning and then they go on to do that. That's delivered by generalists. Speaking to what we were talking about before, the solution is a mixed solution. It's not specialist. Because they not only take time to—they're four years to train. They take the 10 years prior to that to be the musicians themselves to then go into it. It's a very long road. We do have amazing specialists all over the State, but what we need to look at is how can we have a mixed solution of generalists who are upskilled to deliver the lower age groups—that's super beneficial for their teaching—and then use the specialists to both mentor them but also teach in the upper years as well.

The CHAIR: What does that 10 minutes ahead of the literacy block look like? What format does that take?

ANITA COLLINS: There are three musical elements to it, which are beat-keeping, rhythm-making and singing. You don't do one after the other; they're actually all combined together. It would look like the whole class sitting in front—as they would for, say, reading a book—and the teacher would be leading a few structured activities where they get them started in moving together. Then they get them doing some rhythms and they're singing a song. They probably sing that song every single day for the week. It's the same song. We know kids love that repetition. It's basically making sure that they're getting better and better at those really baseline musical skills, which we know are the skills that actually improve brain development. It looks like a normal part of the class, and then they would head off to do their silent reading or they'd do some stuff with letters, depending on where they're up to.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: We should start our Committee hearings that way.

ANITA COLLINS: We can start with a song.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: Or a group hug.

Mrs JUDY HANNAN: When I look in my area, the private schools are very intense on music. I don't know whether they see the benefits or reputational benefits out there. Has there been any evidence to have a look at private school education versus public school education and the use of music in those two areas?

ANITA COLLINS: There hasn't been any research to compare them because there are so many other variables that sit with that: expectations at a non-government school, where music sits in the curriculum and how it's valued by the parent community. All of those things are so different that research doesn't necessarily work in that space. Anecdotally, having worked across all of those systems and looked at how it's different, I see that the students in the public system are missing out on that consistency but also the expectation that music is part of every day at school.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: There's a Catholic schools program, I believe, that you referred to in your submission that's going well, from what I understand.

ANITA COLLINS: Correct, yes. That's the Wired for Sound one that's done in the Parramatta diocese. I was with them last week. They're upskilling 80 teachers a year in how to deliver that 10 minutes at the start of every literacy block. We are collecting data along the way to see how it's impacting on the literacy development, and we're seeing some very good data coming out of that.

LOUISE BARKL: In the early years of the mentoring program—the music teacher mentoring program, it was called at the time—there was a several year model in the Wagga diocese Catholic schools as part of their music education commitment over a number of years. Every primary school teacher was mentored through that while the funding lasted from the partner. We now have a new pilot in Sydney.

BERNADETTE HEARD: We're just starting a new pilot with Sydney Catholic Schools, supporting their Amadeus program, essentially, which is a really fantastic instrumental program. I think they certainly recognise that, alongside having an incredible instrumental program, having really well trained music specialists in every school and confident classroom teachers is the piece of the puzzle that will make their Amadeus program even more successful. That's just kicking off now.

Dr JOE MCGIRR: You may want to take this question on notice, Ms Heard. You've given some stats on the Music in Me program in New South Wales. I think you said 160 schools out of 1,600. I'm interested in how that compares to how many schools are involved in other States.

BERNADETTE HEARD: New South Wales is our largest footprint and has been consistently since the program started. In Victoria, we're in, I think, 13 schools currently. In South Australia, I think it's only 10 schools or so. In Western Australia, we're working in a range of different models, but it's around eight schools. New South Wales is definitely our largest program currently. It ebbs and flows, year to year. We're currently working with the Western Australian Department of Education to potentially grow the program there. We're talking to other jurisdictions as well.

The CHAIR: Thank you very much for your evidence. The secretariat will contact you in relation to any follow-up questions and those taken on notice.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

Dr JOHN NICHOLAS SAUNDERS, Chair, National Advocates for Arts Education, sworn and examined

Dr KATHRYN COLEMAN, President, Art Education Australia, affirmed and examined

The CHAIR: Welcome. Thank you both for taking the time to give evidence. Would you like to start by making a short statement?

JOHN NICHOLAS SAUNDERS: I would. Thank you so much, Madam Chair. Thank you for the opportunity to give evidence at this hearing and for initiating this inquiry as well. I'm the chair of the National Advocates for Arts Education, or the NAAE. We're an alliance of peak national arts education associations, including Art Education Australia, with Kate; Ausdance National; the Australian Society for Music Education; the Australian Teachers of Media, ATOM; Drama Australia; and the National Association for the Visual Arts, NAVA. I'm pleased that many of our affiliates have been invited to present at the hearing today. Together we represent around 10,000 early childhood, primary, secondary and tertiary teachers. We advocate for high-quality arts education, including the five art subjects recognised in the national curriculum: dance, drama, media arts, music and visual arts.

Our written submission outlines some of the well-documented benefits of quality arts education. Australian and international research continues to demonstrate that students who receive high quality arts education achieve better grades and overall test scores; are less likely to leave school early; have higher achievements in literacy assessment; are more engaged in school; have more positive self-concepts, higher self-esteem and greater life satisfaction; are more connected to their school, their community and their peers; have higher attendance rates; rarely report boredom at school; have increased higher order thinking capabilities and skills; are more motivated to learn; watch less television; and, as adults, are more likely to vote and participate in democracy.

Despite the extraordinary research documenting the positive impact of arts education, access to quality arts education is inconsistent across Australia and, indeed, across New South Wales, and is dependent on socio-economic advantage, school system and geographic location. We have also seen a devaluing and erosion of arts and arts education at universities, with several universities cutting their fine arts offerings and many universities reducing the time allocated to the arts in initial teacher education.

We also know that the arts industry plays a critical role in supporting the dynamic ecosystem of arts participation and arts education in New South Wales. Sadly, the arts industry in New South Wales is in a dire state. Many organisations are struggling to survive after COVID. As a result, we're seeing youth and education programs delivered by New South Wales arts and cultural institutions being reduced or axed because of lack of investment and support. This inquiry is urgently needed to address some of these concerns and to ensure that New South Wales is a leader in arts education and training, both nationally and around the world. I thank you for your commitment to arts education and training.

KATHRYN COLEMAN: Firstly, I would like to take the opportunity to thank you for holding such an inquiry. As an art educator for 30 years and a trained New South Wales art teacher there are not many opportunities to speak publicly and speak to Parliament about what it is that art education does. I am an associate professor in visual art and design education at the University of Melbourne. I teach in Victoria because it is the only place that I can still do my job. I actually can't teach art teachers here in New South Wales because of the limited availability in those programs. I moved to Victoria to do that job because there weren't enough here. I left the University of New South Wales teaching design history and theory when those courses began to diminish and close pre-COVID. That's now 12 years ago that I left this State. I graduated from the University of New South Wales—it was City Art Institute, then College of Fine Arts—as an art and design teacher, K-12, and I taught in this State for nearly 20 years.

I think one of the most important things as the President of Art Education Australia right now, in thanking you for holding this inquiry, is one of the most important things about training for teachers is that it is national. Teachers are trained in particular States but we learn through a range of different curriculums. The opportunity to come and speak here about theory and practice and research in my space of art education is important, not only because this State is the only State with mandatory visual art education—I teach teachers in Victoria where that mandatory education is not there, and for me that's a platform to be able to travel to Sydney today to make sure that that continues—but to speak about why that is so important, in a State where I will today, as a part of my own art education, visit the Art Gallery and go to the MCA.

I am saddened by the constant attacks on artists and art education, on arts workers and the impact that then has on young people and the community about where they see art education existing and opportunities for thinking about, as the inquiry noted, pathways. What those pathways look like in an ecology is really important. We know

ecologically that each thing relies on the other thing. We don't have artists, we don't have arts workers, we don't have museum educators, we don't have people working in these amazing regional galleries that you have in New South Wales—I think probably more important regional galleries than they probably have in other States—without art education. Art education starts in kindergarten and it goes through to year 8 here in New South Wales. I don't see that in every other State in Australia now that I sit in this position as president across the country, and so an inquiry of this nature is really important to be at today. Thank you.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Thank you for being here and for your submissions. I have a question for both of you around the differences between the New South Wales curriculum and the Federal curriculum. Dr Saunders, in your submission you spoke about wanting to harmonise those, and I'd love to hear Dr Coleman's view as well about which is better or how you harmonise them. What is different at the moment, what's the next step and why is it necessary to harmonise them? That might reduce the quality that we have in New South Wales, for example.

KATHRYN COLEMAN: I'm going to say that they already are harmonised. One of the things that New South Wales did in the early 1990s is lead the country in art education. As I said, I am a product of that art education. It's the first curriculum that we see—that we've still seen in place, up until recently—currently under review, not yet finalised. But that curriculum led the changes that brought in the national curriculum.

Even in 1992-93, when I was studying at UNSW, we were discussing what the Australian curriculum—or, at that time, the national curriculum—would look like as students. We were contributing to the professors that were trained in the United States and in Europe in art education in their doctoral studies about the impact of what a national curriculum would look like. I teach in the Victorian curriculum, and that Victorian curriculum is, I can say, so closely aligned to the New South Wales curriculum. Visual arts education is about teaching the whole person in relation to the world. We teach what it means to be an artist, how artists think about the world, how artists see the world, and we teach what audiences are. That language is inherent in the national curriculum.

The thing that New South Wales has done—as all States do in their visual arts curriculum, when allowed by their curriculum authorities—is to contextualise, because art is contextual. Art is responsive to communities, to society and to politics. This is a first contact State, so the ways that you teach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges in this State is different than I teach in Wurundjeri country in Victoria, and it's different than we teach it in the Northern Territory. Each country—big "C" country—requires its own context. The way that we think about the impact of art education and art communities and societies early in the federation of New South Wales and the establishment of this city is very different.

The National Art School, one of the oldest art schools in the country, is here in Sydney. We have to have an art education that is responsive. Having a national curriculum is quite problematic because otherwise you would be teaching an art form from a particular place that is not responsive to the place where that would be being taught. Why the art curriculum needs to be open is that that context is also specific to the practices of those teachers, the practices of those communities and the practices of those societies. I taught in south-west Sydney here, and that context was very specific. I taught children who had lived in camps in war zones for their whole lives. If I had been prescribed a curriculum from the national curriculum authority, it wouldn't be specific to the kind of kids that I was teaching who grew up in a Sudan camp. I needed to be able to look across the frames, to make sense of what that looked like in my context, and then to teach it.

I think the context is there, but each State needs to be able to locate how we teach artistry, how we teach audience, how we teach spectatorship and how we teach creativity. The PISA results are showing that we are teaching that across the country and that each State context works. But we should be allowed to have context. Private schools are allowed to contextualise. If private schools can contextualise and teach the way they need to, then States should be able to. Education, as I said before, is an ecology. When we think about it in that ecosystem, this ecosystem is very different than any other. The way that you think about education just here in Sydney is very different to how I think about it in Dubbo or Wagga Wagga, and it needs to be responsive to those communities.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Dr Saunders, that goes a little bit in contrast to what your submission is saying, so would you like to respond or elaborate, please?

JOHN NICHOLAS SAUNDERS: I agree with Kate. What we've suggested or what we advocate for is some alignment between the national and State curriculum. New South Wales has a very detailed curriculum. Their primary curriculum here, Creative Arts K-6, is a very strong curriculum across four disciplines, four subjects. The model for years 7 to 10, having subject-specific language, works really well because it is taught by secondary-trained specialist teachers. Having a broad primary curriculum that uses language that is consistent across arts subjects is really useful, and that does happen in the national curriculum. We are certainly advocating for some alignment, but certainly not for every State to necessarily adopt.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Where would you see the misalignment at the moment, or the non-alignment?

JOHN NICHOLAS SAUNDERS: I think the biggest one is media arts. That's a whole subject that every other State and Territory in Australia recognises as a discrete subject, and in New South Wales it hasn't been in the primary space.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: What is media arts? I wasn't educated in it, evidently.

JOHN NICHOLAS SAUNDERS: I was. Media arts is looking at media, new media, film, television and radio. It's looking at those critical literacy skills about how we engage in news and how we engage in TikTok and in social media et cetera. It's a great subject. I had worked in an all-boys school most recently. It was in a secondary context in Queensland. It was the arts subject that was growing the fastest because it was engaging boys in an arts subject. It's an area in New South Wales that little bits of it are covered in other subject areas, but it doesn't stand alone at the moment.

I suppose the other thing I would say is that, in the Australian curriculum, there's a central entitlement that all young Australians have access to all five arts subjects from kindergarten through to the end of year 8. Whether the curriculum is adopted or not, that central entitlement, I think, is something that's really important. We want all children across Australia to be able to access dance, drama, media arts, music and visual arts, despite where they go to school, despite which State they're in and despite which system they're being taught in. I think that central principle, that entitlement, is a thing that we will advocate for most strongly.

Dr JOE MCGIRR: Thank you very much, both of you, for coming. I think it's quite important to pursue that issue of media arts, Dr Saunders. Just before doing that, I want to go to Dr Coleman. I just want to check that I understood your evidence. You said that we have a mandatory visual arts education—we're the only State that has that—and we have a network of regional galleries that's strong. So it seems that your concerns are around the availability of art teacher training in New South Wales.

KATHRYN COLEMAN: Yes.

Dr JOE MCGIRR: You've actually painted a pretty stark picture of a decline in that. I wonder if you could just expand on that and its impact on schools and the ability to continue to deliver the visual arts education.

KATHRYN COLEMAN: It's an important question and a place where I now dedicate my research into teacher practice. One of the things that we saw, as art schools were partnered or collaborated with universities, was a change in assessment and standardisation of art practice. Art schools are expensive to run. The University of Sydney used to have one of the most amazing, world-renowned art schools. It has managed to regain some of its fine art education, but the actual campus where artists learnt to be artists together is gone. It was sold. One of the things about the art school at New South Wales, the City Art Institute, where my mother had been previously in the 1960s—it was a standalone art school. It was an art school that actually taught artists. In your education training, you were able to further it at Alexander Mackie College.

In those amalgamations, what happens to art in any standardised curriculum, like we see at school, is that art actually becomes standardised itself; there's a version of what that art education looks like. How we teach teachers is really important because they need to know not that standardised version, but a broad, creative, critical and speculative version of art education. The opportunities, if we think about those pathways, if there are limited ways to attend art school because they're gone—and I noted Western Sydney. At the time when I finished school, you went to Newcastle, you went to Wollongong, you went to City Art or you came out to Bankstown and to Macarthur, which were the old, amazing art schools—and the only art schools in New South Wales where they were actually given art materials.

At City Art Institute, we had to buy our materials ourselves. No other university student bought everything like we did. They're gone. They actually don't exist. How do you have a pipeline into initial teacher education if you also start to standardise and limit your opportunity at the bachelor level? You have only two places to become a Bachelor of Arts/Education in this State. No wonder we have a shortage. I noted the numbers of 34 per cent of art education being taught out of practice—non-art teachers teaching art education—because we don't have a pipeline here.

If we're going to have a pipeline of masters level, you need art schools. How I teach at the University of Melbourne—because we have an art school—is that you go to the art school for three years and you come to me for two years to do the Master of Teaching. That pipeline is a known known. What does the pipeline look like in New South Wales if you want to become an art teacher? You have to get into the University of New South Wales or you'll have to go to the Australian Catholic University, which already locates its placements in Catholic schools,

so you limit your opportunity for public education. As a public educator, for me, that's problematic. Again, if we think ecologically about pipelines, you need to have a strong foundational art education in school. The mandatory hours are really important, if you have started to limit opportunities for tertiary study. You have also limited, through the 1990s and further into the 2000s, visual arts at TAFE, which was completely destroyed when I was still here in this State. Now that I live interstate, I see it even sadder that the opportunities to study at visual art level are so reduced.

How does an artist practise if they don't have opportunities to practise at least with their regional galleries? We have, I think, one of the strongest visual art teaching associations in the country here. In their availability, in their own time, without any funding, they offer professional learning to those teachers in service. But how do we actually create a pipeline for pre-service teachers? I just cannot see it getting any better unless there is a real change in thinking about what art education looks like in schools and then thinking very broadly about what initial teacher education looks like for artists.

I just don't understand how we can keep an art community and an art gallery and an art network of museums if we don't have fine art schools and if we don't have visual art schools. Lumping us together into the creative arts and then using the neoliberal language of "creative industries" has been part of the issue as to why we don't get to stand alone. That can be seen at the University of New South Wales and the art school becoming a design school. Once we shift into creative industries, we diminish the opportunities for fine arts and for visual arts and we locate ourselves in the world of design. It's incredibly important, but we should see those two things next to each other. Design is not art and art is not design. They can be combined. We have an art and design school now in Paddington.

But, still, the opportunities to become that art and design teacher are so few. We limited those places 25 years ago when we said we had a glut of art teachers in New South Wales. But there is no longer a glut because we have limited and limited and limited the opportunities. We have closed art schools and then shut down programs. How can a State only have two places to study to become an art teacher? It just seems crazy to me, in this size of a State and with this large global art economy. This is the State that holds the Biennale and this is the State that runs large art programs, and there is no investment in art education. In my role as president of AEA and then as a professor of art education, it's very sad times.

Dr JOE McGIRR: If no-one else wants to ask a question, can I just follow up? This is going to run a bit counter to your arguments about creative industries and the language of neoliberalism. Dr Saunders, you spoke about media arts being a gap in New South Wales. I am wondering how you see what needs to happen to include that. Coming back to the point that Professor Coleman has just made, who is going to teach it? Where do they come from? What are the courses for that? How do we get that balance right between a utilitarian use and the benefits of a more pure or artistic sense of it?

JOHN NICHOLAS SAUNDERS: Media arts is being taught in some secondary schools in New South Wales—there are courses that have been approved for schools to use—but it hasn't got its own syllabus at the moment. It's on a school-by-school situation and those teachers are taking it upon themselves to train. In about 2016, 2017, 2018 when we were working on the next version of the creative arts syllabus K-6—the primary syllabus—there was a push for media arts to be included in that primary syllabus. NESA—the NSW Education Standards Authority—squashed that. As a result, the New South Wales division of ATOM—the Australian Teachers of Media—closed down because they felt that it was absolutely hopeless to try to get media arts up in New South Wales, leaving New South Wales as the only State not to recognise it as a subject.

It's happening. When teachers are determined, they see the need. They are taking on their own professional learning to make it happen. I also completely agree with Kate about dance, drama, music and visual arts that all of those secondary teachers need to have really high-quality experiences in their discipline at a tertiary level before they go on to do their Master of Teaching. We have seen across the board and across Australia that—particularly over the last 10 years and really as a result of the previous Federal Government policies to try and push students and encourage them into STEM areas and STEM courses at universities. As a result of that, we've seen arts courses become more expensive. We've then seen universities move away—declining enrolments et cetera. So it has had a flow-on effect at a State level and in the teaching profession as well.

I'd also say, as a previous panellist said, that the time allocation for pre-service teachers in primary schools is completely inadequate. We know from research from the Australian Primary Principals Association that primary teachers enter the profession wanting to teach the arts. They know that students learn through telling stories and acting them out; through dance and movement; through singing songs; through painting, sculpture and visual art. They know that, but they don't necessarily feel confident and capable of teaching the arts, because there's been a huge erosion in the time allocated for the arts in primary teaching courses. Some universities have one subject or a 12-week unit where they're covering four arts subjects. No-one could come out of one unit and

feel confident in teaching four subjects to students. So, really, I think we need to see investment in that. We need to see NESA accrediting bachelor of primary courses and master of primary teaching courses that do much more than that.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: Thank you are for your insights; it is valuable. What we've found through submissions, including yours as well, is that subjects not included in NAPLAN testing may be perceived as less important, or less valued, potentially affecting student enrolment and support for visual arts offerings. What we've heard across the board is that students are being told that if you want a good ATAR, then you're better off choosing other than the arts. How do you address that?

KATHRYN COLEMAN: Well, to not cap us would be the beginning. Capping our subject is the first sign to a student that, if I can't get 50 out of 50, even though I get 50 out of 50—that's a sign to a young person that this subject doesn't matter. We've designed into standardised assessment what matters. What matters to young people in education is how they get assessed and what gets assessed. Capping, in my experience, in schools was always very prevalent in not just the young person but their parents' minds. If you're not going to get a full mark in this subject then why are we going to study it?"

The other issue we often have in schools is parents seeing, again, a good creative industries version of "You're better off to be in a design class, you're better off to be in an engineering class or you're better off studying technology because that's going to get you a job." The language of creative industry is in the anti-art rhetoric, and the push to STEM is everywhere. My research is global, and it is global. Young people know that a pathway to their future is in STEM. The job-ready package from the Federal Government indicated that that's where the emphasis was going to go.

So how does somebody become an artist? One of the issues we then lie in is that it's only a place of privilege. So only if I'm from a privileged family that has a broad art education do I realise that schooling is not about jobs. I don't go to school to get a job. If we believe still in the industrial revolution version of schooling—schooling is about teaching the whole person and teaching what it means to be in the world—then an art education needs to be there. But schooling has become, assessment-wise, through its standardisation, about jobs, and so art has to disappear. It has to come off the table, because there's no place for it. That's incredibly sad. If there's no place for it, because you don't see it as a pathway, how does the art world actually gets into schools to show families and young people that art is a way of being present? It actually teaches the student you don't need to go to art school because you study art in high school. That's not what high school is for.

High school is supposed to develop our multi- and inter-disciplinary knowledges about what the world is through sciences, through art, through religion, through our languages—through all of the subjects that are offered to them. It's not about going to work, but the capping says that. The capping at that HSC level says, "This is only for you few." Why capping exists, I don't know—because we are too easy? If that is an issue that we are only teaching people with art knowledge, which is not true, then we must be only teaching the very few privileged because that's all. Those are the only opportunities that are made available to people. If we don't have art education in primary school because we don't train those teachers well enough, then we get a multi-arts version of art.

The multi-arts version of art—which was my issue with this inquiry, lumping four art forms into arts and then separating music, is that we are diminished. We're diminished even in the name of your inquiry. Music is separated. We still have conservatoriums regionally around the State. We do not have art education regionally around the State. It's here in the city only. The actual rhetoric is the reality. People listen to that. So we must actually change the way we talk about art education. We need to make sure that those mandatory hours are real and that there is a pipeline for the people who actually have the skills to teach it, and then we can actually start to think differently about what art is, because art education is a field on its own. It's a new-ish field. It's a field that's now 60 years old, but it's broad, and in this country it's taught differently to any other country in the world. We should be actually investing in that.

What does this inter-disciplinary way of teaching the artist and the audience offer young people? It offers ways of thinking about climate change. It offers things about how do we actually deal with domestic violence rates in this country. We talk about that in art education all the time. Those things about the world—the current affairs and the news—all of that exist in our classroom, but the actual rhetoric and the reality of what art education offers just don't match. We don't value, and then it shows up in testing.

All of us are responsible for literacy and numeracy tests. It's not a maths test, and it's not an English test. In every school I ever taught in, literacy was on the table every day in art education. I taught people how to use every single genre and text type in my art classroom. It wasn't left to anyone else not to do. Even that rhetoric of that standardised testing—to me, why I wanted to note the PISA results is PISA says that it's art education that's doing the heavy lifting. We came fourth in the world, and nobody said anything; no government came out and

said anything. But the rhetoric is still that art education doesn't do the heavy lifting in literacy and numeracy. Look at the heavy lifting it's doing in creativity. If we actually believe in the rhetoric of the creative industries, then art education is doing its job, but we have to actually support it to do it.

Capping is a Board of Studies issue, and that has to be dealt with. But the actual way that we talk about assessment and standardisation needs to change. The STEM agenda and the quantitative measures that we put inside education are not how art education works, and it doesn't have to. We don't live in a binary system. We need to actually think more broadly about how art education functions in the inter- and trans-disciplinary space, and then we might have an opportunity to think differently about what it doesn't do in that really negative sense rather than all of the amazing things it does and just shift that lens, which I don't think is terribly hard.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: I think the perception is reality as well as the rhetoric. I think that that perception suppresses the creativity that could be exposed and developed in a normal sense. Is that part of your recommendation, do you think, to remove capping? Should that be part of what you suggest?

KATHRYN COLEMAN: It should be removed. If a student gets 50 out of 50 in what is truly standardised testing, then, yes, a student should get 50 out of 50. ARTEXPRESS recognises the top works in the State. It's the only State that does such a show of the top artworks. So why are those kids being capped? Do people go into that exhibition and know, "Wow, that kid probably got full marks but they didn't receive them"? The effect on the ATAR is drastic, and it needs to not be there. It does not make sense for visual art to be capped.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: The other subjects are not the only way of developing critical thinking.

KATHRYN COLEMAN: No, they're not.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: Arts is a significant player in that as well.

KATHRYN COLEMAN: It is a significant player.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Can I ask one further question? Yesterday it was brought to our attention that there's no extension subject in art. I wonder if you might be able to comment on why there's no E3 in an art available anymore. You can do E3 in a music, but you can't do E3 in art.

KATHRYN COLEMAN: I am hoping that my New South Wales teaching association will touch on this very specifically. To me, it was political. It is about this rhetoric being reality around what's offered and why we differentiate. There was a decision made that we didn't differentiate enough between one course and another. That means that an understanding of practice, an understanding of discipline and technique and technology were misunderstood, or misinterpreted or ignored—I'm not actually sure. But there needs to be an opportunity like in every other State. In Victoria we have three visual art programs at the VCE level. Here, there is one. We've actually shown that we've standardised visual art down to a point that we only offer it here and it's only offered at this time in such a small quantity. That shows the whole education community that it doesn't matter, because apparently you can't extend your study or knowledge of being an artist and being responsive as an audience member beyond a two-unit subject. It is incredibly sad.

I just think that the state of all of it—you put the initial teacher education, you put the capping, you put the limited opportunities at the HSC level, you put the limited opportunities for art schools. How does this State continue to lead in the visual arts when it continues to cut programs? It just can't. We know we can't keep cutting and things stay alive. Artists are agile but they're not that agile. They've been hit hard by COVID. The creative industries in this State, if we're going to use that language, will, what, be led by music? Because that's what the inquiry is focused on. I just don't understand that. The national curriculum language is important. There are five art forms that are supposed to be dealt with with parity, with equality and not prioritising one over the other. We didn't prioritise when we limited visual art at the HSC and then it set up the scene for everything else to follow.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: We did go to the National Art School yesterday

KATHRYN COLEMAN: Excellent. I'm glad.

The CHAIR: Thank you very much for your evidence. The secretariat will contact you in relation to any questions taken on notice or any further questions.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

(Short adjournment)

Ms PENELOPE BENTON, Executive Director, National Association for the Visual Arts, affirmed and examined

Ms NICOLE DeLOSA, Co-President, Advocacy and Communications, Visual Arts and Design Educators Association of NSW, affirmed and examined

Ms GEMMA BALDWIN, Advocacy, State and National Issues, Visual Arts and Design Educators Association of NSW, affirmed and examined

The CHAIR: Welcome. Thank you for taking the time to give evidence this morning. Just so you're aware, parliamentary privilege applies to witnesses in relation to the evidence they give. However, it does not apply to what witnesses say outside of the hearing. I urge all witnesses to be careful about making comments to the media or to others after completing their evidence. In addition, the Legislative Council has adopted rules to provide procedural fairness for inquiry participants. I encourage Committee members and witnesses to be mindful of these procedures. Would you like to start by making a short statement?

PENELOPE BENTON: I will, thank you. Good morning and thank you for the opportunity to present today. I will first pay my respects to the Gadigal peoples, the traditional custodians of this beautiful place where I am grateful to live and work, and extend that respect to their ancestors and Elders. Sovereignty has never been ceded. This has been a very quick turnaround, so I'll just explain what NAVA is. It would have been very quick for you to read all of those submissions before today. The National Association for the Visual Arts is an independent membership organisation which brings together the many voices across the visual arts, craft and design sector to improve conditions of work and practice. We do this through advocacy, education and the code of practice, which sets out best practice industry standards for working conditions and payment for artists and arts workers.

NAVA has a national reach, with over 40 per cent of our members based in New South Wales, which is quite significant. Our submission notes cuts to art education courses and museum studies over many years across the State and a lack of training and career pathways for First Nations artists and arts workers. Most galleries and visual arts organisations do not have a single Aboriginal arts worker or Aboriginal advisory board. However, our submission didn't fully address the scale of cuts to the visual arts, craft and design as a practice overall. We have lost major art schools in Western Sydney and across the regions. I hear Southern Cross University is phasing out visual arts later this year. That's in northern New South Wales. It's the only university course left in the region.

Here in Sydney, we've gone from three very strong and unique standalone visual arts campuses, with dedicated schools for art education and arts administration, as well as visual arts, media arts and craft and design, to just one art school remaining. The other two have been significantly reduced in scale and specialisation. We've seen enormous changes to the vocational and tertiary education system for visual arts, craft and design in New South Wales, with whole modes of practice now struggling to exist in several regions. At the same time, access to core funding for organisations has significantly reduced over the last 10 to 20 years, and most small to medium galleries and organisations are struggling to stay afloat.

Burnout is at an all-time high. Until recently, many artists supported their practice through paid work as academics, teachers and educators, or technical support staff in art schools. Cuts to education have had the double impact of wiping out paid work for practising artists. For students, the impact of cost of living, cost of education, having to work full-time and study to pay for the course and live, often in Sydney, together with reports that show income levels for most visual artists remain well below the poverty line—all of this means lots of people are questioning arts as a valid career path. With low enrolments, TAFEs and universities struggle to justify keeping the courses and facilities. It's a really terrible loop.

Many of the submissions and presentations that you will hear today talk about the benefits of art training to the contemporary art workforce across all industries. A lot of repair work to the sector and critical investment is needed to meet the objectives of this inquiry into how the arts can work with the education system to develop creative skills. We urgently need an increase in funding to support the work and skills development of individual artists and arts workers through mentorships, internships and training; project and fellowship grants; and the purchase of specialised studio equipment, which can also be a significant issue for artists working in material-specific disciplines. I will leave it there. Thank you.

NICOLE DeLOSA: VADEA is the only New South Wales visual arts curriculum body invited to give evidence at this hearing today. Our written submission highlights serious concerns with the tertiary and K-6 sectors at length. The current 7-12 curriculum space highlights that visual arts is the most popular arts subject selected in both stages five and six, despite years of curriculum erosion within school contexts. Having reviewed many of our colleagues' submissions prior to this inquiry, we note some are in support of media arts as a subject. This is

despite the fact that outcomes in this course are already adequately addressed in existing New South Wales visual arts curriculum offerings and the New South Wales English syllabuses. VADEA has had extensive involvement in the New South Wales curriculum reform process over many years now and is satisfied that the quality and relevance of the 7-10 visual arts was sustained. However, it is concerning that the rhetoric around curriculum design is always grounded in the paradigm of out-of-subject teachers.

VADEA supports NESA's "adopt and adapt" approach to the Australian Curriculum. Visual arts links with a range of institutions and galleries, and VADEA is constantly seeking opportunities to extend and build on these within the framework, as a volunteer-led organisation, to ensure that students are aware of the benefits of a visual arts education and that they have a strong connection with the art world. VADEA is the only cross-sector provider of ongoing professional development in New South Wales visual arts education post-tertiary, and we advocate for all New South Wales visual arts educators. Thank you.

GEMMA BALDWIN: I agree with Nicole.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Thank you so much for your submissions and for coming along today. I was curious about the teacher pathways. Obviously, we have heard that there is a really significant decline in the formal bodies that are offering education for teachers but, in terms of what teachers do before they get into that formal education, we heard previously from music that often there is a career in music of a decade before teachers actually go into a formal training. Is there a similar pathway or any trends in terms of the kinds of experience that visual arts teachers have before they seek formal training?

NICOLE DeLOSA: Certainly just speaking for myself, I never aspired to be an artist. I wanted to be an art teacher. I think that the two roles are different, and in my experience many art educators are there because that is what they want to be. However, of course there is a pathway for artists to also do tertiary education, through the old Bachelor of Education and Master of Teaching process within the tertiary system. Many of them take that opportunity to have an education pathway alongside their artistic pursuits as well.

PENELOPE BENTON: I would add to that it absolutely varies, depending on all sorts of people and their journeys.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Is there any research on that, that you are aware of?

PENELOPE BENTON: There is a little bit of research that we've been a partner on recently called Visual Arts Work. I can share that with you following this. That looks at career pathways mostly for artists as academics and their trajectory into that type of teaching, so outside of the school system but in the universities and TAFEs.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Sorry to interrupt, but your third insight?

PENELOPE BENTON: I guess leading on from that research is that other people would go into art school thinking they will be an artist, then realise over time that they really like and enjoy sharing skills and knowledge and training people up. So they will get work delivering workshops as something that they enjoy doing. Others will find that it's actually really fulfilling paid work as well. So there's all sorts of reasons why people might also fall into educator roles.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: If there is a shortage of visual arts teachers, is there a capacity to reach into the artist world and offer attractive pathways to teaching, do you think?

GEMMA BALDWIN: I think it would come down to the requirements to become a teacher in New South Wales, which requires a Master of Teaching, and which is a two-year course. So I think definitely that is an opportunity that could be explored by a whole range of areas within the sector. But I think we've seen a gradual decline of people studying in Master of Teaching courses. It's an opportunity, but the rhetoric around education in New South Wales at the moment is not a positive one. It's not the most attractive opportunity for people if they are not going to be passionate about being educators. First and foremost, I guess, it is an important aspect of that.

NICOLE DeLOSA: In our submission we actually do talk about fast-tracking teacher education and we warn about the pitfalls of that. That is not just because it can diminish the quality of art education within that classroom space, but it actually presents itself to a whole gamut of real wellbeing issues for the teacher themselves when they are placed in hard-to-teach subject areas that they don't feel fully equipped in. In my experience, fast-tracked education programs have a very negative impact on the teachers themselves in those contexts.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: In your submission, Ms Benton, you refer to the impact of Smart and Skilled on TAFE. We were at the National Art School yesterday and it seemed that one of the pathways for those who are at the National Art School as mature age students were people who'd done a TAFE course as a pathway. Can you talk a little bit about the impact of Smart and Skilled on narrowing and closing off those opportunities?

PENELOPE BENTON: Absolutely. I have limited research into this but what I believe, what I've been told, is that when that was introduced the impact meant that most visual arts are not part of that, which reduced the subsidies provided. Without subsidies lots of people just cannot afford to go to TAFE, which makes it not an attractive or viable pathway or option to study, which has led to a decline in enrolments, which I think is terrible. Combined with other reform around that time, that has meant there is a lot of compliance that people need to meet to become a teacher at TAFE. What I've been told is people start the course and struggle to keep up with the compliance and maintain study as well as a paid job to support their study, and just find that it's not viable and drop out.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: I asked the previous panel about the issue around extension. I saw that you had something to say about that. I wonder whether you might want to elaborate.

NICOLE DeLOSA: Kate was very eloquent in explaining that it had been a case of the visual arts stakeholder group at that time found it incredibly difficult navigating some of the conversations around the duplication that the third unit had. But, of course, she also very eloquently put that it really was an extension of practice again further. It is still the belief of every New South Wales art educator that it was a valuable and viable course that should never have been cut. It wasn't in our submission because we've long held that's an argument that has been long lost. I can absolutely categorically state, though, it was an amazing extra curriculum offering that was available to New South Wales students. That is a real loss. Would you agree?

GEMMA BALDWIN: Yes, and I think it was challenging for the curriculum writers at the time to make the case for the syllabus because the curriculum authority at the time wanted to know how the content of that subject was different than the other courses and not just more of the same thing. I know music were really successful in making their case and that's why there is a Music Extension 1 course, but visual arts were not successful in that period in making that argument. I think, with the research that's been happening in the space, we would be in a different position to make that case at the moment. But I know that in the curriculum reform space there is very little appetite to add courses at the moment to the suite of subjects and there is discussion of removing subjects. And so it's a matter of our focus has been, in this curriculum reform process that we're currently in the middle of, advocating for high-quality visual arts education, which has been a real struggle for us—so, yes, making the case for an extra subject, when the syllabus development process within the current subjects has been a challenge as it is.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: Ms Baldwin, touching on recommendation 6 of your submission where you call for mandatory periods of master of primary teaching in the ITE stage, do you think that would help to ignite an interest in the arts space if those teachers had that mandatory component as part of their Master of Teaching?

GEMMA BALDWIN: Yes, 100 per cent. I think the challenge is that we want primary educators to be confident to be able to deliver and teach the subjects in the creative and performing arts and that if they don't have the adequate education to do that then they're less willing to do that in the classroom. Teachers go into the space, particularly in the primary context, with subjects that they're particularly strong at or they have a greater willingness to be able to do, and so with such little time allocated for the creative and performing arts in the primary context, it is an incentivisation to do that in a high-quality way. I know Nicole probably has some other comments about that.

NICOLE DeLOSA: Just listening to the inquiry earlier, it was interesting to hear about programs that are already in K-6, in music in particular, that are already operating in that space that don't operate for visual arts at all that I'm aware of.

Dr JOE McGIRR: I just want to clarify a couple of items, Ms DeLosa and Ms Baldwin, from your submission and evidence. The first is just for my own clarification. You referred to the Melbourne Declaration and the creation of a key learning area, and then you highlight the debate about the values and otherwise of that. Has that debate gone or do you have a view about the value of the creation of that key learning? It wasn't clear to me what your view on that was in the submission.

GEMMA BALDWIN: At the time the issue was that we were coalescing all of these distinct subject areas into one. What happened in the process, when the Australian curriculum emerged, was that an attempt to find similarities or connections between each subject area was made. So the design of curriculum was based on the fact that there are connections between music, art, dance, drama and visual arts. There has become this artificial construct because you're placing these things that don't exist—in an attempt to amalgamate those very distinct subject areas, with long histories as disciplines and practices—together. That has been our concern: When you lump everything together you lose the subject specificity and quality.

Dr JOE McGIRR: You seem to imply that you are quite happy with the way media arts is being approached in the current curriculum. I don't want to verbal you, but is that correct? We've had evidence to suggest that New South Wales has lost an opportunity to develop a curriculum in that area.

NICOLE DeLOSA: What was discussed even earlier today was that media arts is an additional arts area outside of visual arts, music, dance and drama. Within New South Wales, though, we have other visual arts offerings. That's what we were talking about earlier. We have photographic and digital media and we have visual design as separate visual arts offerings within the stage five area, and they build into stage six. Within the New South Wales English syllabus there is quite a significant approach to visual literacy within that curriculum. With all of those existing New South Wales curriculum offerings, so to speak, it's our feeling that we complicate the space by bringing in media arts when a lot of the outcomes, in our opinion, are being met in those curriculum offerings for New South Wales students.

Dr JOE McGIRR: You have expressed reservations here about the draft New South Wales Creative Arts K–6 syllabus. I wonder if you could expand on that evidence here.

GEMMA BALDWIN: It's no longer a draft; the final version of that was released last week. Throughout the process we had significant concerns with how that syllabus was developed. We met with NESA on multiple occasions to outline those concerns. Again, similar to the issues that we had during the development of the Australian curriculum for the arts, it was an attempt to find commonalities and linkages across subjects. Because the syllabus itself—it's not like it was a visual arts syllabus and a drama syllabus, although separately it's considered one syllabus with all of those subjects sitting underneath that. In terms of curriculum expediency, there was attempt to again find connections and commonalities across those subjects. As a result, in our experience there was a perceived attempt to fit things where it was an awkward fit for us. We weren't particularly happy with the final draft. The final version has come out. We haven't had an opportunity to dig into that because we're both full-time teachers in the classroom. We've just started a new school term. That's just been released.

Dr JOE McGIRR: It would be interesting if possible, as a question on notice, for you to give us your views on that. I appreciate that's asking a lot because you've got jobs and so on, but it does seem to me to be an important issue. Another issue connected to that seems to be the link from stage three to stage four. In your submission, you actually seem to be quite positive around the year 7 to 10 syllabus, so perhaps you could include some detail around that transition issue as well.

GEMMA BALDWIN: Definitely, we can do that on notice and provide something.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: Both of your organisations have national coverage. Are there any States or Territories that do this particularly well that we could look to?

GEMMA BALDWIN: In terms of visual arts education?

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: Yes.

GEMMA BALDWIN: I would very selfishly say that New South Wales is the leader in this space. The reason is that we have the enshrinement of visual arts education as a mandatory subject in years 7 to 8 as part of the RoSA requirement. The way that New South Wales has positioned itself in regard to the Australian curriculum is that our syllabus history is very distinctly different to the other States. Some States have taken a wholesale uptake of the Australian curriculum. We have staunchly been in opposition to that curriculum since its first development because it positioned visual arts very differently from our distinct history. So, yes, I would say we're very much aware of what happens in other States, but we have always stood by the notion—and NESA has been supportive of this as well—that we respect the unique position that New South Wales is in, in terms of our history as an academic subject.

PENELOPE BENTON: Can I add one final thing? I know we're out of time. I just quickly wanted to loop back to that earlier question about pathways for artists into teaching, which is different in a university context. I think that's a really different type of educator role. As an academic, research into your practice and specialisation into your own work is really encouraged and supported. It's actually part of your job, which means that it has huge benefits to the artist's career separately in addition to their role as an academic or an educator in the university system.

The CHAIR: Thank you very much for all your evidence. The secretariat will be in touch about any questions taken on notice or further questions.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

Ms AMY GILL, Vice President, Drama NSW, affirmed and examined

Dr CHRISTINE HATTON, Director of Research, Drama Australia, affirmed and examined

Ms DIANE GRANT, Member, Ausdance National, before the Committee via videoconference, affirmed and examined

Ms LESLEY GRAHAM, Ausdance Representative on National Advocates for Arts Education, Ausdance National, before the Committee via videoconference, affirmed and examined

The CHAIR: Welcome and thank you for coming in to give evidence. Would you all like to start by making a short statement?

CHRISTINE HATTON: Yes, please. I'll start, if that's okay. Thank you for the opportunity to speak at this important inquiry. Drama Australia and Drama NSW commend the Committee for opening the inquiry into arts education and training in New South Wales. This is an important opportunity for New South Wales to demonstrate cultural leadership that could have a profound, positive impact for arts educators and students in New South Wales.

AMY GILL: This is a joint submission with Drama Australia and Drama NSW, which are the peak bodies for drama educators nationally and statewide, representing teachers from early childhood all the way through to tertiary and across into the creative industries. All children have the right to a rigorous, high-quality arts education, delivered by their teachers. We recognise the importance of all the art forms, including dance, drama, media arts, music and visual arts. We advocate for equitable consideration and access across the depth and breadth of each of these art forms.

CHRISTINE HATTON: We would like to highlight for the Committee the research that underpins our recommendations to substantiate our claims about the holistic benefits of drama education for children and young people. It's also worth noting that Australia is an established leader in global education for drama, drama research, and practice.

AMY GILL: We recommend that drama is a mandatory offering across all primary stages and stage four in secondary, paving the way for elective study in the senior years. We also call for the Education Act to be updated to reflect a contemporary understanding of the importance of all the arts as discrete subjects. We ask that funding is provided to professional associations and arts organisations to provide quality, ongoing, professional learning experiences for teachers.

CHRISTINE HATTON: We advocate that every primary teacher receives quality training in arts education in their Initial Teacher Education—a lot like the other speakers, I think. We recommend that the drama discipline pathways are restored in New South Wales tertiary institutions to provide equitable opportunities for those wanting to train as drama specialists in secondary schools. We urge the Committee to champion drama as a vital component of the New South Wales education system.

The CHAIR: Ms Grant and Ms Graham?

LESLEY GRAHAM: It is a pleasure to be able to speak at this important inquiry. Ausdance National is Australia's peak body for dance and at present is working as a voluntary board without funding. Ausdance National supports the key points and recommendations of the NAAE submission. I would like to draw particular attention to section 1 of the NAAE submission and support for a further investigation by the inquiry into the role of specialist New South Wales arts selective schools and of the VET sector.

It is important to understand the difference between dance education and dance training. In the specific context of dance, I present that dance education is and should be available to all children and young people and is a part of creating the foundation of every person's lifelong learning and connection to culture. Dance is the discrete art form which gives primacy to kinaesthetic learning and focuses on developing young people's expression using their body. In a world where so much time is now spent on computers, dance education offers an antidote to digital screens. Through dance education, children can gain the experience of interacting with others in person, of communicating with others using body movements and gestures in the physical space around them. They explore their bodies' potential in both creative and cultural contexts. Focusing on group problem solving and participation, they develop awareness and control of their movements, and learn social understandings of their body while interacting kinaesthetically with others.

Dance training, on the other hand, has a vocational focus and involves elite-level skills training. In the courses offered by the selective schools and the VET sector, the focus is on a career pathway to tertiary dance

training and the performing arts industry. The issue for elite dance training is that these courses prepare young people to enter the career path at an early age. The flip side of this is that most who achieve their goal peak early, relative to other art forms. Due to the athletic requirements on their body—equivalent to a gymnast—their performance career is short, often ending in their mid-twenties. It is therefore crucial that the New South Wales Government ensures that all elite dancer training is supported by rigorous, holistic educational opportunities, preparing dancers for a successful transition to other careers when they retire from their dance performance career.

DIANE GRANT: Again, thank you for the privilege of presenting at this inquiry, representing dance. I'm a dance educator working in tertiary sector and I would like to address the right of every child and young person to have access to quality learning experiences in the arts, including dance, at primary, secondary and tertiary levels. Ausdance NSW has been a State voice for dance and dance education over the last four decades. Unfortunately, Ausdance NSW was dissolved at the end of last year due to its loss of funding. A return of funding is needed for this vital dance organisation to continue supporting dance and dance education in New South Wales.

Under the current New South Wales curriculum reform the arts syllabus has been reviewed and updated, after more than 20 years, in primary and secondary schools. Considering the current provision of dance and the other art subjects in schools, there are limited pathways and access to affordable tertiary dance training in New South Wales. There are also limited pathways and government support for young people who want to pursue tertiary education to become secondary dance educators and for an initial teacher education course to address our teacher shortage. Finally, there's a need for increased professional learning opportunities to support New South Wales teachers to effectively teach dance and the arts subjects in our New South Wales schools.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: Thank you so much for coming along today; we appreciate it. We're hearing across the board of a general decline in the pathways and the program offerings across the five key disciplines. Why do you think that's happening?

CHRISTINE HATTON: It's complex. It's a combination of changes in strategic direction in universities that is very much about viability and cost effectiveness. Arts require equipment and special rooming. In drama we require theatres for secondary teachers to learn to operate lights, sound, all the technical aspects. Indeed, I could use my own university. My other side gig is I'm an academic at the University of Newcastle. One theatre that served our program for theatre education was bulldozed a few years ago. Now we have the controversy, or controversial situation, where we've got training teachers who will go into schools that will have far more superior equipment and spaces than we ourselves have. The decline across the practice of art learning is quite profound and across universities. We lost fine arts first, and then drama was under scrutiny. It is incredibly complex and it's connected with the situation in secondary schools—

AMY GILL: And industry.

CHRISTINE HATTON: —and industry and the way that the secondary school teaching—often in our subject area, young people choose to be drama educators because they had a wonderful drama educator in their own experience, and they want to be just like them. Certainly that has been my experience, anecdotally, for many, many years teaching pre-service teachers. But they are discouraged in secondary school from going into the creative arts or, indeed, in regional areas like ours. The school can't timetable for a drama class to run or a drama specialist teacher to be there. The interconnection of those sectors is so important for feeding that community and that creative ecology between schools, tertiary institutions and the arts industry sector as well. It is complicated, I'm afraid.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: Just briefly, Dr Hatton, do you think that the lack of demand and therefore the reluctance to invest and expand comes from the pipeline that's not coming from K-12?

CHRISTINE HATTON: It's coming both ways. The message can come at school level, but it also can come top-down once degrees are changed and the nomenclature changes so it stops being offered in the words that the children understand when they're studying it at school. It becomes creative industries or performance or something else entirely, so it's quite hard for them to see that there is a pathway. I do a lot of work with teachers, making sure that they understand what programs are available to young people to come through, but I also have a number of students who have come through secondary school who have not had access in their own schooling but desperately want to become drama teachers.

It's not as simple as a one-way direction. The messages I think universities sometimes tell young people is unless it's for profit, you have no reason to become an arts educator; you are better off becoming something that can earn you a wage. At my university, we have one of the largest schools of education in Australia. We've continuously had drama education as an offering since 1974, and many of the practising teachers around

New South Wales are ex-graduates of the University of Newcastle. It has ebbed and flowed, but it has changed probably in the last 10 years about the strategic directions of tertiary institutions.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: Lastly, I will pick up on your point, Ms Gill, about industry. You were saying, Dr Hatton, about language coming back from industry in terms of—is it devaluing where someone's going and the focus then on earning a living and going down that path as opposed to the creative side, do you think?

AMY GILL: Can I speak to that, Chris?

CHRISTINE HATTON: Certainly.

AMY GILL: If we look at Sydney Theatre Company as an example, which is one of the largest—

CHRISTINE HATTON: Flagship.

AMY GILL: I'm not quite sure, but it could be the largest theatre company in the Southern Hemisphere. It's struggling financially at the moment. That has trickle-down effects into our education space. We just recently found out that they're cutting their school drama program, which was being led by industry within that space, because of funding. They've just made redundant the education coordinator at Sydney Theatre Company, who is an education-trained specialist, because they don't have the funding. That's trickling down into our young people that aren't having those cultural experiences and often it's schools that are giving our young people those first cultural experiences, particularly those young people living in low socio-economic areas.

They don't have access to cultural experiences because of financial constraints or location constraints. It's schools that are providing those cultural experiences in partnership with industry and, as funding is cut to those organisations, it trickles down. Interestingly, the student that came top in the drama HSC course this year was from Turrumurra High School and they didn't even run the subject on the subject line. It was run outside the subject line in the teacher's own hours after school with a partner school across the road. I think that shows what sort of state we're in and why there is such an urgency for this inquiry.

The CHAIR: Ms Grant or Ms Graham, do you have anything to add to Mr Anderson's questions in relation to dance and dance education?

DIANE GRANT: In terms of the pipeline, it's quite a long pipeline starting from the youth who study dance in their youth—private dance studios—and then into education and then into tertiary education. If we think about that long pipeline, certainly it's a burgeoning recreation for young people. In schools it becomes much more selective for the reasons you've just heard and then tertiary education in dance in New South Wales—well, there are only three dance courses in New South Wales and they're all private providers. The government universities no longer support dance in tertiary. There's a lot of work being done in the private sector, but it certainly does not provide support for the number of students who would like to pursue tertiary dance as training for a future career as a dance artist or performer. But also, in terms of initial teacher education, there needs to be more support for students, more scholarships to support them so that they can continue and achieve their goal of being a dance teacher in New South Wales high schools, particularly in the rural and remote areas.

LESLEY GRAHAM: Could I follow on, please? I would like to reflect on my comment about dance education as well in that ultimately we have to think about the value of dance education as a separate issue, if you like, to the dance training. We've really got, again, as people have said, not enough teachers being trained. But it's about the primary generalist teachers. I think that is an issue with the delivery of K-6 dance education. I teach into a university course with the initial teacher education, and we have one session on teaching dance to primary in the whole of their course. And that's in the Master of Teaching, in the Bachelor of Education. We have one unit where we have to share all of the arts subjects in the training of those primary generalist people. So if those teacher trainees are not confident to start with, they're not likely to get confident in one session or a fifth of a unit.

Reflecting on what's happening in schools, I've worked in schools for K-12 for 40 years. Young people love dance. They want to be involved. They love the arts. The problem is that they are being often counselled out of it, if you like, with a lack of understanding of the benefits of dance education to their life experiences—of people's understanding of what are the requirements to get into tertiary courses and of the requirements for a good, all-rounded education which gives people the confidence to be able to be employable. As I mentioned, that sense of understanding social environments and understanding communication through the body and expression through the body, both dance and drama give this to young people in a way that other subjects cannot. Dance and drama are really preparing people for life. They're preparing people for being confident humans who can interact with other people and be successful in their workplaces and life.

Dr JOE McGIRR: I realise we're running short of time, but I want to come back to Ms Gill and Dr Hatton. Did you say that the Sydney Theatre Company's school drama program was now not going to operate?

AMY GILL: Correct. I believe Sydney Theatre Company has put in their own submission which details that, so we are able to speak about it here. We've only just found out through that submission. The research behind that program is extraordinary in how it builds literacy.

CHRISTINE HATTON: World renowned.

Dr JOE McGIRR: Indeed. That's clear in your submission, and also the reach of the program. That's a very significant piece of information.

CHRISTINE HATTON: Correct. It's very extensive. There's 10 years of work in schools.

Dr JOE McGIRR: Secondly, you've also made a point about the need for media arts to be separately identified. There has been debate this morning on this issue. Can you quickly expand your perspective on that, from a drama point of view?

AMY GILL: The Australian curriculum has defined five distinct art forms, including media arts. We believe that all Australian students should have equal access to all five art forms as defined by the Australian curriculum. I'm not an expert in media arts, but I did some research before stepping in here. I wanted to draw on the definition of media arts that's in the Australian arts curriculum, if I may. It's drawing on communication technology, such as television, film, video, newspapers, radio, video games, the internet and mobile media. Those things aren't being addressed broadly across other syllabuses. There are other priorities in those syllabuses.

We live in a digital age. Even the young people that we're engaging with in the drama classroom want to be stepping into that digital space. That is the world that they live in, and we are not prioritising that as an art form in any space in our schools at this point. It's an add-on or an extra option for them, but it's not a priority in any of those syllabuses. I don't think we are, as Gonski called for us to do, equipping every child to be a creative connector and engaged learner in a rapidly changing world. If we look at them as discrete subjects and if we treat them as discrete subjects, including the media arts, we're doing what Gonski called for us to do in that report to review and achieve educational excellence in Australian schools.

Dr JOE McGIRR: I have one more question to Ms Grant or Ms Graham. There was reference—I think it might have been from Ms Grant—to the role of specialist schools within the teaching system. I didn't quite pick up the point you were making in regard to that. I wonder if you could expand on that.

DIANE GRANT: That was you, Lesley.

LESLEY GRAHAM: It was myself, yes. I was linking specialist schools and the vocational—the VET sector to the idea of dance training, where young people are possibly looking at a career in dance and contrasting that to the concept of dance education, which is, if you like, equivalent to maths education, where not everybody is going to be a mathematician, but dance contributes to their general education. We have got dance training in the specialist schools and the VET sector, which is dance training, and we've got dance education, which is the broader generalist application of the skills of dance.

Dr JOE McGIRR: If I can follow on from that, you spoke about the need for dance training at a super sophisticated level to include training around how to transition out of those careers. Is there any thought given to incorporating an education component for those undertaking that sophisticated training and introducing them to the idea that they may teach later on?

LESLEY GRAHAM: Yes, and I guess that is what I'm talking about. I think that's the role of, if you like, the tertiary providers as well. But it is really to ensure that young people training as, essentially, elite athletes—as dancers—continue their education. I'm supporting the concept of having these specialist schools where young people training in a specialist art form can continue their education. They continue their general education so that they are getting their other subjects, they are getting their HSC, and they are getting other qualifications so that the transition later isn't as difficult.

DIANE GRANT: And, as well, finding pathways from those training organisations into tertiary education—for such a short-lived career.

The CHAIR: Any final questions?

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: This may seem like a strange question. I was at a high school production just recently. It was the first one that the school had done since 2019. I wanted to know whether there has been a general decline in those occurring. It seems they are put on with an expectation that the teachers—there is an extracurricular imposition. What can be done to facilitate expanding the opportunities for those kinds of productions to be held in schools?

CHRISTINE HATTON: Great question. I think many schools have large performance programs that are not just the school production individually but that take the learning experiences from the classroom and put those on for parent audiences et cetera. I know some schools that have a performance program that's almost like a small theatre company. The offerings are enormous. School productions in schools require a great deal of labour, and not all schools can afford to pay the teachers extra to do that. They might pay them extra or give them extra time to coach sporting groups in the school et cetera. Some schools can do that. My school, when I was a secondary school teacher, maybe let me not go to meetings. That was my payment. These are enormous undertakings that require enormous coordination of multiple teams, tech teams, musicians, orchestras—

AMY GILL: Signers.

CHRISTINE HATTON: —signers, and having the copyright and the rights negotiated and made secure for legal reasons, not to mention the rehearsal schedule with students et cetera. This is often done on top of very labour-intensive performing arts day-to-day education—who spend their time in schools, after school, all of the weekend and all of the school holidays. I don't think we can underestimate the gift that teachers give to making sure that the drama or the arts culture in the school, which is often the soul of a school, is flourishing, because that in itself is an attraction to students to come into the elective classes and to go on and be performers. I have an ex-student who went to NIDA and who is now on various series on television and in films et cetera. Having that pathway is often—the kernel of that happens through those experiences in the classroom or in the productions, but that comes with the generosity of performing arts teachers.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: What can we do to support it?

CHRISTINE HATTON: I think, industrially, there is an issue there about what the expectations are of performing arts educators in terms of that extracurricular commitment. Often it is the private schools that can afford to negotiate a special kind of contractual arrangement around those.

AMY GILL: Training for primary school teachers, in particular, who may not have that production experience or industry experience but are asked to put on a musical with every kid in the school—that's a challenge.

CHRISTINE HATTON: That's a much bigger stretch for the primary educators, in that context. I guess that factoring it into their workload would probably be the first place to start, and offering performance or training incentives. I think one of the things we mentioned in our submission was the synergy between industry, professional learning and educators, and how important that is for their lifelong learning as professional educators so that they get that constant feeding back of training and support, so that they can then go back to their school and run that fabulous production or have that amazing work happen in their HSC class, for that end point for that student.

AMY GILL: And those productions build community. They build community in our schools that our young people are lacking. We can see a decline in mental health with our young people. But these are real-world places where they can build connection and belonging, and find a place in community. I think that needs to be noted. I think we also need to note that's what they're going to remember long after they leave school.

CHRISTINE HATTON: All their lives.

AMY GILL: They're not going to remember sitting in a classroom writing in a notebook but they'll remember being in the school musical, a hundred per cent.

The CHAIR: Ms Grant and Ms Graham, do you have anything to add to that discussion about school productions?

DIANE GRANT: I can only add that every dance teacher in every high school is expected to do extracurricular—before school or after school—ensembles to keep the art form alive in the school, and be prepared to choreograph for the school musical. That also includes all the other arts departments as well. It's just an expectation. They do it on their goodwill, over and above their full-time teaching loads.

LESLEY GRAHAM: I'd like to make a comment that's possibly just a slightly different tangent to it. I have noticed the rise, if you like, of the musical in schools over many, many years. While they do give all the experience and opportunities that the others have spoken of, I'd also like to comment that there is an expectation now that every school does this. What I'm concerned about sometimes is that we're not focusing on the wonderful work that's happening in the classroom—student-devised work and the idea that the arts are actually processes, not just performances. So we've got a little bit of a two-edged sword here, that the rise of the big productions and the rise of the musicals have brought in the sense that there has to be performance in public, it has to be big, it has to be showy and, on the other side of things, we're perhaps not valuing in the same way the stuff that's happening

in the classroom. Maybe that's part of the problem—that schools see the musicals et cetera as very expensive and time-consuming, but part of the publicity for the school rather than essentially important as one of the subject learning areas.

The CHAIR: One final question from Mr Anderson.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: Thanks for your indulgence. What are your thoughts on the Hunter School of the Performing Arts and what it does? It is pretty much encapsulating everything that we're talking about.

CHRISTINE HATTON: Yes, it does. It provides specialist education for all of the arts, and many of those students go off to work in the arts industry. I have taught many students who have been through that system who are doing teaching because, as my parents said to me, "Just in case you need a real job," and who perhaps would say that the majority of their colleagues who they went through school with, at that school particularly, have got industry in their sights rather than education. So I think that those kinds of schools are great for hothousing the talents. They're enormously competitive for the people who actually go there, for the children and young people who go there. That's part of the milieu of those kinds of schools, just like Newtown Performing Arts High School et cetera. Those are places where there is an expectation that everybody is at a certain level of skill in their areas and they expect you to do ensembles and go on tours to other countries and all those kinds of things.

I would like to see a day when that kind of rich cultural and artistic life is offered to all students, no matter where you are, and, whether you're in a regional town or a central school, that you have high quality. I take Lesley's comment there about the importance of good quality classroom practice. Maybe it's time to really rethink who has access. It shouldn't be, in my mind, an elite experience; it should be an expectation that every child has the right, as in the UNESCO declaration, to access a full range of high-quality arts experiences at school—by their teacher, who knows and loves and cares about them. That's really the first relationship, I think, that's really important. In selective schools it's for a select group; it's not for all. The arts, in education, very much has a democratic underpinning that it is arts for all rather than for the elite.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: Thank you very much.

The CHAIR: Thank you very much. The secretariat will contact you all in relation to any questions taken on notice or any further questions. I really appreciate your time.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

Mr JOE MULLER, Managing Director, MusicNSW, affirmed and examined

Ms EVELYN RICHARDSON, Chief Executive, Live Performance Australia, before the Committee via videoconference, affirmed and examined

The CHAIR: Welcome, Mr Muller and Ms Richardson. Thank you for making the time to give evidence. Would you like to start by making a short statement?

JOE MULLER: Sure. I thank the Committee for the opportunity to contribute to today's conversation. We've taken it as a given that the Committee understands the vital importance of quality music education in contributing to the social, cultural and economic wellbeing of New South Wales communities. I know that there is an abundance of research that supports this, so our submission focuses on a call to mandate quality music education in all New South Wales primary and secondary schools, supported by strong policy, investment and accountability measures, to ensure all young people have access to quality, sequential and ongoing music education, regardless of demographic, socioeconomic and geographic factors.

We are ambitious for the contemporary music sector in New South Wales, and see significant benefits to involving artists and industry professionals in partnerships across all levels of the education sector to deliver stronger outcomes and support both a culturally diverse New South Wales artist community and a nationally and globally competitive New South Wales music industry. Put really simply, we want to ensure that all young people in New South Wales have access to music education that supports the essential place of art and art making in our communities, that is inclusive of all stories, and that acknowledges the many and varied career pathways available in the contemporary music industry. At a time when so many across our sector are speaking in crisis terms, our investment in the future of the contemporary music industry must begin with quality arts and music education. I'm really looking forward to the conversation today.

EVELYN RICHARDSON: Thank you for the opportunity to appear today. As we note in our submission, this inquiry comes at a very important time for our cultural and creative industries as they rebuild from the impacts of COVID-19. Indeed, one of the main obstacles to full recovery from the pandemic is the industry-wide and critical shortages of skilled workers across the range of occupations that bring our live arts and entertainment to audiences across the New South Wales community. To address this, we call on the New South Wales Government to consider funding for industry-based placements and traineeships, including for work experience placements, to help our performing arts organisations address current skills shortages and to build their future workforce.

In our submission we also highlight the essential role of our performing arts organisations in supporting positive education and training outcomes through the programs they already deliver for students at all stages, and teachers, both in and out of the classroom environment. Our performing arts organisations and their people deliver extremely valuable and impactful programs for students and teachers. Much of this work currently is being done without any dedicated funding support from the New South Wales Government.

In their own submissions a number of LPA member companies will provide the Committee with compelling examples of the contribution they are already making to arts and music education and training, as well as the opportunity to do much more with the right policy framework and funding support from Government. I commend their recommendations and submissions and would encourage the Committee, where possible, to hear more from them directly about their programs and what they are delivering and the impact they are having on current and future generations of New South Wales students and teachers.

We welcome the New South Wales Government's commitment to support a whole-of-government approach to advocating for and investing in the arts, cultural and creative industries as set out in the Creative Communities arts and culture strategy, including very important steps such as the establishment of formal partnerships between Create NSW and the education department. Finally, as home to many of our exceptional performing arts companies, organisations and training institutions, New South Wales has a tremendous opportunity right now to draw on their expertise and capability in achieving powerful and life-changing outcomes through arts and music education and training now and into the future.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Thank you for your submissions and your attendance today. I wanted to pick up on something that both of you reference and I think is connected, which is essentially industry partnerships. They obviously exist at a schools level and then more at a training and apprenticeship level. Are there examples of that we can draw on or use to inform some successful, or perhaps unsuccessful, mechanisms for developing these kinds of industry-led partnerships, or at least industry and training partnerships?

JOE MULLER: We've detailed a few examples in our submission of some existing partnerships happening across New South Wales. MusicNSW, for example, delivers work that is all about professional

development and capacity building for early- and mid-career artists and industry and has historically worked with young people. FEEDBACK, for example, was a one-day music conference that we delivered for a number of years for 12- to 25-year-olds. We have programmed all-ages events, like NEW NOW and Indent. We continue to run a suite of professional development activity called Sound Advice. But there are a number of other organisations. Heaps Decent does a lot of work with young people, EMC has started playing in that space, Nakama Arts, Street University all do really great work.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Just to expand, what has made them successful? What is unique about the partnerships or which ones have done well and why?

JOE MULLER: I think what is unique about the partnerships is their capacity to meet young people where they are at. It's to provide places for young people to connect with music education in spaces where they feel like they are reflected in the community. So they are seeing themselves reflected in the teachers, they are learning about contemporary music forms, they are learning about contemporary music instruments. They are exposed to a rich network of contemporary music artists and art-making practices that feel representative of who they are and where they live.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: I guess what I am getting to is do those partnerships provide something so unique that a curriculum, for example, couldn't really design for that kind of connection and that kind of context that students need in individual schools?

JOE MULLER: I would argue that the curriculum should aspire to reflecting contemporary language, contemporary instruments and contemporary music forms. It does to an extent. Certainly MusicNSW commits our time and resources to working with the Government to develop new curriculum wherever possible. I think there is also a role for industry and industry professionals to play as an inspirational voice for those young people—not just for the students but also for the teachers, many of whom just don't have the expertise to be able to deliver the kind of music education training that is needed for those young people to truly thrive.

EVELYN RICHARDSON: I look at that in two parts. I think a lot of companies right now provide education, access and those kinds of things with respect to arts and music programs. With respect to industry-led programs, there are very few partnership examples that we can look at right now, but I think there is potential to build those. One of the things that New South Wales has is some very, very well-established, strong companies, with a very big skills base and expertise, who are leading with respect to going into schools and the education sector with various programs. I think many of them have the potential for on-the-ground, skills-based training. In our industry, the performance industry, a lot of that training is on-the-ground, jobs-based experience; it's not something you can learn to X point and then you've actually—if you're in lighting and sound or stage management or whatever, you have to get the experience doing that on the ground.

Going forward, what I would say is that there's a very strong opportunity right now for New South Wales Government to draw on the companies that you already have—you've got a very strong infrastructure and skills base—and work with them to build those partnerships. There's certainly a willingness on behalf of those companies. If you've got companies going out to schools—everyone says, "You can't be what you can't see," which is why it's really important that those companies continue with those outreach programs. On the flip side of that, there has to be somewhere for students to then progress and develop those skills through the training institutions that you have there, but also through the very practical, on-the-job training that they can only get when they're working in performing arts companies or music companies or wherever they want to be in the sector.

Dr JOE McGIRR: Mr Muller, I think the Committee would definitely take an assumption of the value of music education across a broad range of intelligence capabilities, let me put it that way. When we were visiting yesterday, we met a group of students. I have to say, they were very passionate about getting a career in contemporary music, but they weren't—I hope I'm not misquoting them—I'd have to say, hopeful that they would make a full-time living in contemporary music. A view, can I say, that I think was echoed by their teachers, that they would be not unemployed but facing a career where they would be mixing and matching work in different parts of the industry, and outside the industry. I'm just interested in your views about where the future lies for people interested in contemporary music careers and how we relate that back to the sort of music education we provide.

JOE MULLER: Firstly, I would just point to the fact that, for many artists specifically, the idea of mixing and matching work is actually built into the fabric of what it is to be an artist. Nick Cave is one of our most celebrated music success stories in Australia, but he also has other vehicles for his creativity. What I would encourage that specific teacher to discuss with the young people is the many and varied range of career pathways available to young people in the contemporary music space. There are a number of ways that people can participate in this industry outside of just as a practising artist. It's really important that our school curriculums reflect that to

encourage young music entrepreneurs to go and become small businesses and deliver in the variety of different options available to them in this sector. Certainly we as an organisation are actively looking to grow the capabilities of young people just through the vehicle of working at MusicNSW. To Evelyn's earlier point around the need for industry placements, I think there is a real opportunity there to give kids and young people a chance to engage in the various parts of the sector.

Dr JOE MCGIRR: Do you think the curriculum and the teaching now provide that information or open up those opportunities to students?

JOE MULLER: I'm not an expert on the curriculum now, I'll confess. I know that some more contemporary language and exposure to contemporary music forms is featured in that curriculum, but I do think it could go further, yes, absolutely. I think we need to see contemporary music artists reflected in music curriculum, for example. Our curriculum should be an opportunity for us to celebrate the wonderful artists that exist in New South Wales and Australia generally and to celebrate the rich and diverse music community that we are operating in.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: Do you think secondary schools look at live performance—and we've talked today and we've had discussions with the National Art School and others and we went to NIDA and AIM yesterday. Do you think that coming through the secondaries—say, from 7 to 12—they are looking at that live music scene, like production, stage management and A&R guys who are out promoting, starting your own business in terms of record management, artist management and that sort of thing? I don't know if I'm seeing that in high schools. You see the creative arts but you don't see the pathway for anybody that would want to go down that path of the live entertainment industry.

JOE MULLER: Yes, I absolutely agree. First of all, unfortunately, I don't think we're seeing in every New South Wales high school a level of quality music education at all, let alone the diverse range of education around the potential for career pathways that exist in the music space.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: We saw it at NIDA—they're doing theatre production and stage management—and a little bit at AIMS in terms of live music production, how to set up a studio and what to do, and some of that creative stuff. I don't know if they're offering that as career advisers going to those career days with years 10, 11 and 12 and saying, "Here is some live production and here is that creative space."

JOE MULLER: I think that's where there is a role for industry professionals to play in partnership and collaboration with secondary schools to give real-world examples of the diverse range of career options available to young people in the sector.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: You talk about that in your submission, where you think there needs to be that better connectivity between music organisations and schools.

JOE MULLER: Absolutely, yes. There is an opportunity there.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: How do you think that could happen? Who would initiate that? I know RADOs do a great job in terms of that grassroots development, but how do schools and the education department better connect with music industries to have that pipeline, if you like?

JOE MULLER: I don't profess to have all the answers, but perhaps just investment from the education department in industry organisations who are able to fill those gaps for schools where there just isn't access to quality music education. We acknowledge, of course, that many of the teachers working across the space just don't have the knowledge of the kind of things you were talking about around production and the other parts of the music industry. I think there is a role for industry to play in bridging those gaps. That not only benefits the young people but it also benefits the teachers who then have access to that expertise and inspiration. Just being involved in music is fun.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: It's pretty cool.

EVELYN RICHARDSON: Can I add something to that? Just listening to that conversation, I think one of the things that could be done from what we saw in the performing arts sector—and it could be a model for the live music sector—is that Global Creatures developed a program called Get Technical! It was a large program on the set of *Moulin Rouge*. The motivation for that was, as an industry on the performing arts side and on the theatre side, we realised that we needed to reach young people to educate them about the range of skills with respect to putting on a live show, like a big musical in this case.

Over a period of time they developed a program that high school kids all the way up to before they go into uni could come to and meet all of the department heads from all of the different parts of putting on a show and

get an idea. It was *Moulin Rouge* in this case. Each of those department heads came out and talked about where they'd come from, how they'd come into the industry and what their jobs were about. Over a period of time, they took that all around the country. They had over 5,000 students across Australia come to that half day behind the scenes/behind the curtain. It was very successful. They've now taken it to Broadway and to the West End, but it was something that started in Australia when there was a very big skills shortage coming out of COVID.

I point to that because it could be something that could be the same in the live music sector. Kids don't realise that there are all these different pathways. Not everybody is going to be a musician, be in a band or go on the road, but there are about 50 different roles sitting around that they could be involved in and still be part of a very exciting and interesting industry. Perhaps it's something that even New South Wales could look at piloting with industry partnership, because obviously we've got the people that work in the industry to provide some kind of showcase or a behind the scenes, revealing how the industry works and what those roles are. That's something certainly that I think Joe and our organisation—we represent promoters and venues, but we would see ourselves as part of that education process.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: In terms of that education process, if we had more teachers who were better equipped in that create space—there are many high schools right across New South Wales, including regionally as well, where you've got these bands starting up. Years 10, 11 and 12 getting some mates together and throwing together a little four piece, a little five piece. That should be the nucleus for creative explosion for that school to find a teacher that's interested in that space, to then develop that and push that school and that education component. That sets the ball rolling for those that are involved with their mates around that space to then create something a little bigger than that. But it does come from a teacher, having the backing of the school for a start, looking at that and then picking up on that theme and saying, "We've got something here, ladies and gentlemen. Let's run with it."

JOE MULLER: Yes, and I think you've identified one of the issues, which is that, at the moment, it seems a little bit luck of the draw. If you just happen to have access to a teacher in your school who has that level of knowledge and inspiration, and you're a young person, then that means you get that access and, sure, you could become the next Silverchair or—

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: Powderfinger.

JOE MULLER: Let's keep it New South Wales!

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: Yes, we'll leave that out. I'll shut my laptop now.

JOE MULLER: But it really is about having access to those teachers, so it's really important that we better equip teachers by training them. The way that we can do that, I think, in the short term anyway, is in partnerships and collaboration with industry professionals.

The CHAIR: Following on from your comment—and I was at the seminar last week where there was a lot of reference to this—you referred to quality, ongoing and sequential music education and you've said that there's a huge disparity. How do you see that playing out in terms of the ongoing and sequential part, not just quality?

JOE MULLER: First of all, we would endorse the submission made by Music Education right from the start around mandating music education for all primary students. We would extend that to also mandate access to music education across all high schools in New South Wales, and there was a person giving evidence earlier or, sorry, a discussion around selective schools. I think that there are some wonderful schools in that space, but I think it's very, very important that we acknowledge the need for young people to have access to music education regardless of where they live and their socio-economic background. I do think there's a role for the State Government to play in terms of better navigating the tertiary situation. I think one way that the New South Wales Government could support the cost barriers of music education at a tertiary level is by reducing course fees in the VET sector, in TAFE, for example, working on collaborations between Federal and State governments to better give entry points, I suppose, into what have become quite prohibitively expensive tertiary degrees. Does that answer your question?

The CHAIR: Yes, pretty much.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: I think you're right in terms of the programs that TAFE offers with Smart and Skilled, where they look at that fee free. That could be an option to reduce those cost barriers to get into those spaces. Yesterday we heard some evidence that TAFE was quite an appropriate provider. In some cases it was the pathway to get into NIDA, AIM, AFTRS and those other areas. TAFE does play a really important role, in my view.

JOE MULLER: Absolutely.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: If some of those courses can be expanded upon and be included in Smart and Skilled where they are fee free, I think that would certainly open up the oyster.

JOE MULLER: Agreed, noting as well the critical role that industry can play in terms of mentorships and placements, to Evelyn's earlier point.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: Teaching.

JOE MULLER: Yes. I think there is a real opportunity for investment in those kinds of industry placements as a way for real on-the-ground training for young people and entry points into the sector.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: I agree.

The CHAIR: Thank you very much for your time. If there were any questions taken on notice or there are further questions, the secretariat will be in contact with you about those.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

(Luncheon adjournment)

Mrs DEBRA BATLEY, NSW Chair, Australian Society for Music Education, sworn and examined

Dr KIRSTEN MACAULAY, NSW Executive and NSW Treasurer, Australian Society for Music Education, sworn and examined

Mr MAX HOLZNER, Chair, Music Teachers' Association of NSW, affirmed and examined

Mr ANTHONY van den BROEK, Deputy Chair, Music Teachers' Association of NSW, affirmed and examined

Ms EMILY ALBERT, Executive Director, Alberts and Head of Music Education: Right from the Start, affirmed and examined

Mr ERIC SIDOTI, Project Lead, Music Education: Right from the Start, affirmed and examined

The CHAIR: I welcome all of you who have come this afternoon. Thank you for providing evidence to us. Would each of you like to start by making a short statement?

DEBRA BATLEY: Thank you, firstly, for the opportunity to address the critical issues surrounding music and arts education in New South Wales. The Australian Society for Music Education—ASME—New South Wales chapter represents a diverse group of musical educators dedicated to fostering a robust and inclusive music education system. Music education is a cornerstone of a well-rounded curriculum, offering profound cognitive, emotional and social benefits. Research consistently shows that quality music education enhances students' social and emotional wellbeing, cognitive abilities and academic performance, especially for those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Despite these benefits, significant barriers hinder the effective delivery of music education in New South Wales. Key challenges include inadequate initial teacher education, ITE, for generalist primary teachers; a lack of continuous and sequential music programs; and insufficient support for music specialists in primary schools. Additionally, the absence of mandated hours for music education and the lack of formal accreditation for primary music specialists exacerbate these issues.

ASME NSW has made several recommendations, but we would really like to speak to these actions to address the barriers: Mandate explicit hours of study of continuous and sequential music education in primary schooling, one hour per week in every term and every year of primary school teaching; conduct a comprehensive survey of music education delivery in New South Wales primary schools; establish NESA-accredited roles for primary music specialists and pathways for permanent employment; increase and mandate hours for music education in ITE programs; and provide additional funding and incentives to connect First Nations creative artists with schools. By prioritising these recommendations, we can ensure that every child in New South Wales has access to high quality music education, enriching their educational experience and equipping them with essential skills for the future. Together, we can transform music education in New South Wales, fostering a more creative, empathetic and culturally rich society.

MAX HOLZNER: It's a privilege to present our submission to you all and give evidence today, so thank you for the opportunity. My colleague Anthony and I had the pleasure of watching the live stream of the earlier evidence with Dr Anita Collins, who, coincidentally, was my high school music teacher some 30 years ago. It's surreal. Dr Collins and representatives from Music in Me spoke eloquently about the vital role of music education, reiterating important findings from the research commissioned and published by Alberts' the Tony Foundation, which have been reiterated in many of the submissions that you have reviewed. We feel comfortable noting the research and points in this area moving forward.

While many submissions have justifiably focused on curriculum models for early learning and primary school stages—which we support—the broad terms of reference for this inquiry allow us to consider music education and training in its entirety, from primary through to tertiary levels. This perspective allows us to acknowledge the significant contribution of extracurricular music education, which is indispensable given the current landscape in New South Wales. Specialist music teachers, both instrumental and vocal, play a crucial role, and we want to draw the Committee's attention to this "shadow profession" of sorts.

My colleague Anthony can certainly speak to the role that the broader music teaching profession has in education and training of school-age students—so school age, not school students, and also within schools. According to the latest ABS figures, there are around 4,300 such teachers in New South Wales and over 11,000 nationally. The federated MTAs, through an Australian college of music teachers, will represent a substantial portion, or close to 25 per cent of those teachers, many of whom work peripatetically delivering music education, either as sole contractors or employed through corporate and extracurricular providers. We can talk further to that.

This is our central thrust here in carving out space for this discussion: At a time when governments and school systems are under pressure to improve access to music education, especially in government schools, the profession lacks comprehensive quality standards and processes for assuring the quality of teaching across all settings. Unlike professions like medicine, law and architecture, music teaching does not have universally applied professional standards. Our submission outlines a strategic, collaborative and collegiate approach to elevating music standards and accessibility in New South Wales. We look forward to discussing it with you all.

EMILY ALBERT: Thank you for the opportunity to present this afternoon. I'll be brief as our submission is before the Committee and we expect it will be more profitable to allow Committee members the time to ask any questions you might have of us. Music education, right from the start, is a national collaborative initiative led by Alberts' the Tony Foundation. The Albert family, as you may be aware, has been in the music and entertainment business for close to 140 years, from Boomerang mouth organs and songsters, the early days of radio and then TV, through to our recording history with The Easybeats, AC/DC and others, to the present, where our business has changed but our values have not.

This initiative was born of our history and an enduring belief in the power of music to change lives, especially young lives. We work closely with partners and supporters across music education providers, the music industry, research and philanthropy. We enjoy cooperative relationships with education departments and teacher associations in several jurisdictions, including here in New South Wales. The strength of this collaboration has been at the heart of this ambitious effort. We've been early supporters of this parliamentary inquiry. As I expect would be apparent from the submissions before you, our colleagues share our conviction that your work is most timely.

This inquiry offers the opportunity that every primary school student in New South Wales has access to quality, sequential and ongoing music education across seven years. To succeed in this would see primary students benefit in their educational attainment, wellbeing, and personal and social development. This is proven. It would also nurture a culture within our schools where students want to be there, engaged and eager to participate. The evidence of this will be before you during the course of your inquiry. Finally, it would be a significant step in lifting confidence among parents and the community that our schools are genuinely about a holistic education which is both affirming and equitable.

We've taken these well-researched benefits as a given. Our submission restricts itself to the policy landscape focused on the immediate actions required to ensure delivery of a quality, sequential and ongoing music education for every New South Wales primary school student. In essence, we propose that every primary school student in New South Wales will have access to a guaranteed minimum of 60 minutes of music per week, mandated up to stage four with a teacher, generalist or specialist, confident and capable of delivering quality music learning.

So this headline objective drives the recommendations that follow from it, including, firstly, setting targets, starting with 50 per cent of primary schools providing access to quality, sequential and ongoing music education by 2027; secondly, establishing a standard as to what constitutes quality music education; thirdly, developing and implementing a three-to-five-year operational plan in conjunction with an external advisory group; fourthly, focusing the initial priorities across school leadership, the teaching workforce and resourcing.

In putting these recommendations forward, we've been encouraged by the parliamentary debate introducing the motion establishing this Committee, and the discussions we have had, that there is a shared appreciation of quality music education across the Parliament. We're holding our collective breath that you will seize the opportunity before you to provide the New South Wales Government with a strong set of clear recommendations that can deliver on the promise of quality music education. We hope our submission might be of assistance in that regard and are willing to assist further, including the provision of additional information if that would be helpful. My colleague Eric Sidoti and I would be more than happy to answer any questions you might have.

The CHAIR: What does it look like in schools where there aren't specialist music teachers and there aren't the philanthropic foundations that are coming and doing work in primary schools which is very high quality but not continuous?

ANTHONY van den BROEK: I'd be happy to start the conversation about that. I think what I notice as a private music teacher in the industry is that we are doing the heavy lifting for what is not happening in primary schools. I only discovered that music education wasn't compulsory in primary schools when students started coming to me who had absolutely no ability to sing. They really had no skills. They couldn't do any rhythm. So, as a private piano teacher, my job all of a sudden became, actually, a remedial music teacher to try to get them to a basic level. So that's what's happening in primary schools. The teachers who are teaching on the side, who are instead teaching what should be going on at school, are developing the music students in New South Wales.

Then they come into year 7, and then there is a mandate for them to actually learn music. So anyone who's been doing music for four or seven years, or even two, is absolutely bored out of their brain by the simplicity of the syllabus when it starts. I think there is a problem with the lack of streaming and that these are basic skills that could have been taught in the primary school level, anyway. It's not particularly complicated. They are not hard. They are not expensive. Kodály-based education, which was raised earlier today, was developed by Zoltan Kodály in Hungary in the late nineteenth century. He believed that every child had the right to a music education, and it didn't have to be expensive, because every child has an instrument right there, in their throats. They also have hands. So it doesn't have to be expensive or complicated, but it does need to be delivered by people who have some expertise to be able to teach children how to sing.

There also was a mention, and I've heard it through all of the submissions this morning and the conversation, about the right to an arts education. That sounds very esoteric, I think. It's not really like the right to have shelter, is it? I mean, it's something kind of different. But I would argue that of all the things that humans have been doing for millennia—they have been singing, dancing, and making art objects and they've been involved in religious and spiritual activities as well as hunting and gathering. So why would we take that away? Why would we not offer that to every student in our State?

At a tertiary level we are also quite concerned because traditionally a Bachelor of Music degree, which now is hardly offered by any universities in New South Wales and my university, the University of New South Wales, just nixed their Bachelor of Music this year—but, traditionally, they understood that most musicians that would be turned out of those degrees would not necessarily become full-time active musicians but they would possibly go into teaching, and they felt that it was important that they would provide the pedagogical skills and knowledge for these people to go and become teachers.

Now we don't have a Bachelor of Music in many institutions and we have very little pedagogical education, so we have a completely unregulated industry, which is the private music teacher industry. So anybody can call themselves a music teacher, and I think the original conservatoriums might have something to say about what that's causing. As an examiner for the Australian Music Examinations Board, I see a very wide range of abilities and, let's say, teaching prowess. Sometimes it is, quite frankly, terrible and students are being let down by a lack of regulation. I might just leave it there for some of my colleagues to take up.

DEBRA BATLEY: Can I speak to your question of what it looks like in a primary classroom without a music specialist? ASME New South Wales' perception is that, without a music specialist or a generalist teacher who is capable and confident in the delivery of music education, the default position is to teach the art form that they are comfortable with. I know of several schools that offer visual arts continuously through the year because they are comfortable with the content and the subject matter for the students, and then they carousel music and the other art forms. So a student may only get music in term 1 and term 3 of a year, or they might only get two terms of music in a stage, which is two years of schooling. That is certainly reflected in the research by researchers such as Margaret Barrett who have looked at the confidence of teachers in delivering music curriculum. I think that's what it looks like when we don't have confident music teachers in the classroom, and I'm not necessarily saying a specialist. I agree with Emily Albert: A generalist teacher who is confident in the subject matter can be incredibly powerful in the classroom.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Could I ask about the 60 minutes? We heard earlier that 30 minutes, for example, might be delivered in three 10-minute blocks throughout a week. Is that something that you are all open to, or do you imagine that 60 minutes is a discrete period of time? I would love to hear from everybody, if you don't mind.

DEBRA BATLEY: I think one of the issues at the moment is that there is no time mandated at all. I think, from school to school, actually, 10-minute blocks is perfectly appropriate to early stage one, when we are dealing with very small humans, but an hour would be brilliant for year 6, and I think we need to give teachers the ability to meet the context in front of them. However, at the moment, what we have is 6 to 10 per cent of classroom time given to creative arts with no further advice, which greatly dilutes the teaching time for music.

EMILY ALBERT: I would support what Deb says, and I think it needs to be on a school-by-school basis. What we want to see is that there is that mandated 60 minutes a week in whatever way is most appropriate in that school and stage level.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: I want to ask about the proposal around a 50 per cent target of public schools offering quality music education. I know it is contained in your submission appendix but, for the benefit of the Committee, can you give us a brief summation of what constitutes quality and, secondly, how you propose to measure this?

There is already a reporting obligation in terms of the curriculum outcomes for music. Schools are reporting that they are teaching music and that students are meeting or not meeting the relevant curriculum outcomes. How would the reporting system differ to what's currently in place?

EMILY ALBERT: We're strong advocates for the adoption of a framework as to what constitutes a quality music education. I think our understanding at the moment with the curriculum is that it can be interpreted in different ways as to how that is met, because there are not really clear, specific expectations about what quality music education looks like. We have worked very hard to put together a quality framework, which was with various stakeholders across music industry education providers, educators. It was a really tough piece of work. It is hard to get one format, but we have had general agreement with that and we offer that as a standard for starting. The other piece is that we don't actually know what the current state looks like in New South Wales, and this is the same in other jurisdictions. No department of education that we speak to can confidently tell us exactly what music looks like in its delivery in schools—who is delivering it, what their qualifications are, how many hours, over how many weeks of the school year.

We are, at the moment, working with the NSW Department of Education on a survey, looking at teachers within schools, to understand what is happening. We offer that, again, as a way to understand what the current state of play is, and that could be replicated over subsequent years every two to three years to understand what the current status is. We just don't have the information. At the moment we couldn't actually tell you, hand on heart, whether 50 per cent is an ambitious target or not, because no-one could tell us whether quality music education is being delivered in how many schools. I don't know if you want to add to that?

ERIC SIDOTI: If I could just add one thing about the link. The link that we try to make in the submission is between setting a standard and the measurements, because the terms of reference require this question of measurement to be addressed. The difficulty has always been that when people talk about quality music education, they interpret it in their own minds. It's interpreted a whole lot of different ways. What we have tried to do by establishing a standard is provide the base against which you would be trying to measure what's actually delivered over time. That's combined then with the reporting, which need not be onerous. This is part of the conversation we have had with the Department of Education. Of course, teachers' time is on everyone's mind. But a simple instrument, delivered periodically with the same data, will give you trend data and the instrument we've designed is also capable of eventually delivering our comparable national standards.

DEBRA BATLEY: In answer to your question, too, the reporting requirements are that schools get assessed on their teaching programs and their division of time. So there are two levels of compliance. In a teaching program, to say that you've met the requirements of the course, the outcomes for primary school music in particular are very simplistic. So if you're frightened of teaching music, you can construct it in such a way that you could check off those outcomes with not very much teaching. But whether you've checked them off in a meaningful, rich, helpful way that is quality music education—there is no guarantee that's happened. The other thing that schools have is their teaching time. But as I've mentioned, that pie is very unspecific when it comes to how the creative arts are taught. At the moment the reporting requirements don't guarantee that a quality music education happens.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: To pick up on something that Ms Albert raised about the department not being quite sure where we're at, my understanding is that there are two full-time staff members employed in the arts unit within the Department of Education. Would you suggest that's nowhere near enough when you consider that's covering all types of arts, not just music? I'd love to hear everybody's comments.

EMILY ALBERT: My understanding is that some of that is co-curricular, as well as curriculum-based.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: So it's even smaller, really, and that's not really sufficient to manage the kind of depth that we would ideally like to see.

ERIC SIDOTI: I would be very surprised if anyone sitting at this table thinks there is enough human resource in the Department of Education to deliver systemically a quality music education. I think that would be an agreed statement, and I would be very surprised if they didn't agree with it within the department itself, to be perfectly honest. If you look at some of the data that we provided, the Victorian department decades ago had 107 essential people. That's one of the reasons why we, amongst others, are suggesting that it is not just what sits in the head office; it is also what sits in the regional offices, in terms of having cluster specialists who can support teachers within a primary school cluster arrangement.

KIRSTEN MACAULAY: In addition to that, ASME New South Wales members report that it is hugely helpful to have those people in the arts units supporting what is happening in the schools, and we are very grateful for that work. To make it even better, we would also call for the Department of Education to recognise "primary

school music specialist" with a unique coding, so that we can look at the statistics behind how much music teaching is happening in the schools.

Dr JOE MCGIRR: Can I follow up this issue of the measurement of what's happening, which I found absolutely extraordinary. Mrs Batley, you have said that there are objectives ticked off and measures of time allocated. They are not very good, but they are supposed to be recorded. Is that correct? I mean, if we went to the department, would they be able to provide us with a list of primary schools where those boxes were ticked and the time was allocated, or not even that?

DEBRA BATLEY: They would be able to tell you whether the creative arts outcomes were taught, and that goes across music, dance, drama and visual arts. But they would not be able to tell you how much time was spent—well, the individual school may be able to tell you how much time was spent on each art form. As I said, this happens in the school that I teach in, which I find astonishing. I love my school, let me say; but when we don't have secondary teachers going into the primary school to deliver the curriculum, which changes from year to year depending on staffing, music gets taught for one term a year.

Dr JOE MCGIRR: To be clear about that, they would tell you that the objectives have been taught based on a self-report from the school, which I presume doesn't get verified externally or checked in any way. It's just a self-report from the school.

DEBRA BATLEY: NESA audits teaching programs, or inspects independent schools, but when you look at that, it doesn't give you the information you need to be able to tell that that program has been delivered in a quality, in-depth way.

Dr JOE MCGIRR: Ms Albert, I notice in your submission you talked about work you are doing with the South Australian Government on a survey. In fact, I think you mention a report that's come out of that. Can you just take us through what was involved in that, how complicated that was, and then where you are up to in your discussions with the New South Wales department?

EMILY ALBERT: It's the same survey that we are looking at. Our initial hope in putting the survey together was that we would build a national picture of music education. We realised that was quite difficult to do all at once, so we started with South Australia. They have their 10-year Music Education Strategy, and I think it is fair to say they didn't have a great way to measure the success of how that was being implemented. So they did want more knowledge of what was actually happening on the ground in schools. We did some research a few years ago which looked at initial teacher education and what teachers were learning before coming into schools. We then wanted to look at what is actually happening on the ground. This survey goes direct to teachers for them to answer.

It is not meant to be to music teachers; it is to generalist teachers, to understand their level of confidence and competence to teach music in the classroom, to understand what sort of facilities their school has available for music—so the instruments that are available, the space that's provided, the amount that's allocated in a general week to the teaching of music and across the school year, as well as that particular teacher's ITE background, as well as their professional development experiences. It asked them general questions around the perceptions of the students' ability as well. So that gave us a really great picture on the ground in South Australia as to what was happening. You could certainly see some outcomes as a result of them having the 10-year strategy and having had a focus for the last three years on professional learning and upskilling of teachers.

In terms of New South Wales, we had a commitment from the now arts Minister and education Minister prior to the last election to run a similar survey in New South Wales. We have now received funding through Sound NSW to fund that. We have an engagement with the Australian Centre for Educational Research to roll it out. We're working collaboratively with the Department of Education, ACER, the Teachers' Federation and ourselves in terms of how that will be delivered and are currently in the process of looking at when that can go in place in schools.

DEBRA BATLEY: I just want to support Ms Albert's survey, but ASMA NSW would actually love it if that survey didn't just go to public schools but went to every school in New South Wales. There seems to be a perception out there that independent schools do music education very well. I actually think we don't know, and that possibly high-fee independent schools with lots of resources do it well. Actually, the majority of independent schools in New South Wales are low fee and they don't have those resources, so we should find out about every single school in New South Wales.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Just on Ms Batley's comment earlier, I want to clarify in terms of that question around the reporting of outcomes, is it possible that those outcomes might be delivered as part of blended curriculum—you're delivering music in conjunction with the English syllabus or with history syllabus—and that

you could therefore check off those outcomes on the basis of a lesson that's not necessarily explicitly a music lesson?

DEBRA BATLEY: I'm just in my head thinking through the outcomes right now. I actually think you possibly could do that. Certainly with the syllabus that's just been produced, where the outcomes are reduced, that would definitely be possible.

MAX HOLZNER: I'm aware that the Committee is looking at the curricular context, I suppose, of a lot of this. When looking at outcomes and what is happening on the ground, I just thought I needed to jump in to say that even any measurements that we get out of it quite possibly belie the reality on the ground and what's actually happening, perhaps even in the eyes of significant stakeholders within schools: parents, community, families, the teachers themselves and principals.

Just very quickly, wearing an additional cap, we put a submission in—I actually haven't seen it—for Western Sydney Philharmonic, which is based out in Parramatta. It's two years old. I'm the Chair. Kim Williams is the patron. We're doing some interesting grassroots work with primary schools in the region that we received funding for. We've just held auditions at a very large scale with the 34 primary schools in the Parramatta LGA—around 250,000 population for that city. Almost all of our applicants came from the Government schools in the area. We have video evidence as to why they were auditioning for these programs. Some of the salient and impactful points were what was happening in schools was either non-existent—these are primary schools in the area—or, if they were, it was of what the parents and the children themselves thought was such a low standard.

That points to the importance of what's happening here and being discussed, but also that there are companies—corporate providers—that are currently providing the ensemble programs, the private tuition, to over two-thirds of those schools. Many of the teachers that have been used at the intersection with these schools are undergraduate students. They certainly wouldn't meet the benchmark for accreditation by our body that has a mandate to accredit instrumental teachers, and with pedagogical qualifications as well. I just thought that an important observation to make when looking at outcomes because many of those schools and teachers will think, "Actually, we have acquitted ourselves." And the parents might think, "They're doing a good job with these providers." That's the reality on the ground, even in a reasonably affluent area like Parramatta.

Dr JOE MCGIRR: We just don't know, and I think the point is that if you're not measuring something, you're actually not managing it. However imperfect the measures are, at least some sort of measure will throw light on the issue. I did want to cover this issue of the accreditation of private teachers but there may be other Committee members who want to ask a question. I'm happy to wait.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: Ms Batley, just on the reporting role, do you think the reporting that's coming out of the Department of Education is masquerading the real problem that we're seeing? We're getting it a lot anecdotally. We've had a lot of submissions come in highlighting a significant resource problem. The reporting doesn't truly reflect the situation.

KIRSTEN MACAULAY: There are aspects of excellence happening in Department of Education schools that our members share with us. However, we're conscious that there isn't equity across those schools, and we would love to see that. But that's where the survey, the measuring tools, come in so that we know that there is equity in what resources are being given to schools so that quality music education can happen.

DEBRA BATLEY: And I think, too, that I would use the word "compliance", rather than reporting. No school has trouble delivering literacy curriculum because that has very clear guidelines about how much should be taught and how it is—well, just the time is very clear. The same with mathematics. However, we're dealing with a subject that has been rolled into four subjects. If you're at a school where it's 6 per cent, not 10 per cent, the best case for your subject, if the pie is divided up evenly, is about 1½ per cent of teaching time given to music. That's not very much.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: I'd like to touch on capping, if I can, in relation to how the creative industries are somewhat devalued when it comes to the remainder and the encouragement to pursue science, maths, English, others, as opposed to the creative because of that ATAR and say, "This is where you should be directing your efforts." Do you have a comment on that?

KIRSTEN MACAULAY: Partly in the signposting that there aren't specific hours given to music education suggests to the wider community that it is not valued. By not giving those mandated, continuous, clear instructions on what quality music education looks like, that sends out a message which, unfortunately, is translating into what you've read in our submissions about declining numbers, through music education, and also into industry. However, to address that by looking at ITE, how music education is taught, the quality of that music education, accreditation and signposting in schools that we value music education, that would change the

landscape. Immediately that is saying to the wider community in each school, "Music education is valuable," and that will have an impact moving forward.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: We all agree that music education is valuable. It just doesn't seem to be translating into the classroom, which is a real problem. Mr Holzner, you took a breath.

MAX HOLZNER: Outside of maybe the independent sector where clearly, from the communities and at the school level, it's valued. Many private schools are doubling down on their investments in this area. So I think there is a real understanding there and a consensus that it's very valuable.

ERIC SIDOTI: If I just add, as was elaborated by some of the people this morning—Anita and others—there's this misconception that somehow by having an hour of music a week you're robbing literacy and numeracy. Whereas the reality is quite clearly that it's a net contributor to numeracy and literacy. So there's this false demarcation—a line that shall not be crossed—between STEM and other forms of education that actually contribute to STEM, and music is the example par excellence.

ANTHONY van den BROEK: I'd like to add to that as well. I think one of the reasons why many parents choose to send their children to private music education is that they're well aware that it actually makes their kids smart. I see that every day when I'm teaching. It enhances all the qualities of the students. My students, many of them who get their licentiate level diplomas at a young age, and that's equivalent to about a fourth-year university recital—or at least it used to be—aren't going on to study music at university. They're going on to study mathematics, medicine, law, politics. They're going on to being consumers of artistic products as they become adults, and I think this is rather essential. It's not either/or; it has to be together.

Ms LIZA BUTLER: Thank you for your time today. You've told us that the Department of Education can't provide the data. But if we think of outside of school, especially in regional areas, are you aware of any additional barriers to children and young people in regional areas accessing music education?

DEBRA BATLEY: As someone who lives in a regional area, music education in regional areas is hard to staff. A personal experience—I drove my daughter 210 kilometres a week for cello lessons for eight years, and she ended up doing a music degree.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: That's lucky.

Ms LIZA BUTLER: That paid off.

DEBRA BATLEY: In contemporary music, no less. But I'm not the only person who has that story. We had a student in our school last year who travelled out of town because their instrument wasn't delivered in the town that I'm from.

Ms LIZA BUTLER: Where is that, may I ask?

DEBRA BATLEY: Tamworth.

Ms LIZA BUTLER: There you go. I asked the right question, then.

DEBRA BATLEY: I actually think that ability to attract trained teachers to regional areas is enormous. When you start looking at schools like Bundarra Central School, with a total enrolment of 210 students or something like that, the teachers that are in that school are teaching multiple subjects. That makes it even harder, because you end up—I've got a friend who ended up at Murrurundi central school, and he was a science teacher. He got music because he could play guitar, which was great and he did a great job. He reached out and sought help. That is the thing in regional New South Wales. The other part of that is that it's hard to maintain your career just as a player in regional New South Wales. Those people that want to keep having that professional career and their teaching career at the same time are not necessarily going to move to regional areas. I ended up in the classroom because I moved to Tamworth. I found out that that was my calling in life, but I never would have gone into the classroom in the first place if I hadn't moved out of Sydney.

Ms LIZA BUTLER: Does anyone want to add to that?

EMILY ALBERT: I was just going to support what Mrs Batley was saying in terms of our own engagement in regional areas. We understand the large problems confronting education more broadly, and the conversations we have is we can't even get teachers, let alone music teachers. I think there's a real opportunity to look at solutions on a more holistic basis. Eric referred to it before; we know we've spoken with members who are near regional conservatoria and the role that they can play, the role of specialists in regional areas that could service multiple schools—so thinking maybe a little out of the current system and how resources that do exist could be used in ways and looking at ways for solutions within the system for changes that could address those.

There are challenges in schools in inner Sydney. They are going to be multiplied and amplified when you go to regional and remote areas.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: Apologies if you have touched on this in your submissions and I haven't picked it up. When we're talking about the difference between regional and metro, also that difference between those from higher and lower socio-economic backgrounds, I know anecdotally of cases where students who are not as well off end up being in the percussion streams of music ensembles and things because their parents can't afford to get them instruments. What sort of support is there for students who are not necessarily—even for those from middle-income families but where the money is just not stretching, where's the support for them to actually access an instrument that's going to make them love music?

MAX HOLZNER: From the point of view of our members—well, a significant portion of our members are classed as country members. So this is where, I think, the digital divide as well comes into play and is really material. My mind immediately goes to intervention, solutions that are delivered digitally as well. I know that there are some initiatives with our Victorian counterpart going on to work with areas within the State to assist regionally, and linking parents and families and communities and schools up with accredited teachers in metropolitan areas. But obviously it's not a magic bullet. I draw the Committee's attention to the Loble report, which some of you might be—or I hope all of you are—au fait with. It was, I think, a Gonski-backed report that came out a bit over a year and a half ago, where it looks at the role of EdTech particularly in dealing with many of these issues, and it's definitely an issue with music.

DEBRA BATLEY: I think, too, regional conservatoriums—actually resourcing them with libraries of instruments that can be rented out to students and remembering that regional conservatoriums aren't in every country town, and so expanding their net. That would make a huge difference. I work part-time at a regional conservatorium. We offer a limited number of bursaries and the reason the conservatorium doesn't offer more is because they just don't have the money to offer all the bursaries they want to. Music tuition is one of those things—when we're talking about conservatoriums, when there's a drought, that's what gets cut from the family budget. When there are hard times—and they're different issues in regional communities to city communities. My suggestion would be give them more money so that they can begin to address that equity gap and also resource them with instruments that can be rented to students. When my daughter was learning cello, there came a point where we just had to buy a cello because there were no full-size cellos at the local conservatorium. We were pretty committed to that process, but at that point, for some families, that would be the stop sign for them.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: Just picking up on that point, Madam Chair, I think the inequity is not only in the funding but it's also from the education department, making sure that regional conservatoriums, where they do exist in those regional centres—and in the cities as well—become the default for those schools to go to in terms of their teaching. Because they're not. Conservatoriums—and we'll talk a bit about that later—get their KPIs on their funding with numbers. Yet they're funded by the education department. Yet the education department doesn't tell the schools, "Your first port of call should be your local regional conservatorium if you have one." Ultimately, there is an internal battle between the two. The conservatoriums have a big role to play. I think that, when they are in those locations, they do a very, very good job. But it does come back to the resourcing and HR component of schools and having enough teachers to be able to deliver those programs. And it's a real problem.

The CHAIR: We're going to have to wind up there. Sorry to the members who had additional questions. Thank you for your evidence. The secretariat will contact you in relation to any questions taken on notice or any further questions.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

Mr DAVID FRANCIS, Chief Executive Officer, Wollongong Conservatorium of Music and President, Association of NSW Regional Conservatoriums, sworn and examined

Mr HAMISH TAIT, Chief Executive Officer and Director, Riverina Conservatorium of Music, sworn and examined

Dr TRACEY CALLINAN, Chief Executive Officer, Regional Arts NSW, affirmed and examined

The CHAIR: Welcome. Thank you for taking the time to give evidence this afternoon. Would you all like to start by making a short statement?

DAVID FRANCIS: Thank you very much for inviting us to speak today. We welcome this very important inquiry. I also want to acknowledge the previous panel. This is a beautiful segue into what we're going to be saying. I was very impressed with the quality of that panel. We are representing regional New South Wales. The association represents 17 regional conservatoriums that provide access to lifelong music and music education. We provided a supplementary paper to talk about the work of regional conservatoriums, so this submission really focused on three key areas which were of primary concern to our members. The first one of those, following on from the previous panel, is that music education is incredibly valuable. We all know that. We feel that the benefits of music education are proven, and we would urge that there are no more studies. We should accept the science and move on.

I was at a panel earlier today, and one of the questions was, "How are we going to achieve that?" Our view would be that we need to change the culture in schools. We need to advocate for the value of music education in schools. There need to be frameworks within the curriculum and within government strategy to allow that to happen in schools. We need teachers who are equipped to deliver music education. You would have heard from our colleagues at Music in Me earlier this morning to that effect. But we also need to create demand from the students. This is an ecosystem. We need demand to be created from the student body for music education. But, as we heard from the last panel, recruitment is a key issue in regional areas. Our members are particularly concerned about access to skilled music educators.

HAMISH TAIT: Regional conservatoriums experience a very high level of demand, but not all people can access the services for two particular reasons: Firstly, there simply aren't enough music educators to go around and, secondly, there are the costs of that. But, more importantly, the provision of teachers to regional conservatoriums and, indeed—listening to the previous panel—to the industry at large is also essentially a problem, because there is no organised system of training for music educators, particularly outside the school environment. The peripatetic industry is without an industry connection to the training sector to develop a future generation of music educators. What training does exist is rarely fit for purpose and often delivered by people with little or no experience in the industry. There is also a lack of consultation with the industry, particularly from the tertiary sector, regarding what is needed to equip graduates to provide a quality music education as a profession after their graduation.

There is also—and it has been raised earlier this afternoon—the lack of regulation in the industry. The lack of regulation in the music education industry, particularly the instrumental and vocal tuition sector, means that there is no global oversight, with the exception of what's going on in regional conservatoriums, which is heavily regulated by the department. But, outside of that, there is little regulation of child protection, the training and development of teachers, quality control of music education outcomes, and WHS and other legislative compliance. But we do believe that regional conservatoriums are uniquely placed to play a vital role in the development of teacher training development, to play a vital role in that process going forwards and, alongside organisations such as the MTA, to help develop a framework to support teachers and the development of programs that can allow the next generation of young music educators to come through.

Also, equity is another key concern of regional conservatoriums. We are currently accessing over 30,000 students across rural and regional New South Wales. Despite this, massive inequity still exists, with large parts of New South Wales still without access even to a regional conservatorium. We heard testimony just previously where parents have to travel hundreds of kilometres just to access instrumental lessons. This is a story that regional conservatoriums can tell you in spades. Under current financial models, music education is reserved for the well-off. Specialised music education is out of financial reach for most students, particularly if they are attending public schools in lower socio-economic areas. In the 2005 national review of music education, this was highlighted as a major problem in the Australian music education system and, in that time, nothing has changed. Stating the obvious, we are failing if we don't consider access to music education as a right and not simply a privilege for the well-off.

DAVID FRANCIS: The Association of Regional Conservatoriums represents one of the most skilled bodies of music educators across regional New South Wales, but these people are music educators who have a mindset and embrace the notion of a portfolio career. They are often community leaders within their communities, who use music as a vehicle for enriching the lives of their communities. They may be in the classroom or in the community, running ensembles. They may be local business owners. We're actually really thinking, when we think about training, that the training of music educators needs to embrace the notion of a portfolio career, particularly for those people who would embrace and contribute to the lives of regional and rural communities.

TRACEY CALLINAN: I have worked in music education all my life, but over the last 15 years I have focused my work in supporting regional New South Wales. So my view is very much taking that regional New South Wales view—a picture that includes the conservatoriums but goes beyond it. So the first thing I'd like to raise is the question of why music matters in our regional communities. It matters a lot, because there are young people growing up in regional New South Wales. We all know we have strong sporting communities in our towns, and that's a great thing, but it's not for all of them. For some of them, until they find their tribe, which is an arts tribe, they are lost, and so music is really important to help those young people find their way through life.

It's also important right through the ages because, interestingly, in regional New South Wales not all of our learners are young. We have lifelong learners, and that is a really interesting make-up of how people learn and the reasons why they want to keep doing it. But the other thing I want to also point out is that in regional New South Wales I really believe that having strong music education flows on to an activity that actually helps build more cohesive communities.

I have just noted down four areas that I think are really important, and because we work together there will be an overlap, but it's not all exactly the same. My first point is the same point that I am sure you have heard repeatedly—that there are such serious issues about getting good teachers in regional New South Wales. I do believe there are ways we can try to address some of those things and, while it may not answer everything, there are a number of things that I believe need to be looked at. The second area is that I think for music education to thrive in our regional communities we need to make sure innovation is there. It is important, I believe, that the offer is wide across what music education means—certainly not just classical, contemporary has a strong place, but I would say industry wide, because when we have young people growing up in regional communities they have to see what's possible, and there is so much possible within the music industry.

I think that we need to make sure that we've got young people learning to play instruments, but I also think that we need young people who are learning about the music business. We need young people who are getting trained in audio skills, for example. There is a whole industry out there and it's a big industry, and regional people can be feeding into that bigger picture. I grew up regionally and look at where all my friends are. One of my friends is now one of the top sound people in the world. He was Kylie's sound man for quite a long time. Those things are possible, but they become possible if you can see them and you start learning when you're young. So I would really like to think about how we can be more innovative to connect our learning to a whole industry. I also want to make sure that music and music education is celebrated within our communities, because if we have active things happening, we have a gig scene, we have things like town bands still operating, those things really feed our community.

The last thing I would like to say is how inconsistent music education is across regional New South Wales. We've already heard that. There are not regional conservatoriums in all areas, and that's always been a slightly ad hoc approach to what makes a regional conservatorium. We have to acknowledge that. We have to acknowledge that it affects the access issues and, again, we have already heard about the SES factors involved in that. What about those areas that don't have a conservatorium? Is that about making sure that we're extending the reach of the regional cons? Is it putting other scaffolds in to make sure that people who are operating outside of those areas maybe have better supports? And making sure that there is compliance, because while compliance may be an onerous task for many, we have to look at the quality that is happening in all of those areas right across those things.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: Thank you very much for your submissions and for coming along. My question comes off the discussion we had with the previous panel of witnesses around how music education has become seen as the preserve of the wealthy, particularly in a lot of regional areas. Looking at the history of conservatoriums, have they always been subject to grants programs from government rather than being fully funded? Have we ever had properly public conservatoriums in the past or have they historically been charitable organisations?

DAVID FRANCIS: I will pass to Hamish momentarily, but in the case of Wollongong Conservatorium, and bearing in mind we are in a more urban area, the grant that we received from the Department of Education

represents about 14 per cent of our turnover. The way that I look at regional conservatoriums and the message that we are projecting, in terms of the value of the contribution our communities make to music education—I'm putting a social enterprise argument around it—our communities actually invest \$50 million a year in music and music education through regional conservatoriums. That far exceeds the core grant from the Department of Education. I'll pass to Hamish to answer your question directly.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: I am curious as to where the funding comes from.

HAMISH TAIT: When you make reference to public funding, you are talking about government funding?

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: Government funding in grants, yes.

HAMISH TAIT: In the history of regional conservatoriums, there has been no point where the Government has taken sole responsibility for music education outside of the school system. Regional conservatoriums first evolved in the late 1970s, in Bathurst. Those conservatoriums were, to some extent, supported administratively, in some cases, by local tertiary institutions such as Charles Sturt University, which was then the College of Advanced Education, coming off the Riverina Teachers' College in the case of Wagga Wagga. But, for the most part, you will see a mix of conservatoriums evolving as a consequence of the New South Wales State Conservatorium, which doesn't exist anymore because it became part of Sydney University and it is now the Sydney Conservatorium. It has no role in regional conservatoriums.

They are either supported in that regard or they came out of the back of declining involvement in music education from the Catholic teaching that was done through convents right across regional New South Wales. In more recent years, very active community groups have come together to say, "We need one of these; we need to bring," because it's only through that collective in your community that you can attract teachers to come. Without the regional conservatorium in the local area, there will be no teachers in most of those areas, because people won't leave their metropolitan safety to move to a regional area. That's the case we hear in many, many industries, but in music education that is very real.

In the late 1990s there was a shift in government funding. Under the Bob Carr Government some initial funding was released to regional conservatoriums. It was very, very marginal and it was simply a pie cut up, proportional to each conservatorium. It wasn't much money. Most conservatoriums were operating with maybe \$100,000 a year in grants. As we moved to 2006-07, it became very clear that that model was no longer working. John Della Bosca, who was the Minister for Education and Training at the time, initiated a review of regional conservatoriums, which resulted in the current funding model, which was rolled out in 2009. That model hasn't been reviewed since then, so that's quite a long time for that model to have been in place.

We have enjoyed a very close relationship with the New South Wales Department of Education during that time. We work very closely with their key performance measures and their guidelines. But, in most cases, 14 per cent is probably on the low end of the spectrum where that funding is supporting; it can constitute up to 25 per cent to 27 per cent. I don't have exact figures in relation to that. But, in most cases, you're looking at an average contribution to the turnover of those regional conservatoriums of about 24 per cent from government grants. The rest of the income is coming from fees, and any other donations and philanthropic support that regional conservatoriums can gain.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: In terms of fees, if you had more public funding would the fees be lower, would that then create a more equitable playing field? If we have this decline, particularly in our public education systems around music tuition, and people are going to conservatoriums, then—

HAMISH TAIT: To put it in perspective, probably one of the most expensive services offered by a regional conservatorium is a one-on-one lesson, which is the traditional learning environment for most instruments and vocal areas. That's excluding groups like ensembles, which are obviously more cost effective for parents, but you can't really participate in an ensemble unless you know how to play your instrument. I would say, on average—and David might be able to provide more context for that from his perspective—you would be looking at, for a family, for a 30-minute one-on-one contact point each week, an annual cost in the vicinity of \$1,600 to \$1,700. When you look at those kinds of fees, for families on marginal and lower incomes, that's actually just well outside the reach. If you have multiple children engaged in music education, the fees for that one half an hour contact point actually start to rival the fees that the parents are paying even for lower end non-government school fees.

Then, when you look at lower income families—the normal people within our communities—in fact, the cost of music tuition is just simply way outside. Certainly over the last 12 to 18 months, all regional conservatoriums have seen a massive slowing of participation coming off the back of COVID and now into several

years of high interest rates and high costs of living where just putting food on the table has become very, very high cost. The discretionary choice to engage in a music education has become much more under pressure.

DAVID FRANCIS: It's a choice. May I add to Hamish's answer? In terms of your question, if there was more funding available, the reality is that there are many young people across regional New South Wales who are not able to access music education in schools. We know that the department are not employing specialist music teachers because of the bias within the curriculum, but actually regional conservatoriums could employ specialist music teachers and deploy them on a peripatetic basis to schools. Then the regional conservatorium becomes the employer and it becomes responsible for delivering music in the classroom to meet the curriculum needs as well as the extracurricular activity that many of us do in terms of school band programs and ensembles and so on. In terms of that increase in funding, there would be a very real benefit, assuming that the increasing funding allowed us to pay competitive salaries that attracted people to move to and base themselves in regional New South Wales. I think there is a tension there as well.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Can I ask a quick question to clarify funding? Universities are generally the purview of Federal Government funding. What's the relationship between conservatoriums and the Federal Government?

HAMISH TAIT: As a regional conservatorium, if you walk into your local member's office for the Federal, the normal response is "This isn't Australia-wide; it's a State issue." That's the response I've received multiple times over the last 20 years that I've been in my role. I would also add to David's comment around being able to go into schools. Workable models exist right across the regional conservatorium network where regional conservatorium staff with the relevant qualifications to be able to walk into a classroom are, in fact, delivering curriculum programs in schools on behalf of the school. In two cases in the Riverina in the last six months, the schools have been unable to pay the cost of that and the cost of those programs has been subsidised by donations from the community, but that is a key performance measure that regional conservatoriums are held accountable to by the New South Wales State Government.

Dr JOE McGIRR: I think we need to explore the way you're funded in a bit more detail because it's an incredibly complex model and it's clearly inadequate. It might have been okay in 2006 and 2007 but it's clearly not adequate now. I want to unpick, first of all, the criteria by which you're funded by the Department of Education. That's the first point: what you have to do for that and what's happened to that over a number of years and what pressures you're under now; secondly, what opportunities you have for other income—and I understand that's actually constrained not just by the market but by issues around GST, so that's an important consideration. We just need to unpack that. The third point I want to explore is that you do receive funding from the Department of Education, and you did—Dr Callinan, you're okay?

TRACEY CALLINAN: As you probably noticed, I have a little bit of a cold. I'm trying not to cough and I'm making it worse.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: It always makes it worse when you try not to.

Dr JOE McGIRR: If you need medical attention, let us know. You described your relationship with the Department of Education as a close one but, in fact, in the scheme of the education system, my observation is that you are tiny and that you are, in fact, I would suggest, barely noticed and that your interactions are at a very low level within the Department of Education, even though in terms of, I would argue, regional context and providing access to regions for music education you are absolutely critical. There are three issues there. Firstly, tell us how the funding from the education department works, what you are required to do and what has happened to that. Secondly, what are your constraints on other funding? Thirdly is just a comment from me about the visibility of your work within the Department of Education.

DAVID FRANCIS: Excellent questions. In terms of the funding we receive, the regional conservatoriums are funded through a program called the Regional Conservatorium Grants Program. As Hamish said, it was, in its current form, formed in 2008-09. The regional conservatoriums receive \$7 million across the 17 regional conservatoriums within the grant program. Our understanding is that the Department of Education also receives an administrative fee. It's Treasury money that is administered by the Department of Education, and the Department of Education are the administrators for the grant program.

Within that, the Regional Conservatorium Grants Program requires us to report against priorities for the Department of Education—for instance, how many public schools we're in, how many public schoolchildren we reach who are receiving regular music education within school as a result of our work, non-regular music education and also how many adult participants, as well as schools that are in areas defined as regional and rural by the department. There are a whole series of key performance measures that we report against.

Those performance measures also reach beyond the school system, because the breadth of work that we deliver far exceeds what happens in schools. For instance, most regional conservatoriums have an early years program and run community ensembles. We are the largest provider of music therapy in our region. A large chunk of the work that Regional Conservatoriums delivers is captured through other KPMs. We also have to record our estimated teaching hours. This is the value of the time spent delivering our activities. It was interesting that the previous panel was saying that there isn't data in existence to demonstrate the work or the value that's going on in music education, but actually that is not the case for Regional Conservatoriums. The department has been collecting—

Dr JOE McGIRR: In fact, it's quite ironic the level of detail you're reporting and the level of detail not available in that other issue. But let's keep going.

DAVID FRANCIS: I will let you say that.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Mr Tait used the phrase "heavily regulated" earlier. I was going to ask what you meant, but here we are.

DAVID FRANCIS: I think that some regional conservatoriums would argue that it is disproportionate in terms of the turnover of some of the conservatoriums. But that is not to say that the funding isn't incredibly welcome and incredibly valued. We were delighted that when Minister Car was appointed, the doors of communication opened. In our submission we included a link to Minister Car actually talking about the role of Regional Conservatoriums and the role we play. To answer your third question, then, the dialogue with the Department of Education is good. We would love to see the Department of Education advocating more strongly for our work internally. Their default appears to be, "We are the administrators of the grant," as opposed to, "You're an important part of our program and we're going to advocate for your work." As president, one of the questions I have is, when we provide all of this reporting, actually who internally is seeing that? What impact is that having in terms of the department's knowledge of our work? Really, it's falling to the association to do that advocacy work.

Dr JOE McGIRR: In terms of those KPMs as you've called them, they increase from year to year, do they?

DAVID FRANCIS: Yes, there's an in-built 15 per cent increase.

Dr JOE McGIRR: Does your funding increase by 15 per cent each year?

DAVID FRANCIS: No. The funding has not quite kept track with CPI over the period since 2009 to present.

Dr JOE McGIRR: So you've had a 15 per cent increase in KPMs, year on year, for the last—

DAVID FRANCIS: For each triennium, we have a 15 per cent.

Dr JOE McGIRR: So that's 5 per cent per year.

DAVID FRANCIS: Correct.

Dr JOE McGIRR: But the grant doesn't match CPI.

DAVID FRANCIS: Correct.

The CHAIR: What relationship, if any, do you have with the Catholic and independent schools, either collectively or school by school or with individual students?

DAVID FRANCIS: I'm going to let Hamish answer.

HAMISH TAIT: Historically, regional conservatoriums have done a vast amount of work in the non-government school sector. Unfortunately, that doesn't get captured in our reporting through the Regional Conservatorium Grants Program because that's just a reporting. It's not required by the Department of Education to collect that data. But definitely within Catholic and other non-government schools right across regional New South Wales, the level of engagement with regional conservatoriums by those schools is very high. Though, putting that into context, non-government schools in regional New South Wales are very different to, say, non-government schools in metropolitan centres. Fees are nowhere near as high. In particular, Catholic schools in regional New South Wales offer very low fees and are often providing enormous amounts of fee relief for students. That can even extend to supporting their music education to some extent, though that's not particularly typical right across the network.

Dr JOE MCGIRR: I did have a third question which was other sources of income for the conservatoriums and if that's constrained in any way.

DAVID FRANCIS: The primary source of income for regional conservatoriums, other than the Department of Education grant, is through fees that we charge to individuals for their music tuition and also that schools pay us for providing programs. I would say that in many cases, particularly for extracurricular activity, that cost is passed on to the parent and/or the P&C often pay for that extracurricular activity. In the case of Wollongong conservatorium—and I have a background in the arts so I'm very used to making funding applications—I certainly do benefit from project grants from, for instance, Create NSW, and we're very grateful for that. But actually, again, the opportunities are relatively limited for regional conservatoriums.

HAMISH TAIT: You also asked earlier about constraints on other income sources. Regional conservatoriums are, for the most part, not-for-profit charities. The Australian Taxation Office GST provision for charities is that they operate on a 75/25 per cent consideration basis. So if the fees that a conservatorium is collecting exceeds 75 per cent of the cost of providing that service, then GST has to be charged. That then sits on top of the regulation and compliance issues where, often in our local communities as the funded organisation, we're competing against unregulated private providers who have almost no compliance requirements and in some cases are offering cash-based businesses.

If we suddenly had to add 10 per cent onto the fees, because it's operating within a supply and demand economy in that environment, then the demand for the service at a higher fee is just going to diminish even further. Involvement will diminish even further. So that becomes quite a bigger picture. That would be less of a concern if all of those private providers were held to the same compliance frameworks, but when they're not even having to comply with basic child protection legislation, it becomes a very complex, competitive environment and arguably unfair.

Ms LIZA BUTLER: I just want to clarify in your statement about music education should be a right not a privilege. I don't think it's changed from being a right, personally. I just want your view on that. I think it's always been a privilege. When I look back at my mother studying at the conservatorium here in Sydney, to my brothers and I all having lessons, to me giving my children music lessons and I look around in my friend group, it's always been a privilege; it hasn't been a right. Am I right in saying that? You're saying that we need to change that status quo?

HAMISH TAIT: I think our position is that music education is a right. As articulated in the cultural communities policy released by Create NSW late last year, involvement and engagement in arts and music is now regarded as a fundamental human right. When we have schools without specialist music teachers, when we have no music being taught in the curriculum and CAPA being marginalised to very small number of minutes per week, month or term, where our primary education graduates are going through four-year primary degrees having done maybe one subject in CAPA, and I heard a report only last week that that can include up to two hours of music, what we are seeing, in fact, is the vast number of students—our representation here is for regional New South Wales—in regional New South Wales simply don't have access.

I think it's our philosophy that music education should be something that every child should have a right to be able to access. It shouldn't be something that is reserved for students who have parents capable of paying for the auxiliary services. Certainly the Regional Conservatorium Grants Program goes some way to addressing it. It certainly provides an incredibly good model that is demonstrated over a long, long time—decades of work—that it's very effective at reaching communities. The key issue is simply resourcing to be able to ensure that that work is able to be perpetuated.

TRACEY CALLINAN: Can I just add to that too? For many years it was always seen as something that was going to be provided by the schools. That has been eroded really quite seriously over the years. What we could have argued many decades ago really was working in New South Wales as a right for all young people, it's not the case now.

Ms LIZA BUTLER: My next question is about an increase to funding conservatoriums to deliver services in regional areas. Would you need to form additional conservatoriums? If we look at the south-east, for example, from Wollongong down there are no conservatoriums. How could you deliver services from Wollongong all the way down in Bega?

DAVID FRANCIS: This might be a great time to tell you that I conduct a choir in Pambula. I drive five hours in each direction to do that. I have a partner down there who rehearses the choir on a weekly basis, and I go down once a month and conduct their concerts and so on. Wollongong Conservatorium is providing some limited services to the far South Coast, but I absolutely want to acknowledge your point that there are gaps in regional

New South Wales that are not served by regional conservatoriums, and we would really love to see those gaps filled.

There may be other organisations who are working in those spaces. For instance, on the far South Coast, prior to this job, I was the executive director of the Four Winds festival in Bermagui, and we formed a major education program. It was funded entirely through philanthropy, and we were working in—it was within the region major. We were working in five local schools. By the time that program matured, Bermagui primary school actually engaged music teachers. So you can see how regional arts organisations who are committed to music education can also have an influence. It may be that there are partner organisations out there who could become part of the network.

Ms LIZA BUTLER: I know on the South Coast that there is a lack of music teachers. You have to get on a waiting list to access, whether it's piano, violin—like, there's only one violin teacher in Ulladulla and one in Moruya, for example, and none that I know of anywhere else, and you just cannot get in.

DAVID FRANCIS: That's exactly right. When I was working on the far South Coast, when we identified young people who had particular talents, often they were learning their instrument by Skype once they reached a certain level, and then the community were supporting them to come up to, for instance, Sydney Conservatorium or one of the regional conservatoriums. I said in my introduction there's definitely a mindset that comes into play here, and that mindset, particularly within that community on the far South Coast, is one that appreciates and values the arts. That community is highly creative. It's highly entrepreneurial. I can't say that's necessarily replicated across the whole of New South Wales, but what it needs are community leaders in communities across New South Wales who can engender that spirit and provide real inspiration to their communities to get engaged in music education, which is why I was saying the music leaders of the future need to be people who view themselves as much in the community arts leadership space as much as "I am a specialist trumpet teacher".

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Just moving on, I guess it's a similar issue but, to clarify, does each regional con offer courses in music teaching?

HAMISH TAIT: No. Because they are simply not equipped or funded to do so. Several of the regional conservatoriums have partnerships with, say, Central Queensland University, or the University of New England, whereby they can train local musicians into their tertiary program. For example, at the Riverina conservatorium there is a program which allows school leavers to do their Bachelor of Music through the regional conservatorium in Wagga Wagga without having to leave home. They can do an external studies program where they do their practical studies with a local teacher. They graduate with a Bachelor of Music after their three years. But what's also happening concurrently to that is that those teachers are then being put through an internal training program, which is training them how to become a music teacher.

That's partly because the program itself offers four units in a full bachelor's degree, which broadly covers levels of pedagogy. The degree programs that exist in Australia are very few and very far between that provide very, very specific studio, instrumental and vocal tuition as part of their programs. That's just one component of the problem. But, certainly, regional conservatoriums are very much talking within the network about the need for us to address this issue because, if we don't, we're going to run out of teachers.

A lot of regional conservatoriums, I can think of Young Regional Conservatorium, have been advertising for a strings teacher for nearly two years and had no applicants. Or they had one international applicant but, because of the immigration restrictions around the working visas, they couldn't afford the salary that was required to be able to pay them at even a basic level. I think one of the biggest concerns is the salary levels for instrumental teachers in regional areas—I can't speak for metropolitan situations, but certainly in the Riverina a teacher on a full-time contract working as a piano teacher, for example, will probably be earning \$60,000 to \$65,000 a year. Whereas, if they happen to have a Master of Teaching, a school will entice them out, because they're desperate for a music specialist as well. That teacher will be enticed out with a salary that can even in some cases double that. So the ability to attract and retain teachers of a standard capable of delivering this quality of music education is becoming harder and harder.

I have been a CEO in regional New South Wales, in regional conservatoriums, since 2000. In that time, the problem has become worse and worse and worse. We've been advertising for a saxophone/single reed teacher since December last year, and I've only just had an applicant in the last week. That sort of gives you a bit of an idea of just how low the supply is of teachers in this space.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: I'd just like to come back to the fact that everyone has a right to education, and it comes back to the rights and the privilege platform we were talking about. Everyone has a right to an education, and the creative arts is part of education, so it's a basic right. When you think about the numbers that

are allocated from the education department to conservatoriums, it's miniscule in terms of supplementing that right that people in regional New South Wales particularly—when they have access to a conservatorium, one of the 17 across New South Wales. It's a right, not a privilege, and there needs to be more work done, I believe, in that space in supporting the cons.

The CHAIR: Sorry, Dr Callinan, do you want to quickly say anything in addition, more broadly than just the regional conservatoriums?

TRACEY CALLINAN: Not very much, but I would just say about the sort of issues that are being raised that I think there are many, many different solutions. In looking at how to address some of these things it's not a one size fits all. It's maybe finding enough flexibility within the offers that are made for conservatoriums to then work to address these in a number of different ways. We've already heard of the example of the South Coast of New South Wales, which has been described very well. In many ways it's a hothouse of activity and yet there's a shortage of teachers.

But we have other areas where there is almost nothing, and yet people are asking for it. That requires a different response. I think we need to find ways of looking at solutions that can have a menu of different ways that—it could be that there is a mix of videoconferencing teaching and some face to face. It could be looking at how to find your partner organisations that are already active and giving them support and liaising in different ways. That's the main thing I would stress—that regional New South Wales does not look the same across the whole area. So building it in to have that flexibility is the way, I think, it has to be addressed.

The CHAIR: Thank you all for your evidence and for your time this afternoon. The secretariat will be in touch about any questions taken on notice or any further questions.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

(Short adjournment)

Ms MIA PATOULIOS, Chief Executive Officer, Sydney Youth Orchestras, sworn and affirmed

Mr JAMES PENSINI, Head of Orchestral Training and Artistic Programming, Sydney Youth Orchestras, sworn and affirmed

Ms FRANCES GEORGESON, General Manager, Australian Children's Music Foundation, affirmed and examined

Mr RORY ALCOCK, National Partnerships Manager, Australian Children's Music Foundation, affirmed and examined

The CHAIR: Welcome, everyone, and thank you for making the time to give evidence this afternoon. Would you all like to start by making a short statement?

MIA PATOULIOS: Thank you, Chair and Committee, for this opportunity to contribute to your important work. For more than 50 years Sydney Youth Orchestras has been and continues to be a place for young people to connect and create through orchestral music. We represent young people aged five to 25 from 300 schools and universities and 200 different communities across Greater Sydney and regional New South Wales. We are one of the largest orchestral training providers in Australia, with 15 orchestras, and one of the few that provide a pathway from beginner to pre-professional. We strongly believe in the power of music to change the lives and educational outcomes of all young people, regardless of their gender, ethnicity or socio-economic background.

As one of the oldest youth arts organisations in New South Wales, we can testify to the impact on the individual and the vital role youth arts plays in the sustainability of arts and music industries. The infinite possibilities created when young people are given the opportunity to participate in creative arts can and often do change lives. This universal capacity for music to create impact is evident from Broken Hill to Lismore, Bega to Granville. Active participation in music and arts provides young people with the building blocks to understand the world around them, connect with others from different cultures and economic backgrounds, listen, work as a team, and develop essential skills of creative thinking and problem-solving critical for success in the twenty-first century. It is well documented within research into the cognitive benefits that music has on the developing brain. It is clear why the world's leading education systems have music as a cornerstone. As highly skilled migration increases into Australia, so will the demand for an education system which offers music as its foundation.

We are already seeing challenges in the model and delivery of music education in New South Wales. Youth arts and community organisations are increasingly required to meet the demand without a secure funding model to match. These organisations need to work together with the education system and industry to put young people at the centre of what they do. We believe government can play a critical role. In our submission, we made four recommendations. Each of these are fiscally modest and can help government to achieve greater return on investment. These are to establish a bipartisan arts and education policy, expand structures and subsidise music education across the State via music hubs, recognise key youth arts organisations to drive sector development, and establish an innovation taskforce to examine new delivery models. We are here to answer your questions and we welcome the opportunity to be part of the conversation.

FRANCES GEORGESON: To the Chair and Committee members, thank you for the invitation and opportunity to provide input into the inquiry into arts and music education and training. The Australian Children's Music Foundation was founded 20 years ago by Don Spencer when he became aware that many primary schools didn't have a music teacher. For more than 20 years, our long-term music programs within low ICSEA schools and youth justice centres have unlocked hidden potential and changed life trajectories. It's more than music. Our programs have a tangible impact, proven to increase school attendance, self-esteem and resilience. I'm delighted that this Committee has been formed, as we believe that in order to ensure that every New South Wales child has a quality music education, it requires cross-party commitment to both acknowledging the inequity of access to a quality music education and agreeing on a practical plan, of which we hope to be a part of the solution.

In short, we believe that addressing the inequity gap can be achieved by: firstly, reshifting a predominant focus from STEM to STEAM via a clear definition of what a quality music education is, which includes a commitment to an hour a week of classroom teaching from K-8; secondly, addressing the skills and confidence gap that generalist music school teachers have in teaching music, through a combination of upskilling generalist teachers, increasing the number of music teachers, and building partnerships and allied support with musicians and organisations such as the ACMF, to place teaching musicians in the classroom with generalist teachers; and, thirdly, improving and embedding data collection on access to a quality music education in schools in order to track progress.

The CHAIR: The ACMF runs a program at one of my local schools, Granville South Public School, which they can't do for all students all year. Stages one and two are in the first half of the year and the later stages after that. How are you finding the capacity of the classroom teachers, after being in the classroom with your specialist teacher, to be able to continue music education for the half of the year when you're not available?

FRANCES GEORGESON: Our music program at Granville goes for two days a week and our goal is always to try to train the generalist teachers up. In Granville specifically or overall?

The CHAIR: Both.

FRANCES GEORGESON: It depends on the teacher and on which school we're in, but our success rate is probably about 70 per cent to have those generalist teachers continue the music program in the schools.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: I'm curious about the taskforce that you've mentioned in the recommendation. What would that be about? Obviously you suggest creating the taskforce so that the taskforce could investigate those mechanisms, but is there anything that you have in mind in terms of innovative teaching delivery options that either already exist and are working well or that you could imagine the taskforce investigating? It would be helpful to have commentary from all of the Committee witnesses.

MIA PATOULIOS: What we are seeing is that we have a very traditional model, which we have outlined in our submission, which really outlines a very ongoing sequential learning framework. We are also seeing, though, in a practical sense, that we will not be able to deliver that in New South Wales schools. That is really due to the skills shortage. So we actually do need to look innovatively at how we can actually address it. I think, if we hold on to the notion that we are able to somehow turn that shift around—we know that it takes ten years to get a musician even to a level where they can enter tertiary education. We're seeing it. We try to bring kids—as many as possible—through. It is going to have a significant lag in our ability to actually increase those teacher numbers. What we would be proposing is that it will take the regional conservatoriums and it will take organisations like us—organisations that focus on youth arts specifically, the not-for-profit sector and community organisations—together, to actually start plotting and mapping what is happening, what are good models and what can then be replicated and drawn across.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Is that drawing on EdTech, for example?

MIA PATOULIOS: Absolutely. Sydney Youth Orchestras, pre-COVID, were looking at this challenge and looking at how we could put an instrumental music program into a low SES school. We know that there is a significant decrease in the number of kids learning instruments in Western Sydney. This was our challenge. We started the Western Sydney Youth Orchestra. We thought, "Let's try and tackle this." COVID hit. We didn't want to give back any money to the lovely foundation that had supported that program, so what we invested in was a digital resource to help support the teaching of instrumental music. It doesn't replace the teacher, but what it does do is provide a framework and 480 videos that actually scaffolds the first year of learning. It is looking at things like that that we were—because what we were hearing, when we were touring regionally and when we were in Western Sydney, was that you had teachers that were teaching off-instrument. I am a violin teacher, but I am actually teaching all the cellos, double basses et cetera. These were a video resource that could actually be applied, and it has been successful. At the Hume Con, we have a flute teacher who is now successfully teaching clarinet, when she never felt confident to before that. I think it is those sorts of solutions that we need to come together on.

JAMES PENSINI: And just further to that, on the concept of the taskforce, I think it has become obvious over the course of the day that there is remarkable unanimity in the sector and things that are being identified across the course of the day. But it is simple things like, even, what is a music teacher? We throw the term around—music teacher—but, around the State, it is used in very different ways. Does that mean a private instrumental teacher? Does that mean a classroom accredited teacher? Does that mean someone who can read musical notation? Does that mean someone who can teach music extension in a school? We are not talking necessarily about the same things, not that any of those things are a problem, but there is a disconnect across the whole sector about what we're even talking about: which parts are registered, which parts are accredited, which parts are trackable, and which parts have child protection implications.

All of this, really, is being addressed in excellent ways in lots of places, but in some places it's just not at all. So I think, as you can see from the people around here today, there is a will to do these things. But I think government helping, like we did in the response to COVID—we brought all of these organisations together and we haven't really been together since, until today. But there is a chance there to use the sector to set and to readdress some of these basic issues of what we are talking about, even in terms of delivery of music education.

RORY ALCOCK: I'd like to second that. I don't think there is, as Tracey said in the previous panel, a one-size-fits-all solution, and I would like to second that. I think it is about looking at a range of solutions. Just

even specific to the Australian Children's Music Foundation, our preferred model is teaching a musician in the classroom with a generalist teacher, long-term, week in, week out, but that is not practical in every situation. I can think of an example in the Riverina, in Hillston and surrounds, where we were not able to recruit a music teacher or even a specialist musician to go into class local to that area. So our model there is for 15 years we have been sending a specialist musician up there for one to two weeks a term—initial teacher training and then going up every one to two weeks every term to set the start of the term, in terms of teaching the class, but then working with each teacher at Hillston and surrounds in terms of their musical capability and the level of musical competency within their class to work out a lesson plan for the remainder of the term. I think that flexibility is really important.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Do you ever use digital mechanisms to deliver information or training through your programs?

FRANCES GEORGESON: No. Basically our model is to have the teaching musician in the classroom. I mean, there may be things used in that environment on that day, but no. We did, through COVID, create teaching resources, but our model is to have the teacher in the classroom.

MIA PATOULIOS: Just to add to that, we deliver musical theory lessons live, through a live stream, to 400 children every week. We are using and looking at the learnings out of COVID and how we can actually increase that. We also live stream our rehearsals for regionally-based players as well.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Those lessons to 400 students, are they in line with the curriculum or are they extracurricular?

MIA PATOULIOS: They're extracurricular and focused on orchestral theory programs.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Naturally.

Dr JOE McGIRR: I want to get to the Australian Children's Music Foundation. I'm going to cover some material we have covered already today. In your submission you quote from a study published in 2018:

Two thirds of Australian Primary Schools and one-third of secondary students do not have access to any school music education.

Does that apply to New South Wales today? I am interested in both groups' reflections on why we are at that point now, keeping in mind that there are curriculum objectives that are supposed to be ticked off and there is a curriculum that is supposed to be implemented.

RORY ALCOCK: Could I definitively say that those exact percentages apply to New South Wales? No, but I think you could take it as indicative that there is a real problem. I think, as we heard from previous panels, the absence of a definition of what is a quality music education is part of the problem, because current reporting mechanisms allow for the ability to interpret meeting the outcomes of the curriculum. It's open to interpretation. There are some pockets of excellence across the State, but there are also situations where schools, because of a skills and confidence gap, their ability to tick the outcomes means that they can deliver—I think an example that has been used plenty of times is—potentially half an hour for one term a year, and the quality of what is being delivered is unknown. I think the real call here is about the improvement of the data collection. It needs to be that definition of what a quality music education is and then survey questions that are able to elicit whether that's being met or not.

Dr JOE McGIRR: You also mentioned your example of Hillston. You have not used EdTech or remote. You have relied on person to person, but you've found innovative ways of doing that. In that case it is not quite a fly-in fly-out model; it's a sort of parachuted in for residency for a bit, which does create a benefit locally. I think you use it to build strategic capability there.

RORY ALCOCK: Yes.

Dr JOE McGIRR: Have you partnered with Regional Conservatoriums in any of that work in regional New South Wales?

FRANCES GEORGESON: No, we have not. We haven't endeavoured to do that. I think the last time we had conversations with them was about three years ago, and we were unsuccessful.

Dr JOE McGIRR: Was that just a capability issue, on one part or the other?

FRANCES GEORGESON: I think it was a financial issue. Yes, financial and it wasn't within the realms of their organisation to be giving funding to us.

Dr JOE MCGIRR: My thinking that comes from that relates to the music hubs concept that was developed in the submission and the presentation from the Youth Orchestras group. It seems to me that if you have a range of organisations located in different spots, if there is some way of bringing those city and rural and Western Sydney organisations together, with a focus on building capacity in those regions rather than simply sending a service out, there may be value in that. Do you want to comment on that?

JAMES PENSINI: Yes, sure. The hub model was very much based on our successes in working with the regional conservatoriums network over a period of time, particularly through regional touring and various other outreach activities. Like has been mentioned, they play really important roles in their communities. We wish they were all around the State. For example, we work in Broken Hill. We do quite a bit of work in Broken Hill and Wilcannia. There is simply no musical support like that. There are, of course, other areas around the State—not through anyone not wanting to be there, of course, but that model itself we see as a really powerful way of leveraging their place in the community.

If you have more specialist music teachers in there, they can teach in the primary schools, they can teach in the high schools, they can capacity build the teachers in those areas, and they can help to organise touring and regional activities from State significant organisations—really to play that coordination role and also to be able to provide salaries and employment that is appealing for people to go out and work full-time in these communities. Maybe they teach a bit of trumpet; they do a little bit of conducting; they work in schools. You start to change the model by really investing in them.

We called them hubs simply to not tie them necessarily to the conservatorium name or the exact model, but just having that place also helps organisations like us when we say, "We have a space and the opportunity to do some regional outreach." We can partner with very clear organisations. We are not duplicating resources; we are really making sure that what we provide is targeted to the needs of those communities as well. It is really an expansion more than any kind of revolution.

MIA PATOULIOS: I think we see the importance of the conservatoriums within those communities, and it feels that it is very lacking in Western Sydney to have a centralised place where parents can go, and they know that the teachers meet a minimum standard, that there is subsidised support for venue hire for teachers to operate within, and that there is an administrative support network and framework around that. To not have that in Western Sydney, with the largest population of young people, it dilutes, and people are really struggling to find where that is. The Penrith Conservatorium of Music does a fantastic job, but it is a very small provider in a very big region. As we know, just like regional New South Wales is very diverse, Western Sydney also is. To have a large presence and focus around music education would also give those schools somewhere to be supported as well.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: Thank you for your contribution and your submissions. It seems like there is a common theme that the creative arts—music, drama, performing and visual—are significant contributors to the wellbeing and growth of our students. Why do you think there is such a disparity in terms of the attention paid to it by the Department of Education?

JAMES PENSINI: I am happy to answer that. Specifically, it is because there are wonderful things that still happen. There are wonderful musical outcomes, there are wonderful creative arts outcomes all around the State because a lot of people are working a lot harder than they should have to make these things happen, because we value it and see it as important. There are wonderful things that happen everywhere, but they are harder to create than they should be, and they are inequitable. There are huge barriers to access, and a lot of it has been—I will say this nicely—papered over for a long time. As an example—I will use my own example—I started at a Western Sydney school learning trumpet because it was the only instrument left there, so "You will learn the trumpet." That's fine and great, but that was the music education in that school.

We didn't have any other music education; we had that band program. The band program was good. I was lucky; I had a really quality teacher there that taught me my instrument as well. From that band program we have the principal trumpeter of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, we have myself, and we have the director of music at The King's School just simply from that one school program. That program no longer exists anymore. That is just one little example, but that band program was covering up the fact that there were no other musical activities in that school.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: Why do you think the program doesn't exist anymore?

JAMES PENSINI: The teacher retired and it relied on one person doing a really great job. Also, all of us left to pursue other opportunities. We still go back and help that school in various different workshops.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: Should the emphasis be on the pipeline of teachers coming through in terms of music?

JAMES PENSINI: Absolutely. Teacher outcomes affect student outcomes. You've probably seen in our submission, we have no shortage of people looking for our services at SYO. That's partly to do with what's happening in schools and a multitude of reasons but, simply—we've heard about it from the regional con network—it is the same problem in Sydney. It's obviously different goalposts, but the shortage of really quality music educators—however you define quality—is really important.

The other thing that I would put in there, when we're talking about ensemble music education, it's really all but impossible to run ensemble music programs without the ability to read musical notation. It's our communication with composers. That's not to discredit other art forms but, when we're talking about large-scale music education, it's all but impossible to deliver without being able to talk to the composer directly to pass on to the students. That's why we're seeing changes. We're seeing the Catholic schools sector investing really heavily in the learning outcomes that we know come through music. That is then a bit of a brain drain from the department schools that were then delivering those programs. It's kind of a perfect storm, if you put it that way, of why things are bubbling to the surface now: We have great research, we have things moving at a systemic level and we have huge demand from students.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: In terms of an orchestral component, you can't fake it 'til you make it, but some musos can! If there was a message you'd give to the education department about boosting teacher numbers and resourcing and upskilling them, what would it be?

JAMES PENSINI: To the Department of Education? I love the Department of Education.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: We all do.

JAMES PENSINI: I'm a product of the Department of Education, but they haven't been given the rope they need to be able to actually make this happen. Without the ability to employ specialist music teachers in primary schools—you literally just can't even employ one.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: What does the rope look like?

JAMES PENSINI: In the broadest sense, it's all the things that Alberts were talking about this morning—that everyone has been talking about—this sequential, quality music education in primary schools. It's also the ability to employ people to run instrumental music programs in schools. The Catholic schools have made it happen. Independent schools have made it happen. There is nothing happening in government schools in terms of—any student that learns an instrument in a government school is a public-private partnership with that family. There are no dollars invested in instrumental music education for that student to start learning that instrument.

Dr JOE McGIRR: Can I explore this a bit further? This is a really important line of questioning, because we've also heard that the tertiary institutions aren't training people to teach music, that they're not being employed in the schools and there's a big focus on STEM. The whole system is geared towards NAPLAN and STEM. I think they're all connected. The funding of the universities is tied to jobs and job outcomes, so the funding for arts courses is reduced. They all build on each other, so eventually—bang—everyone has gone. The people who have been doing the hard yards for so long on a pro bono basis, once they go, the programs collapse.

JAMES PENSINI: Yes.

Dr JOE McGIRR: You almost need to convince the system that it should be investing in this to change that to get all of those other activities working—teacher education, employment, curriculum, monitoring, reporting on outcomes and so on. What's interesting about what you just said is that the independent and Catholic schools have seen the value and are investing in this. I presume that's because they see a link between arts and music education and outcomes in terms of literacy and numeracy.

JAMES PENSINI: Absolutely.

Dr JOE McGIRR: I'm just postulating that. Maybe the important point here is to nail that for the public system, that it isn't a zero-sum game. It's not either/or, that one would support the other. I'm interested in your reflections.

MIA PATOULIOS: I think what's also a challenge is when instrumental music and ensemble music-making is no longer in the curriculum. They're the skills that make really great music teachers. When that's being removed, it then becomes, "We don't have to provide those things within schools." It's not a requirement of the curriculum. It is really reliant on programs like ours, on regional conservatoriums and on independent instrumental teachers to actually prop up all of those things, when we know that people who play instruments at a really high level make some of the best music teachers.

Actually, within the curriculum, there isn't the framework for that to necessarily happen on an instrument. What we are finding, particularly, say, in Western Sydney, is that there are a lot of music teachers that are coming through not being able to read notated music. They play piano, voice and guitar. What tends to happen is that they went to a school where the only things that were offered were piano, voice and guitar and they didn't necessarily know how to notate music either. Generationally, we are seeing that cycle continuing. Instrumental music is then not actually being able to be offered because they are not actually coming through that process.

The CHAIR: Can we get back to the question. I am not sure if I understood you correctly. You are saying that there are people coming through as music teachers who can't read music?

JAMES PENSINI: Correct.

MIA PATOULIOS: Correct.

The CHAIR: How did they graduate?

JAMES PENSINI: I don't run the tertiary sector. To your point about the investment that you were talking about, this is very Sydney based but the Catholic diocese and particularly independent schools longstanding have not just invested in the classroom curriculum component—that's all but a given—but it is also those opportunities for practical music making with their peers. That is another option of what is being talked about today. What is not being delivered at all, systemically, is the curriculum classroom side. We are talking about those other opportunities to then have music making with your peers. Both of those sectors have invested in both of those models—curriculum and cocurricular, if you want to call it that. Government schools, of course, have some wonderful cocurricular programs, but they are funded by parents or some allocation that the principal finds to direct to cocurricular. There are no funded cocurricular government programs.

RORY ALCOCK: Building on what James and Mia have said, and in response to Mr Anderson's question in terms of the Department of Education, part of it is absolutely a workforce. I think we both have talked a little bit about the blend of solutions to that, some longer term and some shorter term. But it is also that steer from the Department of Education about defining what a quality music education is and a steer in terms of a time component that should be taught. There are some differences in opinion about whether that is an hour or half an hour. That is there for mathematics and that is there for English but it is not there for music. It is bundled up with the creative arts more broadly. I think, at the moment, we have heard from James about pockets of excellence and we know about pockets of excellence, but it's reliant, really, on a principal that has a firm belief and understanding of the benefits of music education. A system that is relying purely on one individual's understanding is a system that is going to be a patchwork of quality or not. I think that compounds that inequity piece. My response to Mr Anderson would be that it needs that steer from the Department of Education as well as investment in work force.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: Totally agree.

The CHAIR: I have one last question to Sydney Youth Orchestras before we wrap up. Going back to your suggestion that we really need a regional conservatorium in Western Sydney—

JAMES PENSINI: Or multiple.

The CHAIR: Should or could that cover non-western forms of classical music as well, such as the Indian tradition, Chinese, Arabic and Ottoman? If it's all white, parents may not be as interested as if it covered the full gamut of cultural backgrounds in Western Sydney.

MIA PATOULIOS: Absolutely. I think it's a real disservice that we don't actually have those traditions being taught in a formal sense too. I think that would strengthen the orchestral sector, particularly as an industry, if we actually had musicians that were coming through in a very structured way in those traditions as well. It isn't for want of performing those works but often it is hard to find players that, for example, can read notated music, which is part of that. How are you then able to play this work as an orchestra? Yes, we would absolutely welcome that.

The CHAIR: Last year I went to a Brandenburg production of Ottoman Baroque music and they had a Turkish—I can't remember the name of the instrument. You probably know what it is. It's big and has strings and sits flat. It's probably a terrible description, but he teaches that instrument in Western Sydney.

JAMES PENSINI: To that point, all of the regional conservatoriums are governed and represent their communities, so it would be a total misstep. There's just a gaping hole there. We started the Western Sydney Youth Orchestra to start the conversation, but there is just so much that could be done there and so many exciting things that could be done that have never been done before, not measuring success by "Can we fit a concert grand piano on to do a piano concerto?" but, like you're mentioning, "Can we do innovative things across cultures that

have never been done before?" As silly as it sounds, the space, that home and that place creates those conversations that are just non-existent.

The CHAIR: Thank you all very much. The secretariat will contact you about any questions taken on notice or any further questions.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

Professor MATTHEW HINDSON, Acting Dean and Head of School and Associate Dean Education, Sydney Conservatorium of Music, affirmed and examined

Dr JADE O'REGAN, Program Leader in Contemporary Music Practice, and Lecturer in Contemporary Music, Sydney Conservatorium of Music, affirmed and examined

Mr ALEX MASSO, Executive Officer, Australian Music Association, affirmed and examined

The CHAIR: Thank you all for making the time to give evidence. Would you all like to start by making a short statement?

MATTHEW HINDSON: The Sydney Conservatorium of Music, which we call the SCM, is part of the University of Sydney. It regards itself as the largest and best tertiary music education institution in New South Wales and in Australia. This is based on the number of students studying music degrees, from undergraduate to postgraduate, which is about 1,500 this year; the breadth of our curriculum, which goes from performance to composition, contemporary music, musicology and music education; and the continued response from our enrolled students, who almost always rate the education received at the Sydney conservatorium as the highest of any faculty within the University of Sydney.

The success of the conservatorium depends largely on there being a successful ecosystem in music education throughout the State, so it's wonderful to be a part of this conversation today. It's particularly the case because most students come to us from New South Wales, although we do attract interstate and international students. We need a successful primary and secondary music education sector to encourage students who may wish to have a further career in music. We feel this is extremely important and it's one reason why we so strongly support our music education students. They are the ones who will be going into our school classrooms teaching the next generation. Many other of our graduates are also involved in teaching, including private teaching, as part of their portfolio careers. The conservatorium enrolls all its students through an audition or interview plus portfolio process. This is in addition to the minimum ATAR requirement of 70 plus additional factors required in the case of music education degrees.

Of course, it's no surprise that the SCM are strong advocates of the merits of a good music education—we would say that. However, if you'll indulge me to tell a personal, very recent anecdote, my daughter is nine years old and yesterday came home from school buzzing with energy. I asked if she had a good day at school, and she said that in her music class she worked in a group of four children—most of whom she hadn't worked with before—to create a new piece of music based on the Dreamtime. She described how she really enjoyed working together with others, working collaboratively to come up with a result that took everyone's ideas into consideration so that everyone was happy. Basically, my daughter was describing a group work process. The class teacher was using music to teach broader skills, collaboration, cultural competence, influence and leadership.

Music is inherently a collaborative art form that is based around successful communication. That's why it's so important that we can have as many students involved in music as we can—I know that backs up a lot of the statements that have been made earlier in the hearing today—not just listening, although that is essential, but also doing, making and creating. The New South Wales music syllabus, particularly at the HSC, is good at this, as are the regional conservatoriums, of providing a focus point for music study. We just hope and wish that every student in New South Wales will have opportunities to learn and grow such skills, as my daughter did yesterday, through the creative arts.

JADE O'REGAN: Thank you, Matthew. I would just like to second that opening statement. As we are both colleagues from the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, so I guess I second what Matthew has said there. Also, to add that my contribution to the Sydney Conservatorium is that I have been part of a new degree that focuses on contemporary music and specialises in different kinds of practice. I would like to add to what Matthew is saying, that our students can come from all different parts of New South Wales and beyond, and these new degrees—sorry, can you give me one second while I catch my breath.

I would just like to second the importance of the teaching and learning of all different kinds of music and music practices. I feel like our work at the conservatorium is doing that particularly well at the moment, as well as a lot of other institutions around Sydney and further into New South Wales with regional conservatoriums of music. I am really passionate about the idea of students, when they come to tertiary study, to be able to engage in a broad variety of music types and also to be concentrating on great transferrable skills like collaboration and establishing communities. Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this inquiry.

ALEX MASSO: The Australian Music Association, or AMA, is the industry association for music products. Our members are wholesalers, retailers, manufacturers and associated businesses with musical

instruments, pro audio, print music accessories and so on. Many of them are involved in music education, directly and indirectly. Our range of interests includes wood regulation, skills and occupations, live music, radio frequency spectrum, tariffs, competition policy and much more. But our central concern is the provision of music education to children in Australia. When I talk to our members and if I go to a music store—a lot of them are small business owners—and ask them what can we do for their business, what can we do to support them, they'll usually tell me, "We need more people making music and we need more kids accessing good quality music education." We need more to start and fewer to quit. That's our motto.

In addition to my work for the AMA, just for context, I have a strong personal connection to music education in New South Wales. I've worked as a music tutor in schools. I was in a school this morning teaching percussion, in fact. For 17 years I've worked at a regional conservatorium. My two children attend a public school. I've been involved in the P&C. As a young person my life and career was shaped by my experience with music education. That included the public schools I went to; the regional con; regional music ensembles, which haven't been mentioned much today; the arts unit at a regional con; community music groups; interactions with the industry; and also Sydney Con—it's my alma mater.

We made a recommendation about many issues. We wrote a pretty substantial submission. I just want to summarise some of them. I'd like to talk about some of them more. Number one, we need an action plan for music education in New South Wales with ambitious targets and resourcing. We want ambitious but achievable standards. That includes all children having access to a minimum amount of music education every week throughout the primary school years. We think instrumental music tuition and co-curricular programs should be taken seriously by the public school system. We want to see—number three, develop policy solutions for particular areas such as employment pathways for music specialists. Suitable school facilities—so facilities that are suitable for the purposes we expect them to be used for, like music storerooms and stages that are big enough and so on.

We want to see targeted funding in the areas of grants for schools and targeted fee relief for music programs. We want to see some addressing workforce capability issues. That includes generalist and specialist—they have been mentioned a lot today—tutors and conductors. We also have issues in our industry with finding technicians for musical instruments. That's a big issue for us and we don't even have the training pathways, let alone the people to do them. I wrote in our submission about the function of regional cons; private providers of musical education, like music stores and tuition businesses; arts organisations; community groups, being like the sporting clubs of music. They play a complementary role to the school system and they are essential. Only some of these are supported by government and many of them are actually independently contributing to music education in New South Wales.

A government or parliamentary inquiry into music education like this is a once-in-a-generation opportunity. The 2005 national review of music education highlighted many of the issues that you'll read about in the submissions and you're hearing about today. But not enough has been done to improve the situation. Some things have actually deteriorated. A child born at the time of that review would have finished school by now, so we actually need to see some action for this policy. We're really keen to see that policy development and we're excited to be part of the process. Thank you.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: I would love to speak about the Bachelor of Music education. It's pretty worrying, after all the evidence that we've heard today, that the only offering of that bachelor degree is at the con. I'm wondering how many students are you getting through each year.

MATTHEW HINDSON: I can speak to that. We have about 70 apply every year to come into first year. That's an average over the last three years. Then by the time—they all have to do an audition or portfolio. Some are knocked out at that first stage because they won't have the ability to finish. Then the ATAR requirements come into place, including that they have to have three band 5s in their HSC, including in English. By the time that happens, we'd probably get about, I'd say, 25 in the Bachelor of Music (Music Education) per year. We also get some students who transfer across from the other degrees into that further on in their degree. In addition, we have a Master of Teaching degree for students who've done another music degree who then want to become teachers, and there'd be about 35 total in that enrolment—so about 135 students studying a Bachelor of Music or a Master of Teaching.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: At one time. Are those requirements for the music education entry the same or similar to other teaching degrees—I mean, apart from the music aspect? For example, the band 5s—is that what other education degrees require?

MATTHEW HINDSON: You mean in other institutions?

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Other institutions.

MATTHEW HINDSON: I'm not sure. They are standard things that are mandated by NESA for us. So I can't speak to other bachelor degrees. I just know we have to follow those. It is problematic in that we have so many people. In addition to that, we also interview the incoming students to make sure they're suited to the profession. It is heartbreaking when you get students who have got two band 5s and you can tell they'd be a good teacher but they don't meet that requirement. We often say, "Why don't you go off and do another degree and reaudition?", or, "Do a year somewhere out of university and another degree and then reapply." There is strong interest in becoming a music teacher. I must say that it always warms my heart to see that. I often ask them, "Why are you interested in this?" Often, they have had a great music teacher at school or they just love music and want to be involved in communicating that to others.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Where do those students usually end up after they graduate? Do you have any visibility over that?

MATTHEW HINDSON: We have a very fortunate situation in that our graduates are very highly prized. Particularly in recent years we've found that the majority of graduating students actually get a job in a school before they've even graduated. They have job offers because the standard is very high and we have fantastic staff. I think we have a fantastic curriculum, which does include, for all students, that they have to learn to read music, so I don't know where that information is coming from. All students have to do music skills—so theory and aural training. It's a Bachelor of Music Education, so half of the degree is specialising in their specialty area—be that performance, contemporary music, like Jade's students, or composition—and the other half of the degree is about music education subjects in particular. But they always relate back to music. Our graduates are very strong. The employment rate is through the roof for our graduates.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: But 60 people graduating each year doesn't seem like very much considering the full quantum of teachers in other areas that are graduating every year.

MATTHEW HINDSON: Yes. Should there be more? It'd be nice if we could have more of those 70 who applied come through.

Dr JOE MCGIRR: What other courses are available, apart from your course, if someone wants to do music education at the tertiary level?

MATTHEW HINDSON: My understanding is that we have the only undergraduate Bachelor of Music Education.

Dr JOE MCGIRR: That was my understanding, so I just wanted to confirm that. To add to Ms Munro's point, that means that there's 60 people graduating a year. It's no wonder they're getting jobs, given the demand we've heard about, even from a system that doesn't really value it.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: Could I just clarify, is that 60 with a master's or 60 with a Bachelor of Music?

MATTHEW HINDSON: I wouldn't say it's 60. I think it's probably closer to 40 per year.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: By the time they get to the end of the course?

MATTHEW HINDSON: Yes. I'd say 25 undergraduate and 15 postgraduate on average.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: Would the remainder of them go into orchestral programs? Would they go to the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, for example? Where would they go?

MATTHEW HINDSON: Are you talking about people doing music degrees?

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: Yes.

MATTHEW HINDSON: It depends what degree they do. If you're a classical music performer, we've had great success in terms of students gaining positions with orchestras. A lot of people go on to further study to do a master's. That's very common. I think 40 per cent of our students go on to further study.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: Not a Master of Teaching but a master's further in music?

MATTHEW HINDSON: Yes. That's domestically and internationally. There's a great tradition of students doing their undergraduate degree at a place like Sydney and then deciding to go and study further on. Relevant to this Committee, a lot of those students will have portfolio careers. A lot of students are involved in teaching, which is why, for example, in our performance degree, all students must do a unit based on teaching, around pedagogy for their instrument. That's compulsory for all of our students because we recognise—in fact, a lot of the students are already teaching. We live in Sydney, at this conservatorium, and life is expensive.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: You're doing your part in terms of feeding that pipeline back into the education system.

MATTHEW HINDSON: I believe we are not just doing our part, but we do it well. I think the standard of students that are graduating from the conservatorium is very high.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Do you get Federal funding as well because you are part of the University of Sydney?

MATTHEW HINDSON: We don't get specialist funding, no. We get the normal funding that goes to universities.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: But we heard earlier from the regional conservatoriums that they are not getting any Federal funding; it is fully State Government and then private pathways.

MATTHEW HINDSON: Yes. We're part of the University of Sydney, so whatever funding goes to them is then allocated within the university system to come to us. I am very grateful that the University of Sydney sees the value in what we do and supports us in that way.

Dr JOE McGIRR: Do you have any idea of the number of graduates who go to the private school system or the public school system?

MATTHEW HINDSON: I don't have that data. I can get it if you like.

Dr JOE McGIRR: If you have the data, that would be interesting.

Ms LIZA BUTLER: Do they stay city-based, or do they go regional?

MATTHEW HINDSON: I'd say it's a mix. We've had some really amazing students go regional recently. There is one, for example, who has been working in Lightning Ridge for quite a number of years, really transforming the place and doing an amazing job. We think it is really important to have a good link with the regional conservatoriums because we think they do a really good job. We fund our students to go there and do internships and placements there. We have got some philanthropic support to do that. One of the reasons, apart from the fact that it is great for students to get that experience, is to help students realise that, as you heard from some of our colleagues from the regional conservatoriums—it is really important that people realise there is a potential career there in the regional conservatoriums in regional New South Wales. So many of those conservatoriums do an amazing job, but if you have just grown up in Sydney and Sydney is all you know in terms of that, we think it is really important both to contribute to the conservatoriums there but also for our students to make that connection to future possible careers for them, should they so wish.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: Can I explore the Lightning Ridge component? What are they doing in Lightning Ridge?

MATTHEW HINDSON: The student, Lucas, who is a graduate of our music education degree, did his prac teaching at Lightning Ridge and he got the bug. I remember speaking to him and saying, "How did you find it?", because he grew up in Parramatta and it was his first time being somewhere like that. He really felt that he could make a difference in that community. When he got there I was talking to him, and he said that the problem they found, for example, in Lightning Ridge, is that teachers would stay for a few years and then go. So the community was like, "Why should we care about you if you are going to be a fly-in, fly-out, see-you-later sort of person?" He's taken that as a challenge, and we have had students go there recently to actually work with him now.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: So he is drawing them out.

MATTHEW HINDSON: That's right.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: That is great!

MATTHEW HINDSON: And he's actually making a difference. He's established a choir there now. It's part of the town.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: Is that the public school or high school?

MATTHEW HINDSON: Public school, I believe. I am not sure. I am not sure if there are two schools there or not.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: That is excellent. It's a classic example of give them a taste of what happens out west and then you can take a very high-quality teacher out there to be able to impart that. And if they fall in love with the place and stay, then the benefits are really felt.

Dr JOE MCGIRR: That is true but, of 40 graduates a year, my guess is that more than 35 will end up working in Sydney, and my guess would be they would be snapped up by private schools. I would be really interested in data on that because you are exactly right about that story and the inspiration of it, but we are commenting on it because it is an expectation to what is going on. This is not a criticism of your program, but it is a reflection on what we are trying to grapple with in the inquiry here. If the system doesn't have teachers coming through, regional towns won't have people like that coming to them.

Ms LIZA BUTLER: You have all got careers in music education. From when you were growing up and getting into music, has something changed so that not as many people are having those the opportunities? How did you all get—was it through school or was it through parents giving you private lessons? What has changed?

MATTHEW HINDSON: I grew up in Shellharbour, so up in Wollongong.

Ms LIZA BUTLER: Barbara is your mother?

MATTHEW HINDSON: Yes.

Ms LIZA BUTLER: I baby sat you when you were a child.

MATTHEW HINDSON: I didn't know that was going to come out. Well, there you go.

Ms LIZA BUTLER: I wondered. Well, I know your story.

MATTHEW HINDSON: I wouldn't mind saying, though, because—

Ms LIZA BUTLER: The Suzuki method, very early.

MATTHEW HINDSON: The Suzuki method. I grew up playing the violin because a violin teacher came to Kiama preschool, gave a demonstration and said, "Who wants to learn the violin?" I said, "Yes, I'll do it." So I grew up learning the violin.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: Is that *Busy Busy Stop Stop*?

Ms LIZA BUTLER: Yes, it is.

MATTHEW HINDSON: It was. So you've done it too?

Ms LIZA BUTLER: I learnt it too.

MATTHEW HINDSON: Then I went to high school. The music class, if I can call it that—no offence to the high school that I went to, but there was no music really in the school. There was a brass band program.

Ms LIZA BUTLER: Was that Kiama then?

MATTHEW HINDSON: No, that was another school in Wollongong—a Catholic school. In fact, I had a very unhappy high school experience because music wasn't the done thing. But Wollongong Conservatorium saved me. I used to go there and have lessons, and do theory classes and orchestra and all that sort of stuff after school. I got my first composition lessons there. If it wasn't for Wollongong Conservatorium—I write music for orchestras and ballet companies all around the world. It's a big part of my job. I wouldn't be where I am today had it not been for that. That's absolutely true. I started a job as a computer programmer at BHP at Port Kembla and I also applied to Sydney Uni to do music. I got in and it changed my life. I always say to the students who are applying—and actually to their parents, which is more important sometimes—that you follow your heart. Music is a massive industry in Australia, a multibillion-dollar industry. It has tremendous opportunities for people. Hence, I'm passionate about music education. I've talked enough, actually.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: Great story.

ALEX MASSO: Can I give some personal experience of the cohort of people who come through a place like this and enter the field as professionals? My class finished in 2007, so we are almost 20 years out of the con. Almost all of the 20 people in my cohort are still active in music. One of them runs Adelaide Youth Orchestra—Mia's colleague. One of them owns a music store, one of our members. One of them teaches at the Sydney Con. One of them is the head of music at a private school and runs a band program at a public school. A lot of them are teaching music. Most of them are private tutors. Almost all of them, I would say, are private tutors. Probably most of them earn money in education. A couple work in a regional con.

That is the flavour of career paths after a non-education performance degree. There is work there and a lot of people—it's probably typical still, I would say—are coming out of places like Sydney Con as professional musicians. They are able to find work. There is a good supply and there are parts for them. But I think the challenge for the classroom teachers is a different thing. There is quite a different challenge there and a lot of them are being absorbed now by the Catholic system. Even in the peripatetic teachers, a lot of them used to go into this public school for an hour and this public school for two hours, and this one for three hours. Amadeus came and said, "I'll give you a job for four days a week. Do you want it? I'll give you a salary." They said, "Okay, sure, I'll take it," because they don't want to do all the bits and pieces. That has actually absorbed a lot of the people and they're getting classroom teachers, which is great. They're providing jobs, but I think there is a challenge at the moment.

There is a lot of growth in that sector. Our members are seeing it because they are providing instruments. I put evidence in our submission of the typical breakdown for one retailer. They told me that 20 per cent of sales go to public sector, 20 per cent to Catholic and 60 to independent; the past few years it has been 60 per cent in Catholic schools. It's huge. One member told me that they had to call them up and say, "Are you sure this is the number? Shouldn't it be one or two less zeros on the number of instruments you ordered?", because it was just so big. There is a particular thing at the moment with that sector expanding, which is a great thing for those kids. They are very lucky, but it is challenging. I don't want to speak for them, but they have said too that they've got challenges finding classroom teachers.

The CHAIR: I think we need to wrap up now. Thank you all very much for your evidence. The secretariat will contact you in relation to questions taken on notice or any further questions.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

Ms ANNE LOXLEY, Executive Director, Arts and Cultural Exchange, Member, Western Sydney Arts Alliance Working Group, affirmed and examined

Ms LEILA el RAYES, Youth Engagement Producer, Arts and Cultural Exchange, affirmed and examined

Mr BRETT ADLINGTON, Chief Executive Officer, Museums and Galleries of NSW, affirmed and examined

The CHAIR: Thank you very much, everyone, for coming in this afternoon. This is our last session for the afternoon. Thank you for taking the time to give evidence. Would you all like to begin with a short statement?

ANNE LOXLEY: Sure. I am very happy to speak with you today in my capacity as Executive Director of Arts and Cultural Exchange and also in my capacity as a member of the Western Sydney Arts Alliance Working Group. We represent over 40 arts and cultural institutions in Western Sydney and, in many ways, the ACE story is emblematic of the broader cultural sector in Western Sydney in the role that we play in arts and music education in Western Sydney. The alliance has written and submitted a paper to this inquiry, and we would like to bring the group to notice, in case you are unaware, that the Crown and Packer family foundations, which have been investing in arts and music education in Western Sydney for the last 10 years to the total of \$100 million, are finishing this year. That will significantly impact our work, where we're making really significant contributions to the upskilling of Western Sydney's young people.

Arts and cultural institutions are very well placed to play a big role in arts education. In Western Sydney, we are particularly skilled in creating and maintaining culturally safe spaces and working with people from First Nations, socio-economic disadvantage, and culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. One of the things I'd like to note for one moment is that so many of the talented young people from CALD backgrounds that we have the privilege of working with are coming to us with a skill set that includes a first degree in law. It's only once they've done a degree like that that they can become creatives. I could name so many talents in that space.

We fervently believe in maintaining the investment in the small-to-medium arts and cultural sector in Western Sydney. Places like ACE play a very big role in place-based education for people to be creating their own cultural events, their own exhibitions, their own music events with their own art and their own music and also playing producing roles. At ACE we also play a really big role in upskilling early career screen creatives from marginalised and diverse backgrounds, both in below-the-line crew training and in creative skills in the screen industry. We would ask the inquiry to recognise the role of the arts and cultural sector in Western Sydney.

Obviously I know that you know the importance of the work of the schools. There's a lot that we do at ACE—and my colleagues across Western Sydney—partnering with schools and with tertiary education and with other community groups. It would be so beneficial if partnerships were streamlined with the schools and with the other institutions so that organisations like ours were able to do our work more easily. There's a lot to be said for artists-in-residence or musicians-in-residence in schools to be promoting the creative industries as a very sustainable employment path. Just before I finish, the Creative Kids vouchers were a great thing. Partnerships with the Department of Education would be really, really helpful. That's it from me, speaking in a broad way. Leila is very well credentialled to speak to the actual work.

LEILA el RAYES: I am specifically working with youth at ACE. I work in two components: in school, specifically with at-risk students or those who are disengaged, through a social work lens, with alternative education through creativity; and, secondly, we have onsite programs where we work with the older age group, which is usually around 17 to 25. They are specialty programs for more marginalised groups, such as LBGT+, CALD and people who fit within those further marginalised groups that don't have access to creativity, for free—a huge component. All our programs at ACE are kept free, so everyone has access. I am also in these positions because I am a professional practising artist myself. I was in the Biennale this year. I am from Western Sydney, so I have a lot of expertise in how to direct these young kids and how to move through creative Sydney.

BRETT ADLINGTON: Thanks for the opportunity to present to you today. Museums and Galleries of NSW is a service organisation supporting the over 500 museums and galleries across the State, with a focus on the small-to-medium sector. As such, our submission and my focus today centres on two key areas: firstly, the more informal role our sector plays in supporting cultural access and education for students and, secondly, the role the small-to-medium sector plays in supporting career pathways for cultural workers. To the first point, a common example in which museums and galleries provide cultural access is through school visits to exhibitions and collections, to experience cultural material firsthand. Often these visits supplement curriculum-related content. Galleries also provide access to artists to discuss their work and practice either within the gallery or in the classroom. Public museums and galleries also deliver out-of-school hours workshops for students. Often led by practising artists, these workshops cover mediums or activities unable to be offered in much detail within the

school environment. That is particularly also the case in regional New South Wales where there is less access, as has been previously discussed. I also wanted to note that Creative Kids vouchers were a huge financial benefit to the sector to assist in delivering these programs.

However—and, again, this has been discussed a bit today as well—engaging with arts and culture doesn't always have to sit within the context of the art part of the curriculum. Access to cultural material held in museums and galleries can help students have a deeper understanding of many other parts of the school curriculum, including First Nations history, the environment, social histories, languages and cultures, and also building social cohesion, which I think is an increasingly important thing that we all need to be considering and grappling with. More broadly, however, there are many studies providing evidence that arts activity can enhance learning across various subjects by fostering critical thinking, creativity and collaboration; improving reading and language skills; enhancing mathematical skills; building better social skills; increasing motivation; and generating overall higher academic achievement.

I would like to finish by highlighting the significant role the small to medium sector plays as a critical career pathway for many artists and cultural workers. Regional galleries and museums are often the training ground for cultural workers, including artists, where they are provided opportunities to develop a broad range of skills which can be honed for more senior roles or for artists' major institutional presentations. As highlighted in our submission, this workforce feeds the workforce of the major institutions. If we seek a professional workforce within our major State institutions, there needs to be a commensurate understanding of supporting careers at the small to medium end of the sector.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: Thank you for coming today and for your contributions. Mr Adlington, I will start with you. I am fascinated by your submission and the career pathways there. Take a step back. Do careers advisers, do you think, in the education system, offer up any of your pathways and say, "This is something that you should participate in or pursue"?

BRETT ADLINGTON: I would doubt it. Again, this has been mentioned here before. I think there is an increasing lack of understanding of what the career pathways are. I think the Federal Government changes with funding and making those courses more expensive is a huge disincentive to students, particularly regional students. Our submission also highlighted a decrease in programs in the cultural space. I think once you factor all of those things in, it's increasingly looking like a career pathway that is not enticing to many people. I think what that has got the problem of doing is ensuring that people working in our cultural sector are basically coming from higher income backgrounds. I think the sector itself is grappling with that and wanting to break that apart. But it's going to be increasingly harder when the pipeline of people coming through are from those wealthier backgrounds.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: It creates that inequality if there is that barrier to entry and cost is a problem. That is a very sad indictment in terms of trying to get people involved. If there was a pathway forward in terms of fee structures, what would be your message in how to get people involved?

BRETT ADLINGTON: That is probably a bit outside my wheelhouse. I recognise that a lot of these systemic problems are outside the purview of State government as well. We understand that. Our submission included some things around scholarships for students, particularly regional students or students who need that financial support to be educated in these areas. That is one area that I think the State Government could be mindful of.

Ms LIZA BUTLER: Ms Loxley and Ms el Rayes, I think you said that you offer courses where students could come free of charge. Do you get any State Government funding to assist in delivering those courses?

ANNE LOXLEY: Yes. We are very grateful. We are a social impact organisation and we are almost equally funded by arts programs and by social service programs. Leila's role is funded by the DCJ Targeted Earlier Intervention program but the program work has actually been funded by that Crown Packer money. We are scrambling right now to find alternatives.

Ms LIZA BUTLER: That was my next question. What impact will that have?

ANNE LOXLEY: We're very resilient. We're 40 years old. We exist on the smell of an oily rag, and we won't say die. We're just fiercely writing grant applications all the time. Because we do that, we can be really lucky. But what distinguishes our work in the music space is that it's ongoing. We have been running electronic production programs now for almost 10 year. A lot of our colleagues in the arts and cultural space—and I'm sure Brett would agree—are project dependent so can't have that ongoing role. We somehow have managed to keep this brilliant program for neurodivergent musicians going for almost 10 years as well, Club Weld—marvellous, so talented, neurodivergent musicians are working as professional musicians. We just this year were successful in

a Federal Department of Social Services grant where that program is now funded for two years for \$996 million—no, \$996,000, four grand off a million.

Ms LIZA BUTLER: How much was that, sorry?

ANNE LOXLEY: That's \$996,000 for two years. We were about to have conversations with the board about how are we going to keep that program going. We're lucky because of the social impact box as well and we have access to two sets of funding, but we are tenacious about the money.

Dr JOE MCGIRR: You made a comment that you partner with schools but you also said it would be good to streamline that process. Then you also mentioned the value of an artist in residence. So I'm just picking up that there's room for improvement in that relationship with the schools. Schools are very much part of State Government. It's in the wheelhouse, as Mr Adlington would say. I'm just interested in your reflections on that for the Committee?

ANNE LOXLEY: I would just say that he Ms Finn is aware of our work. We're in Parramatta.

Ms JULIA FINN: I should declare that 20 years ago when I was a Parramatta councillor we had a partnership with ACE in digital arts and I was on the board of that for about three years.

ANNE LOXLEY: I just mention that because we are so grateful for your support and for the support of people like Ms Donna Davis. We've done work at Granville boys school. We did it for about 10 years. When my predecessor John Kirkman walked into the school, that school was—let's just say more of a rough school. Now it's a school which is getting the high end of the achievers of the kids, and it goes back to what Brett said. It was a lot to do with our work that helped turn it around. As mad as it sounds, it was a barber shop program for kids that needed a bit of—

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: Attitude correction?

The CHAIR: Encouragement to turn up?

ANNE LOXLEY: Yes. That principal, Noel, understands music. So then we have stayed there, and Leila's been doing other brilliant work there. But getting in the door—Leila, you've just got in the door with Auburn girls and doing a wonderful program there. But there's a lot of work, isn't there, to get in the door?

LEILA el RAYES: Definitely. Coming back to our funding, I am the only person in my position. We don't have teams—we should mention—at ACE, because our funding only goes so far. Each producer is completely responsible for the entire stream. It's difficult to get through the door because I'm only one person trying to write the grants, apply the grants, write the program, connect with the school, make sure the programs are being run correctly, make sure I'm overseeing the facilitators, the budgets et cetera. So that's the issue. It's not exactly a one straightforward thing about contacting the school. In fact, they are over the moon and encouraging as they can be. It's just how much we have for each other—how much time, energy and space. But there's definitely a shared enthusiasm.

Dr JOE MCGIRR: I understand that—and they are very appreciative, but they are not bringing resources or help to the table either. That's what we need to clarify.

ANNE LOXLEY: Sometimes they have a bit of money. Money is a funny thing, isn't it, in the public sector. Sometimes they have a bit of money; sometimes they don't. Money is often an issue. Artists in residence—Leila has been taking an artist, some writers, into Auburn. I have known—this is going to the other end of the spectrum—that there's a really great program at Newington school, and they've had an artist in residence program there for years, very successful. Some of the other really high-end schools I know have had them, because it's a different economic scenario.

BRETT ADLINGTON: I was just going to pick up on that a little bit. We've done research with our sector and found 56 per cent of organisations do partner—and we've included this in our submission—with education providers to provide programs for students in their areas. Again, I think this was highlighted earlier—I think a lot of times those partnerships are due to the passion of individual teachers and the relationships that might be existing to enable those programs. I feel like it's rarely coming through a formal process from the education system to work with a gallery, a museum or any other sort of cultural organisation. It's very much about those individual partnerships, individual relationships and the passion of teachers, and programs live and die by the staff within the schools who might then move on.

LEILA el RAYES: And also the families. There was a period of time when we didn't have funding for the Granville Boys Barbershop before we introduced them to another sector of funding through Education. That was funded by the parents, putting money together, to keep it going for a term.

The CHAIR: Those families aren't super wealthy, but I know they can be really generous. I've been to many events at Granville Boys where a lot of people contribute—not huge amounts, but a lot of people do contribute.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: On that funding aspect, obviously, you've spoken about private philanthropy, and we've heard a little bit today about how valuable that can be in programs. I don't want to get too deep into your arrangements, but do you have outcomes that you have to achieve? When you are approaching philanthropists, are you finding that there has been a difference in attitude and approach over the last decade, for example? Could you give us a little bit of a feeling of how that works?

ANNE LOXLEY: The Crown Packer—people are very reasonable. The funders are very reasonable, and it goes back to what—there are two things. There's the behavioural stuff and wellbeing and those things, and then there's the excellence factor of people being exposed to quality arts and music programs.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: For example, are they requiring a similar level of oversight to what you might expect from the Department of Education?

LEILA el RAYES: Definitely.

ANNE LOXLEY: Yes.

LEILA el RAYES: We are doing proper reporting, acquittals, data selection, et cetera—constantly.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: I am just curious about whether those requirements are more or less onerous or if there are lessons that we can learn from either side of that funding stream that would make the other more available, I suppose.

ANNE LOXLEY: Well, the Crown Packer money is drying up, but it still was very good. I would say that was fairly—they wanted a report, and we had to show outcomes, but it was only one report a year. Saying with all the love and appreciation in the world to the government funders, I find I usually have to report on the same chunk of money five times. It's interesting because the State Government is now overhauling the creative—with the Creative Communities policy, it's going to be interesting because they are saying that there's going to be less reporting. It's not too bad.

BRETT ADLINGTON: I am in the process of applying for eight-year funding at the moment.

ANNE LOXLEY: Yes, us too.

BRETT ADLINGTON: I just wanted to say the process does seem a lot easier than it has been in the past. I just think it would be good to acknowledge that.

The CHAIR: Thank you all very much.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

The Committee adjourned at 16:45.