

**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**

**CORRECTED**

**At Jubilee Room, Parliament House, Sydney, on Friday 23 August 2024**

**The Committee met at 9:15.**

**PRESENT**

Ms Julia Finn (Chair)

Mr Kevin Anderson

The Hon. Anthony D'Adam

Dr Joe McGirr (Deputy Chair)

The Hon. Jacqui Munro

**PRESENT VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE**

Ms Judy Hannan

The Hon. Dr Sarah Kaine



**The CHAIR:** Welcome to the second 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 JAMES HUMBERSTONE, FRSA**, Senior Lecturer in Music Education, Sydney Conservatorium of Music, University of Sydney, affirmed and examined

**Dr THOMAS FIENBERG**, Acting Associate Dean, Indigenous Strategy and Services, and Lecturer in Music Education, Sydney Conservatorium of Music, University of Sydney, affirmed and examined

**The CHAIR:** Welcome to both of you and thank you for taking the time to give evidence. Starting with James, would you like to make a short statement?

**JAMES HUMBERSTONE:** I would also like to acknowledge that I'm on Gadigal country today, and thank you for the invitation to give evidence. Yesterday I spent the day watching the recording of the last hearing and was so impressed with the quality of discourse. I also celebrated the transparency of this process. There's a reason why I want to mention that, which I will come back to in a second. When you were undertaking that hearing, Tom and I were attending the World Conference of the International Society for Music Education in Finland. The week before that we were at the music in schools commission in Estonia. The message that I bring from those conferences to the Committee is that, through this process, you are reading submissions by and meeting with not just the musicians of New South Wales but professionals working at the very highest international standard. We really are up there with the best in the world.

As you've heard, we all want music education for every child in New South Wales, for all of the intrinsic and extrinsic benefits that it brings. We have different ideas about how to get there, which are relative to how we do music education, but we have this common goal. In my submission, I made three groups of recommendations to get to that same outcome of music education for every child. My first recommendations have been outlined in submissions and evidence from many others. They included the addition of a code for classroom music specialists in the Department of Education so that we can retain excellent music teachers in public schools and, in addition, for NESA to add music to the current list of primary ITE specialisations. We are ready to teach that at the University of Sydney already.

My other recommendations were about curriculum, because it's through curriculum that you reach every child. Over the past two decades, the music curriculum has been allowed to stagnate. First, because it has not been regularly updated, as it is in other States and Territories; and, second, because NESA's approach to syllabus review and reform has become secretive and ideologically driven. The recent music syllabus review has been undertaken behind non-disclosure agreements. The public, including experts, were invited to have their say, but submissions were not published and the writing group did not explain how they had responded to feedback in subsequent releases. The resulting syllabus has not kept up with international research and practice, and it is clearly not evidence based, despite NESA's claims to the contrary. So, here in New South Wales, we have the people, but we do not have the curriculum. And so my final recommendation is to make curriculum development in New South Wales as transparent as this process here today.

**THOMAS FIENBERG:** Ngyini Ngalawangan Mari Budjari Gadinurada. I'd like to thank the Committee for inviting me and Dr Humberstone to share stories on unceded land that has been nurtured for generations immemorial by the Gadi people. As a non-Indigenous educator, I feel incredibly fortunate for the opportunities being a music teacher has provided me to build relationships and trust, and to listen and learn from country with my students and with First Nations educators, artists and community knowledge-holders. Working in dynamic, culturally diverse public school communities will forever impact how I approach my current role, lecturing the next generation of music teachers at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music. These experiences have also led to my current role as acting associate dean of Indigenous strategy and services. In the past few months alone, I have spent time with SCM pre-service teachers at Maningrida College in West Arnhem Land, Lightning Ridge Central School and several other public, Catholic and independent schools across Greater Sydney.

I have also co-led music workshops for First Nations year 12 students interested in higher music education from metropolitan, regional, rural and remote areas of New South Wales. At a local level, our pre-service music teachers have collaborated with Dharug language leaders Jasmine Seymour and Corina Norman, helping record songs to assist the reawakening of Dharug language in schools and community settings. Experiences such as these leave me incredibly excited about our students leading renewal in the sector, taking up opportunities in diverse settings and, most importantly, responding to the interests, needs and strengths of school communities. In my submission, I tabled a series of recommendations across each of the points of reference, which I am more than happy to discuss further this morning. My colleague, alongside many others, has already addressed an incredibly important change that would make a significant difference to enabling employment pathways and security for primary music specialists in government schools.

To conclude, I would like to acknowledge that while SCM students are building partnerships, there are many diverse voices under-represented in our music teaching community. In 13 years of classroom teaching in low-ICSEA settings and of numerous success stories, only one of my former students has successfully graduated as a music teacher, and she is making an incredible impact in her Western Sydney school. This is not from a lack of talent, ability or commitment, nor from poor sight-reading skills, but it does reinforce the need to shift from outreach to in-reach. We need systems to change, beginning with revising a senior curriculum written in the twentieth century to be a world-leading, culturally responsive, inclusive and industry-relevant one. Further, tertiary music education needs to catch up to the increasingly diverse teacher workforce by increasing scholarship opportunities, creating new entry points, and by a collective effort to hold a culturally safe and nurturing learning environment.

**Dr JOE McGIRR:** Dr Humberstone, you made a couple of remarks in your submission, and I think you have highlighted them again in your opening statement—and Dr Fienberg, you may want to comment on this—and there are two that I want to focus on. The first is the fact that you have actually said that the primary syllabus is mostly only taught properly in independent and Catholic systemic schools. Secondly, I think both of you referred to the curriculum but, Dr Humberstone, you actually said the process is secretive, and you have referred to the fact that it's not even close to being evidence based. I think those are pretty important items. Could you expand on those—both of you, but starting with Dr Humberstone?

**JAMES HUMBERSTONE:** Yes. As the president of ASME New South Wales said in the last hearing, the issue is that most schools don't have teachers who feel confident to deliver the syllabus, when we're talking about primary—you mentioned the primary syllabus. The problem that we have is that we don't have an accredited specialisation for music. I know several people also talked about the recent reports that have been done by the Alberts group about the very small number of hours of training that primary teachers get to teach music. So they don't feel confident to teach music in their curriculum. As ASME said in their submission, what happens then is that the very few specialist teachers tend to get targeted by other schools, and the problem that we have in the public system is, because there isn't a code for music teacher, we're relying on clever principals who really value music education to work out ways to employ specialist music teachers who feel confident to teach that curriculum and to keep them in their schools.

My children went to public schools, where I live in northern Sydney, where there was actually a specialist primary teacher and she was a graduate of my degree. My degree is a secondary qualification because that's the only thing you can be accredited to be: a secondary music teacher. There is no accreditation for primary at the moment. But we do train in primary pedagogies, so that teacher was able to go into that school and do that teaching with a very clever principal who is using a combination of relief from face to face and other things to keep that person in the job. But without having a code and an accreditation, it's very difficult to get those teachers and it's very difficult to keep them because they might be on a year-by-year contract.

That's just to answer the primary thing, and then the second part of your question was in terms of syllabus development. So, 25 years ago, we were pretty much up on the cutting edge here in New South Wales. We've just had a couple of syllabuses released, but I worked on writing a report and writing responses to the years 7 to 10 syllabus. That's an incredibly important syllabus to me because that is the time where just about—not quite every, but just about—every child in New South Wales in years 7 and 8 gets 100 hours of mandatory music education with a specialist music teacher. Now, obviously there are problems with shortages of teachers in some areas, but generally that actually happens. To me that's really important because, if we get the syllabus right at that point, we give all of those kids the advantage of a music education. That's probably the only time for the majority of children in New South Wales where they've got a specialist in the room. Therefore, that curriculum is really important to me.

The problem with the curriculum renewal and reform that we've had in New South Wales is that it has been undertaken in this secretive way where we don't actually know who is writing it. We are invited to make submissions. Naturally, people like Tom and I and a lot of the other people who you've had giving evidence make lengthy submissions, but those kind of go into a black hole. They're not published on a website like they are in this hearing. We can then try to work out, from the next version of the syllabus that we get, what might have been in those submissions and how, maybe, the anonymous writing panel might have responded to it, but we can't really see it.

Those of us who are working in research are obviously trying to follow what is happening internationally, and we want to see how we're actually going against those international benchmarks. We're quite frustrated that we can't really see how we're moving forward. We can guess at what the conversations are in those panels, but we can't really work out how we end up where we end up, apart from seeing that there are, obviously, ideological arguments or tussles going on in those secret panels. The years 7 to 10 syllabus that has been in review for the last

two years finally has been updated for the first time in 25 years here in New South Wales. It was obviously a very long wait. Look, it's better; it's slightly more up to date. It's better, but we've just missed that opportunity. We have an opportunity here to actually lead the world. We've got an incredibly great history in arts education here in New South Wales, and we've just let it stagnate over the last 25 years. Tom?

**THOMAS FIENBERG:** I think that James has brought up a lot of good points. I might talk about the difference between public schools and Catholic schools—the first part of Joe's question. It comes down to employment conditions. If you can't have a permanent job then how are you going to buy a house? How are you going to have that security to be able to live? For teachers who are working in public schools, they are going from rolling contracts year to year. For me, myself, I was on a rolling contract for six years before I had the opportunity to apply for my own job in a public school, and that's in a secondary context. I have a code to be a secondary teacher, but that doesn't exist. In your recommendations, probably the simplest thing that you can do to make a real difference to improve equity is just to generate a code for creative arts music specialists. We are really well equipped—

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** It's a big departure, though, isn't it? The primary model of education is based on having generalist teachers. There is a tension that has been brought out in the submissions that we've had between Albert's suggestion about just increasing the capability of those generalist teachers versus homing in on specialists. One of the questions that arises is, if we were to go down that path, would we actually have the capacity and the pipeline to provide those teachers to meet that requirement? Do you want to offer some comments about that?

**THOMAS FIENBERG:** I think that, in answer to that question, we're already on that pathway. That already exists. We already have a dual system of specialist and non-specialist teachers in primary school. Currently it's heavily weighted in the independent and Catholic sector compared to the public sector. If we're looking at preparing our students, we need to provide our principals with that option. There already exist specialisations within primary education. Probably the best example is languages. There is a code for a language primary educator. Music is similar to a language and has a specialist skill set. In terms of the pathway of teachers, I think that we do have a long-term goal and then a short-term goal.

Last week you listened to Bernie Heard talking about Music in Me, the mentoring program that already exists within the Department of Education, which pairs specialist music teachers with generalists to support places where there is no specialist music teacher. A workforce of specialist music teachers could make a difference in that mentoring. Not just music is done by the specialist, but the music specialist can provide support and learning so that music can be a part of every child's day. I have a child in kindergarten, and his day starts with singing every single day. They sing an acknowledgment of country to the Dharug and Gundungurra people. They've collaborated with Elders, and this is a generalist teacher delivering that.

We're not trying to say that generalist teachers shouldn't be teaching music, but we need to provide the option for music teachers who are currently working in public schools to be able to have job security, because they are making a big difference. That first step of having communities of practice—they already exist informally. When I was working as a high school teacher in Mascot as well as in Blacktown, as a specialist music teacher, I would provide professional learning for the generalist teachers in my feeder primary schools.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Can you expand on that a little bit in terms of the pipelines and that teaching the teachers element? Some of the evidence we've heard suggests that the only place you can get a Bachelor of Music (Music Education) or a Master of Teaching is at Sydney university. Is that right, and why is that?

**JAMES HUMBERSTONE:** We're the only remaining Bachelor of Music (Music Education). Matthew Hindson in his evidence explained that it's a 50 per cent degree of studying music and studying education. But there are several masters of teaching, including at Western Sydney and at University of New England and—

**THOMAS FIENBERG:** Yes, UNSW. There are many. Even in Lismore there are pathways for this. Yes, there are many universities providing a pathway to being a music teacher, but there are many institutions that are providing primary education which could have a specialisation of music embedded within it. It's not just our music education degrees that could train this future workforce; it's actually within the Bachelor of Education (Primary). For instance, currently at the University of Sydney we have an incredible Wiradjuri musician, singer, vocalist who, every time I meet her in my partnerships with them, I'm saying, "Please come and do our Bachelor of Music. Come, you should be a music teacher." She's being a primary teacher. In reality, her being a primary teacher is going to have a far bigger impact on her students, probably, than she would if she was a music specialist located in one school. Someone like herself could get that specialisation within her primary degree and then be able to go and lead change as a primary educator, so there are multiple options to this point.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Do you think there are options for those types of courses to be provided through TAFE, or does it require a university environment?

**THOMAS FIENBERG:** The university environment is really key. We have a lot of conversation about quality. We could potentially write a quality framework like they have in Victoria, but that's a piece of paper. Quality can be embedded within our syllabus, and it can be embedded within the accreditation process that exists in schools. I believe that having that ability to accredit music teachers to respond to the teaching standards is the best way to ensure that quality exists. In my submission I spoke about having funding to support teachers to do a graduate diploma in primary music teaching, which would just be us running our courses as an intensive over four weeks. They would fill those credit points up within a year.

I think there would be plenty of teachers who would be really interested in doing that training. One of the benefits of going through a university system is that we have an obligation to be able to embed research-informed teaching. You would have heard about the Kodály method—coming here later today. Yes, that's part of our program. But we also have the Orff method embedded in that program. We also have culturally responsive teaching embedded in that program. We also have cultural diversity in music education embedded in that program. We also have informal music learning embedded in that program. Teachers are provided with a broad sweep of pedagogical approaches so that they can make the best decision about what works in their local situation.

**JAMES HUMBERSTONE:** Can I just add one teeny weeny little thing? Just to be really clear about this question about the patchwork nature we have at the moment and what we're proposing today, we're using the word "specialist", but in a way we're using it about two different things. We're talking about the person who has been to somewhere like the conservatorium and is a highly educated musician, and has that background to go into a primary school and just teach music, which happens at the moment but it's just a very insecure career and, therefore, they tend to end up in independent schools, where they can at least have an ongoing job. The other kind of specialisation is as currently accredited under NESA—you do a generalist primary school degree but you can already do a specialisation in maths, in English, in languages or in science.

What we're saying is, if music were in there, it would allow us to immediately—and we've got these courses already running at the Con. So all of these students becoming primary teachers at Sydney university could come over to the Con, which is exactly what happens with the Master of Teaching students now—they would come into those courses that we've got. You've heard in these reports a lot of people complaining and saying, "Eight hours of training to teach music. Eight hours. What can you learn from that?" I was just doing some quick maths yesterday and they'd get somewhere between 78 and 104 hours of maths. They're not going to be a conservatorium-level performance student at the end of 104 hours of training, but they're really going to know what to do in a primary classroom. That teacher can then have that just with their own classroom or they might have a principal who spreads that extra knowledge and expertise around the schools. I wanted to make that really clear in terms of your question.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** Running alongside that is the musicians who then take a master's in teaching who then—the capacity and the capability. We've heard frequently that teachers are already at the max in terms of what they can deliver. From a public education perspective, if there was an option like you were saying—option A having a specialist teacher that incorporates music as well, versus having a musician who then takes a master's in teaching, then goes into the classroom. That eight hours, as we heard yesterday—it lights the spark. That ultimately drives within the school that culture of creative learning and then drags the cohort of the school with them.

**JAMES HUMBERSTONE:** A hundred per cent.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** Once it starts, a rising tide floats all boats. If you start to light the spark, it will start to lift. The other option, I think, would be—and I'm keen to get your thoughts on this. Musicians quite often will have three or four different jobs in a gig economy. If they had that master's in teaching, they could still perform on the weekends, still play at the Con, opera, but they could also have their full-time employment—a regular income, which musicians suffer from the lack of—to be able to then supplement and go, "This is the pathway I'm on." I think it's a good option. Lastly, perhaps the education—I'm keen to get your thoughts. Education supplement, rebate, whatever—look at subsidising your fees to get a master's in teaching.

**THOMAS FIENBERG:** I think we agree with everything that you basically said there. You've read the submissions. I think that has come through in many different places. I want to make the point that our Master of Teaching program at the Sydney conservatorium is relatively new. Even in the short few years that that has happened, we've seen a huge difference in the diversity of music teachers that are coming through into our system. The conservatorium is a conservatorium by nature, which historically has been set up to preserve western art musics. We now have contemporary music students doing degrees within our Bachelor of Music (Music

Education) program. But within the Master of Teaching program we have these portfolio musicians coming in and equipping themselves with an extra skillset. We have students from JMC here. We have students from Western Sydney. We have students from Wollongong. We have students from all over the place.

What we see is, with this really diverse experience of being a musician and also doing musical training coming into this Master of Teaching, that it impacts the flexibility and the preparedness of the teachers to be able to respond in diverse settings because they are working every single class with musicians who might be—we might have a metal guitarist over here; we might have an opera singer in the same classroom. That's what we love to teach. We love to have this diverse understanding of what a musician is, because there isn't one music; there are many, many musics. We can learn from each other. It's having a huge impact, I think, on their ability to be responsive to communities. Ultimately, if we want teachers to work in under-represented communities, we need those under-represented communities to be training to be music teachers because they're going to go back into their communities as well. It's a holistic approach that we need to work towards to be able to create change. That's a long-term thing but, yes, definitely in the short-term those—gig economy would be great.

**The CHAIR:** Dr Fienberg, you made a recommendation about embedding aspects of the VET music industry course within stage six music. Could you elaborate a bit more on that? You've gone into it in great detail in your submission, but I think it's quite important given some of the insights we gathered from when we went to visit AFTRS and AIM about what people were likely to be able to gain employment in later, what skills students didn't have when they enrolled, that sort of thing.

**THOMAS FIENBERG:** Even in my opening statement, I talked about trying to create an industry-relevant syllabus. I mentioned that the current senior curriculum was written in 1999. Naturally, a bit has changed in the music industry since 1999, YouTube being a good starting point for one thing that probably we take for granted every single day. I've also trained as a VET teacher, so I understand the entertainment syllabus. I haven't taught music industry, but I know that music industry—there are many elements in that that could be easily embedded within music 1, music 2 and music extension. Probably the most simple change that we've been advocating for—and it has sort of filtered into the 7 to 10 syllabus—is placing a greater focus on the recorded sound as composition. Presently, if you want to do original music in music 1, music 2 or music extension, you have to write that down.

For my students in Blacktown, if they wanted to submit a song to be assessed, they had to transcribe it, which is just not culturally congruent with the music. We have students who have equipment in their bedrooms creating incredible sounds. Music Industry really does provide the skills for them to be able to hone those skills and then be assessed on it. But presently our music 1, music 2 and music extension courses do not assess the recorded sound. They assess the notated sound. That's just a very small portion of the music that is produced and listened to and consumed. If you open up your iPhones and you listen to the music, I'd like to know what percentage was actually a notated score. I imagine it would be even less for the students that are in schools presently.

**Dr JOE MCGIRR:** You might want to take this on notice because we are getting short of time. But it would be good to have some examples of where the current curriculum has missed opportunities to be more up to date.

**THOMAS FIENBERG:** We have a report which we can table that we wrote in relation to the last—

**Dr JOE MCGIRR:** That would be great, thank you.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** You mentioned that the Con is dedicated to the preservation of western music. I wonder what can be done in terms of the cultural diversity in New South Wales in terms of fostering and developing education in those musical traditions. I was at a Kurdish performance just recently. How do we foster cultural musical traditions other than the western tradition in New South Wales?

**THOMAS FIENBERG:** One of the courses that I teach is Cultural Diversity in Music Education. You're, again, speaking my language here. You can go to the conservatorium now and specialise in a non-western instrument. There is a pathway for that. But there are significant challenges with what else they have to do at that same point in time. The other elements of their degree are still heavily centred on a western-centric approach to it. I've been in conversation with our dean, who is also very eager to open up these spaces—our deputy dean as well, Matthew Hindson, who you spoke with yesterday. We have Iranian musicians specialising in the dotar doing master's degrees. We have made some improvements in that space.

I think that the advent of contemporary music practice has made a huge difference in terms of what we can support our students to do. We have a digital music component, as well, of a degree entry, so there are more diverse options. If it was me and I was the dean, I would be really placing a focus on an intercultural music degree

as an option for people to study. That's what they do at the Sibelius Academy in Finland. It's actually run by a person who was born in New South Wales, so we do have the connections and skill set to be able to implement these kinds of approaches and relationships. We both work in an international field where we have leading scholars engaging in culturally diverse musics. New South Wales in music education, specifically at the Conservatorium, has had two of the biggest leaders in the field, in Kathy Marsh and Peter Dunbar-Hall, who have been educating our students in this space for many, many, many years. I think that we're well placed to listen and respond to that diverse community.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** What about for individual tuition in the community? Do you have any suggestions about how we might foster that for—

**THOMAS FIENBERG:** For diverse musicians?

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Diverse musicians, yes.

**THOMAS FIENBERG:** I think that we need to understand that there are different ways of learning music that are relevant to different musical cultures. Not all systems operate under a master-apprentice model. Some approaches are more collaborative. If we were to set up an intercultural music degree at the Conservatorium, that would be providing a place of employment for these people who are working in community settings and, again, that stable pathway, because a lot of musicians' work is insecure. Definitely, having those degree options and being able to hold space for diverse musicians to be part of this institution at the University of Sydney would be great. We have many partnerships with art centres. The regional conservatorium network, which obviously we won't have time to speak about today, is incredibly important in that space. I think about a community like Armidale, which has a very, very high population of newly arrived migrants and refugees. That conservatorium has just as much responsibility as an institution in Western Sydney to respond to its community's needs.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** Lastly, Chair, if I can?

**The CHAIR:** We have run over time.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** Do you think, gentlemen, that at present the education system relies too heavily on individual leaders to drive a particular genre, whereas if you had a pipeline of music—whether it be artists with a Master of Teaching or music teachers coming through a pipeline—that would lift, and would make it easier for the curriculum to accept and then increase, the hours being delivered in the classroom rather than relying on individuals to drive the program? Does that make sense?

**JAMES HUMBERSTONE:** Just to come back to what I wrote in my submission and what I said earlier on, I think we need to start with curriculum. I completely hear what you're saying, and that is definitely a part of the work that we're doing and we're trying to encourage, in terms of pipeline. Whatever recommendations the Committee makes, we're going to still have a patchwork of music—and that's okay. I think we actually do very well. Tom's just been talking about a syllabus for our HSC students, our year 11s and 12s, that was developed on thinking in the 1990s that needs to be up to date. That syllabus is actually still really successful. We were talking to one of our colleagues at Melbourne university this morning and she was saying, "Man, I wish we were as good as you." They're struggling to keep up at 3 per cent of students engaging in music education to the end of year 12; we're over seven. WA is well below us. Queensland is well below us. We've got this fantastic history.

However, as Tom just said, a lot of the practice that's in the curriculum is very much behind. The way that we ask teachers to sort of lift themselves up, to have those kinds of expectations and to pull the pipeline along, to me, is through curriculum and making sure that our curriculum is right up there with the best in the world. As I've said—and I hate to repeat myself—that's being reviewed right now, so this is urgent. Our stage six curriculum is in review right now at NESAs, and I'm afraid I don't have any faith that that's going to be done well.

**THOMAS FIENBERG:** It's also very hard with how that syllabus is being reviewed. The syllabus review process is written "by teachers for teachers"—is the line that NESAs give. It makes it hard for people like ourselves, even though we are teachers, to be able to provide support in that space. We'd love to have a greater level of involvement in the curriculum-writing process but it's just not set up, as it is. I'd like to make one final point. We have a National Cultural Policy. At the centre of that policy is First Nations first. Presently I haven't heard many First Nations voices in this panel here or meeting in this curriculum. Even today, in my role as Indigenous strategy—I'm a non-Indigenous person, but I'd be very happy to organise a meeting for the panel with First Nations musicians and music educators to provide some perspectives in that space. I'm very happy to follow that up into the future.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you both for your evidence. The secretariat will contact you in relation to any questions on notice—and also to follow-up about your suggestion, maybe. Thank you so much.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** Thank you very much. We appreciate your time, and your submissions. They were very detailed.

**(The witnesses withdrew.)**

**Ms MICHELLE LEONARD, OAM**, Founder and Artistic Director, Moorambilla Voices, before the Committee via videoconference, affirmed and examined

**Ms ELIZABETH MARTIN**, Chief Executive Officer, Accessible Arts NSW, affirmed and examined

**The CHAIR:** Good morning to you both. Would each of you, starting with Ms Leonard, like to begin by making a short statement?

**MICHELLE LEONARD:** Good morning. I come to you from Gomeroi country, sitting here on the verandah at the top pub in Baradine, a very small rural community. Moorambilla Voices is a regionally based, multi-art-form youth education and capacity-building program that commissions and creates choral, dance, visual arts and taiko drumming workshops and works reflecting the worldview of the participants and their communities. We work incredibly diligently to embody the spirit of walking together, with Australia's First Nations people, with inclusion and respect in the spirit of yindyamarra. Since 2006 I have personally seen in workshops over 47,000 children and young people representing the 22 local government areas in the footprint that Moorambilla serves. I have done that through workshops, residency camps, recordings, tours and performances. Moorambilla Voices has direct, on-the-ground experience to inform our recommendations, building on an evidence-based approach that is adaptive, sustainable and continually reflective.

**ELIZABETH MARTIN:** I'd like to acknowledge that I'm speaking from Gadigal land this morning and pay my respects to Elders past, present and emerging. Accessible Arts is the peak arts and disability organisation in New South Wales. Established in 1986, we advance the rights of, and opportunities for, people with disability or who are deaf, to develop and sustain professional careers in the arts and have equitable access to arts and culture across New South Wales. I want to flag that recent ABS data has shown that the number of Australians living with disability has now grown to 5.5 million or 21.4 per cent of the population. Further statistics outlined in our submission demonstrate the barriers and discrimination experienced by artists and audiences with disability, within arts and culture across Australia. The statistics also demonstrate the passion and enthusiasm many people with disability hold for the arts.

Accessible Arts provides a range of opportunities, programs and services that focus on career advancement for artists with disability, often presented in partnership with arts and culture organisations across New South Wales. Accessible Arts also provides broad industry support and education across all arts and cultural industries and art forms. In 2023 Accessible Arts provided 84 training sessions to 2,133 attendees, demonstrating strong sector demand for increased practical knowledge regarding access and inclusion. This is required for the industry to ensure that pathways for artists with disability, as well as events, performances and programs for audience with disability, are accessible. While there has been a lot of progression over the last few years, including increased awareness within the broader community, there remain numerous barriers that people with disability face to accessing arts and culture as audience, artists, students or employees.

Our recommendations are to recognise the need for increased accessibility and inclusion across all levels of education for students with disability; to recognise the demonstrated need for alternative accessible pathways of education for artists with disability provided across the State by Accessible Arts and provided in partnership with arts and cultural organisations; to recognise the urgent need for traditional and creative access and inclusion awareness to be built into all creative practice education curriculums and all levels of education across New South Wales, including how to create new works, events, programs and exhibitions that are accessible for audiences and artists with disability; and to assign increased funding to alternative education pathways for artists with disability to directly access the arts and education sector, including mentorships and internships, in the likes of Create NSW's Createability Internship Program.

**The CHAIR:** Ms Leonard, you mentioned how you recommended that we should start each day with singing using your program, across the LGAs where Moorambilla Voices operates. Could you elaborate a bit more on that and your learnings for the entire State about starting the day with musical singing?

**MICHELLE LEONARD:** I'd be so delighted and, actually, what I'd like to frame everything in is that I'm on residency camp now. I have 90 girls in the hall that I can see across the road. They absolutely love singing and being engaged in the creative arts. Four days ago, I had 50 primary-age boys. Five days before that, I had another 70 year 3 children in Birralii, and then we had 90 adolescents. Everything that we strive to do comes from a place where the children's voice must be heard. It is our first instrument. It is cheap. Everyone owns one. They do not have to make a financial investment. It is also something that speaks directly to our shared experience, intergenerationally. As far as I have seen in the last 20 years next year, children and adults who can start their day with something that gives them a connection to each other, particularly when they're singing, have a better likelihood of being able to concentrate and approach, with a positive world view, any of the challenges of many

of the educational environments that our children work in. They are able to have more resilience—or the Americans would call it grit—to be able to continue.

Every child that I have seen in my workshops, in some capacity, has been able to give themselves a voice. Not all of the children sing like angels but, as we know, not all of the adults sing like angels. But it is the pursuit of it and their tenacity and normalisation of making music a basic human right. That is what I would like to frame everything that we are doing in. I listened very briefly to the previous speaker from the Conservatorium of Music who drew everyone's attention to the fact that within our national artistic framework, we are hoping to have a First Nations voice embedded deeply in everything that we do. It's an extraordinarily positive world view and it is one that has always been done through an integrative, collaborative, artistic approach that is intergenerational. We're just normalising what has always been there.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Thank you both for coming today and for the submission. I was curious about the Moorambilla Voices magic online modules and how they've been taken up so far.

**MICHELLE LEONARD:** I would have been delighted that those nationally award-winning—I think there are 175, 25-minute modules that are all mapped to the New South Wales educational curriculum, with extension exercises. We did make a submission to the Department of Education after they won the national award at the APRA AMCOS. We received feedback very late after that submission. I think it was nearly nine months, sadly, until they were able to get back to us and others. They have not been taken up by the Department of Education. We have had individual teachers in the 22 LGAs that have used those successfully. I've gone out and iteratively tested them in the skills development workshops. They are an extraordinarily positive resource.

We would be absolutely delighted to work with not only the 22 LGAs that I work in but anyone who wanted the opportunity to work with us and then to add their own work into that beautiful collaborative work. What I have also discovered is that there are pockets of excitement and creative excellence everywhere you look. They don't have to come from just one area. If you are an educator and you've seen work we've done online in these modules, you might say, "My year 9s can do this. Let's video them. Let's map them and create a library of what is possible." That's where we're at, at the moment. We're in a liminal space until we are able to work with anyone who would like to have them and to use them generously.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** What kind of feedback do you receive?

**MICHELLE LEONARD:** We receive very little feedback, sadly, at this stage. I do need to make it clear that it is 20 years next year for Moorambilla Voices. We have received no funding or financial support from the Department of Education at any point. This is a creative arts program that works across every single area. We have Catholic, non-systemic schools, distance ed, home schooled, as well as the Department of Education. We work with children from eight to 18 years. We are hoping that we will be able to now newly engage in another conversation, as they are starting to see the extraordinary results coming out of COVID in terms of resilience and school retention, as well as self-concept, not to mention the musical outcomes. Principals are now very keen to engage in conversation and to support conversations further up so that we can offer more access for more children, but it's an ongoing opportunity for us.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** Thank you very much for appearing from Baradine. It looks beautiful out there today.

**MICHELLE LEONARD:** The internet is a bit dodgy. We all need to recognise that in rural and remote New South Wales, the access to technological support, which is often put forward as a framework, is not as robust as people may like to imagine it is. And with a few mice plagues thrown in, anything's possible.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** The internet is solid. Don't worry about the mice plagues—they come and go.

**MICHELLE LEONARD:** Yes, mate, they do.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** We're coming into summer, so they won't be back for a while. Thank you again for appearing. I'm curious as to your offering into schools. Who is delivering it and how is it being delivered? You say you're having little feedback on how that's working, so what's the basis of the continuation?

**MICHELLE LEONARD:** I grew up in Coonamble. I had an exceptional opportunity that was supported at every layer of government when I started as a small child to learn an instrument. There was a rich cultural ecology of music making, intergenerationally, in my small community, growing up. I had opportunities to continue study at the Sydney Conservatorium and beyond. I was basically given a very clear remit from my peers. When I was at the point where I was having children, their children did not have the opportunities we had. We were going backwards. It was, "Michelle, can you please go and deliver skills-based workshops into the schools where you would teach the children how to read music?" The teachers will be sitting in there. From those yearly

events, you will select children that will then go onto the next phase, which is to come to the residency camps, which I'm now at. From that point, we will co-create the repertoire. Then we will bring back the best chamber orchestral musicians and tech people to do a performance that will then be recorded. We have continued to repeat that, adding in extra tours and intensive outcomes.

What I have noticed, sadly, is that the skill set of the candidates that are entering the educational workforce in this third of New South Wales are not being supported in their degrees. They have the will, but there is not the skill and there is a very real lack of support for anything other than the absolute basic that is happening out here, and that is very, very little. As far as I have seen, there are no orchestras, no bands, no choirs, very few musicals and even less instrumental tuition, which is why you have a portable instrument in your human voice. Every international program that I have noticed—and I've just come back from three weeks in Stockholm—has excellence achieved for children with human voice, and then they overlay everything. I hope that answers your question.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** To duck back a little, how is it delivered in schools?

**MICHELLE LEONARD:** It's not, mate. Those that are trying to deliver it are doing so against the odds, in a crowded curriculum, which is why I suggested that we start with a way of supporting children's ability to focus and connect with each other and their educator in a five-minute moment. I'm assuming you are just as young as I am—we all had the ABC songbook, and there would be a wonderful opportunity to integrate something like this back with the ABC. People can listen to it, like they still do with BTN. You've got a repertoire of pieces that are pedagogically sound. They do one a week; by the end of the year, they've got 40. They're cross-curriculum, if that is required, but they form part of their cultural DNA and a repertoire of pieces that will give them the opportunity to engage in a practical musical sense. Music is meant to be done, not passively received. The human voice has the most fabulous opportunity to do that without any barrier.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** If it's not being delivered in the schools, as you're saying there, Michelle, how and where is the referral pathway? You were saying you had 90 girls—50, 70—in your residency camp. How are they learning of what you do in Moorambilla?

**MICHELLE LEONARD:** They first engage with me when I go and see them, free, into school in their school workshop. I see 3½ thousand children and deliver free educational workshops so that everyone gets at least one hour of excellence in their school year, and we have the staff that are observing that at the same time. Some of those young—and older—staff members connect with me and say, "Can I have access to those repertoires? May I have a look at some of the modules you've created?" For the vast majority of their children, it is highly dependent on their teacher, who may or may not be transient. It is highly dependent on where they are at school. We have a 98 per cent retention rate from August residency into September, and we are watching a cohort of children now come through post-COVID that are going from eight to 18. I suppose, for many people who are sitting in Sydney, they would have realised the excellence that is capable when we performed recently with VOCES8 at the Opera House and then recorded for ABC that was played internationally. The capacity is there. It is the ecological artistic infrastructure that is ephemeral.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** Thank you. We appreciate what you do.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Ms Martin, is your organisation primarily focused on arts educators or is music within the ambit of your organisation?

**ELIZABETH MARTIN:** We seek to increase opportunities for artists and audience and arts workers with disability within the arts. Over the last four years, we've found that we've needed to increase our training programs because of the lack of detailed knowledge and awareness around access and inclusion. If you'd asked us four years ago, we had a disability confidence training session that we ran, and that was it. Since then, we've started training accessible exhibitions and design, accessible festivals and events, and a detailed workshop on access riders for performers and artists with disability to be able to talk about what they need to be able to work with companies. We've now got 10. We've just concluded one masterclass in screen, and we've just been funded by Sound NSW to develop a masterclass for the music industry. That's a two-sided training session: one for the general music industry to learn how to work with musicians with disability and crew with disability as well, and then one focused for musicians and crew with disability—how to negotiate contracts, how to negotiate your access riders and those sorts of things. We can start seeing a real positive, practical dialogue between both sides.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** What more can government do to support artists with a disability?

**ELIZABETH MARTIN:** I think definitely some specific funding—increased funding into the areas of providing specific pathways for artists with disability but also a review of the curriculum to see what's being provided there. Certainly increased support for students with disability who want to study the arts and music, but

also we need—people are coming out of their courses without detailed knowledge about how to embed access, about how to work with artists with disability and how to make their gigs, performances and works accessible. There is a real growth in this space at the moment, certainly in the last five to 10 years. We're seeing that community want these things, both in terms of performances—they want to see stories; they want to see performances by people with disability. They want to hear those stories and see those works being made. But there's a real lack in the knowledge across the sector on how to support and how to provide events that are accessible.

We've been touring a comedy show called *Are You Pulling My Leg?*, which is hilarious. It's five comedians with disability talking about their stories. We've been touring that across the country, and it has been quite amazing to realise the lack of awareness in venues for how to support artists with disability and audiences and ensure that the works are accessible. I'm talking about pretty standard things, like how to set up captioning in house, or how to set up an Auslan interpreter and where to place them on the stage. There's a real fundamental lack of knowledge, and it's not embedded, as far as I can see, within curriculums. When we've been working with a lot of tertiary education spaces, it seems to be left up to the goodwill of people on staff as to whether or not these things are taken up and presented.

I also want to flag that beyond the basics of access—captioning, Auslan and those sorts of things—we're also seeing a real interest in growth in creative access. You can look overseas, to the UK, for really great examples of that but we're starting to see them in Australia as well where you start to embed access within the work at the time of creating the work. Rather than create a theatre piece, finish it, whack on some Auslan and some captioning at the end, this is considering how can we embed it from the very beginning and make it interesting and enjoyable for the audience. A great example of that would be Opera Australia's use of shadow interpreting where they've presented works for children with disability, with hearing impairment and they've embedded—the Auslan interpreters are in costume, on stage, part of the performance and delivering that to children so that deaf children can have the experience of opera.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** With the major performing spaces, is there resistance to this? What's the barrier to these inclusive practices being embedded in the work of these institutions?

**ELIZABETH MARTIN:** I would say that it's time and funding restraints—everyone working very busily, a lack of knowledge, people not being aware of the options and people not receiving the training in the rest of their training, in their formal training, so they don't realise. If it's not embedded within the curriculum, it's often seen as a "nice to have" or an extra.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** The VET entertainment courses that are run in schools, is there something in that curriculum that specifically addresses this, or is that a gap that we need to look at?

**ELIZABETH MARTIN:** Yes, I think it's a gap that needs to be looked at.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you both for your time this morning. Sorry we were running a little bit late. If there are any further follow-up questions or any questions on notice, the secretariat will be in contact with you.

**MICHELLE LEONARD:** Could I just say thank you on behalf of the wonderful children and the grown-ups that are here as volunteers and educators. We are so delighted that you're allowing our voices to be heard. It's wonderful to have the opportunity for someone who's been working to amplify children's voices and their connection to country to be able to speak on this occasion. I won't get you to come in and have a listen, but they sound glorious. Children love the arts—they love it. It makes us human, so thank you for giving us a voice. We really appreciate it.

**(The witnesses withdrew.)**

**Ms NATALIE KRADOLFER**, Chief Executive Officer and Co-Founder, Amplify Music Education, affirmed and examined

**Mr RICKY KRADOLFER**, Co-Founder and Head Educator, Amplify Music Education, affirmed and examined

**Ms CATRIONA TURNBULL**, Branch President, Kodály NSW, affirmed and examined

**Mr JOEL COPELAND**, Member and Past National President, Kodály Australia, affirmed and examined

**The CHAIR:** Thank you all for your time this morning. Would you like to start by making a short statement?

**NATALIE KRADOLFER:** Good morning and thank you for the invitation to be here today and for your ongoing work as part of this inquiry. Amplify Music Education is a software platform that upskills and supports generalist classroom teachers to teach the compulsory music curriculum. One in five primary schools in New South Wales successfully use Amplify as part of their music curriculum delivery. That is over 5,700 New South Wales primary school teachers delivering high-quality, sequential, engaging and enriching music lessons for their students. It is a quality and future-focused solution that works in all school contexts. Amplify doesn't exist without the teacher in the classroom. It creates a unique synergy between the experience and knowledge of the teacher and technological innovation.

Our vision is that every child in New South Wales receives a quality music education that they can identify, connect with and relate to. Technology is a natural evolution of education delivery and an important mechanism for equity, equality and accessibility. As part of our submission, our key recommendation focused on the importance of upskilling and supporting generalist classroom teachers. By equipping teachers with the right on-the-job professional development and the necessary tools that are in line with the current teaching paradigm, we will see results. Behind Amplify is a team of local, innovative, creative and highly motivated people that understand the realities and diverse nature of primary schools in New South Wales. We work closely with music makers, creators and industry and are deeply passionate about providing quality music education whereby no student misses out.

**CATRIONA TURNBULL:** Kodály NSW is part of the national organisation Kodály Australia. We're a volunteer organisation and our main activity is supporting music teachers through the organisation and delivery of professional learning. This ranges from short, free events of about 1½ hours to webinars, one-day workshops and the Australian Kodály certificate, which consists of 180 hours of study undertaken over a three-year period. Most of our committee are full-time teachers who organise and run these events on top of their very busy teaching loads.

Our submission focused on the inequitable provision of music education to students, particularly primary-aged students in New South Wales. Many public schools have little to no music learning taking place regularly, while the vast majority of non-government schools have a trained music specialist delivering weekly lessons throughout the year. Our two recommendations were that students in every primary school be given equitable access to music education via weekly lessons throughout the year from kindergarten to year 6, delivered by a trained classroom specialist, and that undergraduate primary classroom teachers receive extensive training to attain the same level of confidence in music education as all other KLA to support the weekly lesson delivered by the music specialist.

Music is a skills-based subject that cannot be taught by reading a book or following a lesson plan. It requires the teacher to have a certain level of musicianship in order to be able to teach it effectively. The current situation is that most general classroom teachers do not have this level of musicianship. This is simply due to a lack of opportunity, experience and training. We recognise that training enough music specialists to deliver music in all New South Wales primary schools is something that cannot be achieved overnight. However, we believe that it should be a long-term goal.

As a skills-based subject, music education is most effective when practised daily. We would recommend that all students receive 30 to 60 minutes per week from a trained music specialist supported by the classroom teacher in their daily teaching and learning. The classroom teacher is well placed to be able to integrate short, five- to 10-minute moments to practise a music skill. The other recommendation that we would like to make is that funding be allocated to support professional learning organisations, such as Kodály NSW, to deliver training to more teachers, both specialist and general classroom teachers. This is currently taking place in South Australia under the music education strategy. Currently, many of the teachers who take our Australian Kodály certificate course fund it themselves and these courses take place in the school holidays.

One of the perceived barriers to implementing a music program is the cost of resourcing it, particularly the cost of instruments. Instruments are expensive to purchase and require ongoing maintenance. However, every child already has an instrument: their voice. A Kodály music education program is focused around singing. Singing is such a valuable skill because it engages inner hearing. In fact, you cannot sing unless you can imagine the sound and hear it in your head. This is not the case with other instruments. This is why we believe all music training should begin with singing. Instruments add great value to a program, but you can certainly have a rigorous sequential music program with a great variety of engaging activities without any instruments. A Kodály music program requires nothing more than a well-trained teacher and the voice.

**Dr JOE MCGIRR:** Thanks to all the witnesses for appearing. My question is to Ms Turnbull and Mr Copeland from the Kodály organisation. In your submission, you actually point to research that says that nearly two out of every three Australian primary schools offer no classroom music.

**CATRIONA TURNBULL:** Yes.

**Dr JOE MCGIRR:** You also point to research that compares government and non-government schools, and I think the figures here are 88 per cent essentially of non-government schools would offer good music education compared to 23 per cent of government. Those are pretty startling statistics. You also point to the fact later in your submission that countries with high PISA scores have a much greater level of music education in the school curriculum. I wonder if you could expand on that research around performance more broadly and the presence of music education, particularly early on in the school curriculum.

**CATRIONA TURNBULL:** Sure. Those figures were from some research that was done by the Music Trust. In those countries such as Finland and South Korea, music is placed at a very high level. It's highly valued, and because music education is part of the curriculum and has been for some time, then the teachers, when they're going into their education training, already have had a rich music education but then they also receive many more hours of training as part of their undergraduate training to become a teacher. It's placed at the centre, really, of what they do. These are the countries that are coming out highest on these PISA scores, and I guess music education is highly valued in those countries.

**Dr JOE MCGIRR:** I suppose the point is association is not necessarily causation.

**CATRIONA TURNBULL:** True.

**Dr JOE MCGIRR:** Could you take us through the thinking around linking those? We're talking about music education, arts education here but there is a lot of interest in NAPLAN results and performances around literacy and numeracy.

**CATRIONA TURNBULL:** Sure.

**Dr JOE MCGIRR:** I suspect we spend a lot of time focusing on literacy and numeracy and not the broader, and that may be counterintuitive but it may actually be producing worse outcomes. I'm interested if you could take us through your thinking around those links.

**CATRIONA TURNBULL:** I don't have that at my fingertips but I would certainly point to the research that Anita Collins has available on her Bigger Better Brains website. I guess that's something I could provide at a later date. I don't have that at my fingertips now.

**JOEL COPELAND:** Just to add on that as well, we're obviously passionate music educators and we believe in the power that music education has and that teaching music is a great thing and a great thing for children to be able to engage in. It's those other things that Dr Anita Collins and other people in the space can point to and tie together in terms of the incredible power it can have on engaging a child's brain, the neuroscience behind learning and priming that brain, I guess, for the literacy and numeracy learnings. That's a wonderful side benefit of what we believe, I guess, should be a core part of curriculum and part of what we're all doing here today.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** This is to Natalie and Ricky. It is nice to have a working musician come to talk to us.

**The CHAIR:** A fellow working musician.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** You've obviously seen a gap. Why did you start Amplify and what was the need for that?

**RICKY KRADOLFER:** I was a primary school music educator and teaching lots of schools around the country, and I was quite shocked when I was going to visit schools at how, firstly, music was being done. If it was being done, it was kind of outdated and boring and not engaging. Students didn't identify with it. It was using

really archaic, old approaches and pedagogies, and I couldn't work out for the life of me why. I was quite shocked that it hadn't evolved since when I was at school, and I didn't really enjoy music at school but I went on to be a musician, so I saw a bit of disparity there. But I also realised how music wasn't being done.

I presumed that when something is compulsory in the curriculum, it gets done, but music seems to be this thing that is the first to get chopped out of school schedules and timetables. I came to realise it wasn't so much because schools didn't want to do it, or principals didn't want to do it, it is just they didn't know how to do it. As you've heard, a lot of teachers, generalist classroom teachers, don't feel confident to do it and there is still this reliance upon having music specialists come into schools to teach something that's actually compulsory in the curriculum. But there are not enough music teachers or specialists to do it in a global teaching shortage crisis.

What we do have in our classrooms are highly skilled generalist classroom teachers who understand the context and how the students learn better than anyone else coming into the classroom. They build a relationship with the students. The students feel comfortable with them. The classroom teacher knows how to get the best out of them. We wanted to create something that essentially upskilled and empowered the classroom teacher to be able to teach something that is essentially compulsory in the curriculum but do it in a really fun, dignified, contemporary, engaging way. To be able to do that on scale, we realised we had to involve technology and created a software platform to be able to do it.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** How many schools and teachers are you supporting through Amplify?

**NATALIE KRADOLFER:** Currently in New South Wales—we are in more since we submitted—I think we're up to 447 primary schools, and it's over 5,700 teachers using the platform.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** What has been the feedback?

**RICKY KRADOLFER:** That it has changed the lives of teachers; that they've built their capacity and efficacy and they feel really good about teaching something that they never thought they could teach or never thought they had to teach; and that students are extremely engaged and they identify with the content. But more so it helps develop a love and passion for the arts and music. It fosters a love of learning in music. It drives their engagement, not just in music but in the classroom, which is really important in a time where students' wellbeing and disengagement essentially from school is at an all-time high.

**NATALIE KRADOLFER:** We've actually had direct feedback from a school in New South Wales that have said that their attendance goes up on the days where the students do Amplify. Students are coming to school because they know that that experience is ahead of them and they want to be there. For a school that struggles with attendance, that's a massive outcome to achieve.

**The CHAIR:** How is it being offered to teachers? Is it by word of mouth? Is it principals passing it on to teachers or are they looking for something to help them teach music, which after only a short education at uni they don't feel comfortable doing?

**NATALIE KRADOLFER:** Yes. We generally work with the principals of the schools, as they are the decision-makers around curriculum delivery. Through our service that we offer alongside our platform, we onboard all of the teachers at the schools quite thoroughly and extensively so that they feel confident to use the technology in their classroom. We have achieved such wonderful school numbers, a lot through word of mouth but also through this growing need of looking for an alternative. As Rick mentioned, schools want to teach music—they absolutely do—but they just needed a way to be able to do it in a way that suited the context of their school.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** I've been thinking about the observation that you made in your contribution around the nexus between literacy and numeracy and I wondered—this is a much broader question about what we can do to elevate the valuing of music, because I think music should stand on its own rather than have to have some instrumental benefit for something else that society thinks is important. I assume that that lack of value is part of what's driven the situation we're in, where music actually isn't given the priority it needs in the school context. What can we do to actually elevate or engender a greater appreciation of the inherent importance of music?

**CATRIONA TURNBULL:** I think there's a perception that you need to be particularly talented to do music, and that it's often associated with playing an instrument at a particular level. Giving it more value in the pre-service training would help. Obviously the main benefit of music is for its own sake, but it has all these other wonderful benefits as well. Because of what happens in the brain when you engage in music learning—that is, active music learning, not learning just about music. Oftentimes the teaching of music can be reduced to the learning facts about music because that's what people feel comfortable with, but the actual learning and doing of

music is what does amazing things in your brain. I know Dr Anita Collins has done a lot of research into what it does in the brain—how it activates both sides of the brain at once and creates these connections which then put the brain in a position to be able to be more receptive to learning and are actually essential for things like learning to read. I guess its importance for its own sake needs to be elevated. A good start would be in the pre-service music training. As Ricky said, it's compulsory, so you would assume that means that it's being taught but, in a lot of places, it's just not, and it's because they don't have the skills to do it.

**JOEL COPELAND:** As Natalie said, there are teachers out there wanting to do it, but I guess it's also full cycle. Lots of principals that I've worked with, and other teachers in schools that don't seem to have that support that we're talking about in terms of the value of music education for music education's sake, haven't had a music education themselves. So when we look at potentially implementing strategies that can support the development of a quality music education for every child, we start to then get adults who have had wonderful experiences in themselves and their own learning journeys and they go on to become great teachers, and potentially great music teachers and great school leaders as well, that can engender that particular culture of valuing music and the arts in the education space.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Do you think it's a question of maybe an emphasis in the curriculum around music production? Only a small subset of society are ever going to be music producers or musicians but a very large proportion of society are music consumers and appreciators, so do we need to shift the emphasis in the curriculum around more a focus on appreciation of music, as opposed to focusing on teaching the kids the production of music?

**CATRIONA TURNBULL:** No, I don't think so. I think making music together is such a valuable thing. It's got social value and, as I said, it's got these brain benefits. Making music is what music is about. Appreciating it is certainly a part of it but it doesn't mean that we all have to become professional musicians. I'm so pleased and impressed when I see someone who's a doctor or a lawyer or an accountant and they still play the instrument that they learned at school, or they're in an orchestra or they're in a choir, so that they're getting that nourishment from making music with other people in their professional lives. That's what I would like to see—these children that we're teaching now, growing up, not to all become professional musicians but to become amateur musicians who love making music with other people and derive great benefit from that.

**RICKY KRADOLFER:** Echoing what Joel was saying, particularly around the positive feedback of it, where if we have every child having a music education, they're going to become adolescents and then adults who appreciate and understand the value of the arts and music but unfortunately, at the moment, we have children going their whole lives through primary school without having any education in music at all, then going to high school. By that time, if they don't really value it, they're not really engaging with it and then we've missed this whole opportunity to have youth value music. For me, since NAPLAN came out in 2010 and the focus on making every teacher a numeracy and literacy teacher, I can't see why we can't make every teacher a music teacher. They just need the empowerment, the tools and the resources to do it and then we can encourage creativity in the classroom.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Do we need a NAPLAN for music?

**CATRIONA TURNBULL:** No. Please, no.

**Dr JOE MCGIRR:** Coming back to this point, and I think it's a good point Mr D'Adam's made about music and the arts being valued in their own right, but I also feel that there are positive benefits for total learning, and social cohesion, and we shouldn't be shy of emphasising them.

**CATRIONA TURNBULL:** Definitely.

**Dr JOE MCGIRR:** It's about using that to try and put pressure to emphasise its importance within the curriculum, but they are important things in our community—social cohesion, interaction, developing both sides of your brain, as you said, Ms Turnbull. We shouldn't shy away from the fact that the arts and music can do that. I'm just interested if you've got—

**RICKY KRADOLFER:** Absolutely. Music is one of the last things left in the curriculum that promotes creativity and students to think differently, to celebrate their uniqueness and individuality, to celebrate imagination, collaboration and working together in groups and just fostering creativity. That sets us up for a future generation of innovation.

**Dr JOE MCGIRR:** Is it possible that some children learn better through music and arts than others, and when it's not there, they're almost put at a disadvantage by traditional approaches to pedagogy.

**JOEL COPELAND:** It comes back to teacher training. We know every child is different. Every child learns differently and every child is going have different interests and passion points. For a teacher, it's about unlocking that. We know that teachers are phenomenal professionals in their own right. As Ricky said, generalist classroom teachers in a primary setting are so great at understanding the needs of their children and implementing differentiation in that sense to be able to unlock that potential in the kid. I think it's there and it's in the teachers' ability to read that and do it. A traditional approach to music education versus more contemporary—I think a great mixture of all of those things to be able to appeal to all children is absolutely possible and within the realms of what teachers are capable of doing.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Can I ask a quick question about funding? This can go to everybody or anybody. Have you seen over time any trends in how principals are able to use the buckets of money that they have and, therefore, make choices about how they educate students and empower their teachers?

**NATALIE KRADOLFER:** From our experience, schools purchase Amplify in a variety of different ways. Some schools take it out of their curriculum budget. Some schools co-fund it with their P&C. Some schools will on-charge it back to parents through their school fees. Some schools will take it out of their strategic development fund.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Basically, they try to do anything to make it work.

**NATALIE KRADOLFER:** Correct. In times gone by, when schools were paying big salaries for specialist music teachers—that funding is not there anymore. Schools don't have money set aside for a salary of that size. When they're looking at how they can address it, a cost-effective way is very appealing in the current climate.

**JOEL COPELAND:** As I said before, it's about the principals valuing—and they've got pressure points coming from different angles. A big pressure point is NAPLAN and the literacy and numeracy focus, which is important. But, as Ricky said, sometimes what gets chopped often is music and the arts and they are trying to find creative ways to still be able to deliver that. At the end of the day, as a principal, you've got a staffing FTE and you've got to try and deliver what is an overcrowded curriculum. You've got to make tough choices. I guess the advocacy piece—and Dr Anita Collins does a lot of this work with her Bigger Better Brains—is advocating to principals and to schools to ensure that they go, "Yes, that is worth investing in and I am going to make a tough decision in another area so that our kids can get the benefit of a quality music education."

**CATRIONA TURNBULL:** I think, partly, too, it's the place of music in the timetable. I know that Dr Anita Collins has research as well into how music can prime the brain for learning, whereas music is often one of those subjects that gets put in the dead times like two o'clock on Friday afternoon. If it were placed in a priority—and it doesn't have to be for an hour every morning. But if those 10-minute segments were there in the prime learning time, before you begin your numeracy and literacy, then that would be of great benefit as well.

**The CHAIR:** We will need to wrap up. I thank you all for coming in today and for your evidence. The secretariat will contact you in relation to any questions on notice.

**(The witnesses withdrew.)**

**(Short adjournment)**

**Mr CARLO TUTTOCUORE**, Education Consultant, Teaching and Learning/School Improvement, Association of Independent Schools of New South Wales, sworn and examined

**Ms KELLY BORG**, Associate Chief Executive, Teaching and Learning, Association of Independent Schools of New South Wales, sworn and examined

**Mrs JACINTA ADAMSON**, Supervisor, Amadeus Music Education Program, Sydney Catholic Schools, sworn and examined

**Ms EVA SPATA**, Supervisor, Performing and Visual Arts Curriculum, Sydney Catholic Girls Schools, sworn and examined

**Mr KEVIN CARRAGHER**, Director of Education and Research, Sydney Catholic Schools, sworn and examined

**The CHAIR:** Thank you all for making the time to give evidence today. We really appreciate your time and your expertise. Would you all like to start by making a short opening statement?

**KELLY BORG:** Thank you for allowing us the opportunity for participation in this inquiry into arts and music education. For a bit of context about our organisation, the Association of Independent Schools of New South Wales is the peak body representing the independent school sector in New South Wales. It represents around 426 independent schools, which currently educate 237,000 students. That equates to about one in five New South Wales students currently attending an independent school, and there are around 38,000 people employed by independent schools. Our sector is incredibly diverse. We have a very wide variety of schools. Around 80 per cent of schools in our sector are faith based. There are approximately 20 different faiths represented. These include Anglican schools, Catholic schools, Muslim schools, Adventist schools, Orthodox schools, Jewish schools, Hare Krishna schools and Buddhist schools.

There are also around 80 schools who provide a non-religious education based on a particular philosophy or educational approach. These include schools such as the Montessori schools or Steiner schools and other schools who educate specific cohorts. Examples of these are schools who educate students with particular disabilities or students who are at risk of disengagement from education. Almost three-quarters of New South Wales independent schools serve low to medium socio-economic communities and around 37 per cent of independent schools are outside of metropolitan Sydney. An important characteristic of our organisation is that we exist to provide advice and support and advocacy for New South Wales independent schools and we do not have any authority over independent schools in our State.

**KEVIN CARRAGHER:** Sydney Catholic Schools, by way of context as well, is a system of 147 primary, secondary and K-12 schools that stretch across the Archdiocese of Sydney and take in an area from Bondi in the east, Austral in the south-west, Engadine in the Sutherland shire and Marsfield in the Ryde area. We're a low-feeing, comprehensive system of schools. As a Catholic system of schools, we're committed to the education of the whole child. We're interested in the education of their intellect and their character and their faith. For us, education of the whole child means giving them the opportunity to excel and find joy in multiple dimensions. Our strategy, which we will discuss a little bit today, not only focuses on developing their intellect and their faith but on their physical development and, importantly, on their creative development as well.

We know that for children and people to live full lives, children need for each of these dimensions to be explicitly nurtured. Each of these feeds the other. We see the importance of arts education for what we aspire for each of our students but also for the benefits that the arts bring to our communities. We hope to make a significant contribution to the culture of our city and to our country. To this end, Sydney Catholic schools has a decades-long commitment to the arts and arts education. We're currently in the third year of a strategic project called the arts plan and the fourth year of the Amadeus Music Education Program.

**EVA SPATA:** Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. Like all arts educators, Sydney Catholic Schools is driven to ensure there is a clear pathway for students to grow and to flourish. We do see some barriers that prevent this. Initial teacher education, particularly for primary teachers, does not adequately equip professionals to deliver the creative arts curriculum, resulting in students' passion and skill not being nurtured to full capacity. While the new curriculum has made some inroads into prioritising creative arts, there is still a challenge in ensuring uptake of electives in stages five and six and engagement with higher levels of study. Sydney Catholic Schools has seen opportunities in curriculum, events and partnerships. We have been able to leverage the scale of our system and expertise across our 147 schools to ensure our students have access and equity to the arts. To build a culture that supports and prioritises the arts across our schools and communities, we have established pathways and opportunities for all students, including for talented students, support for and building of capacity for our staff, and engagement with the extended arts community and partners.

We do this in many different ways. Some of these include the Sydney Catholic Schools Eisteddfod; workshops and masterclasses that allow students from across our schools to come together to learn; the ViVA! program, which ensures that no student misses out on studying HSC performing arts where the subjects can't run at their school; the talent development opportunities that we offer that provide progression for students in their area of expertise; exhibitions and programs—for example, the Portrait Prize and the regional arts exchange, which is a collaboration with our regional dioceses; large-scale productions featuring thousands of student performers; providing teacher programs and resources that ensure consistency of evidence-based best practice in each of our schools; access to experts who provide in-school support for teachers; teacher professional learning, including our partnership with AYO's Music in Me; and enhancing real-world opportunities and pathways for our students, such as our amazing partnership with members of Opera Australia.

A quality arts education is vital to a child, as has been explained by many of our colleagues throughout this inquiry. It is hoped that through providing Sydney Catholic Schools students with all of the offerings mentioned, we will have increased participation in arts programs and courses; increased access and equity, regardless of socio-economic or geographical circumstances; an increase in opportunities for gifted and talented students to participate in arts programs and events; and improved HSC results for all arts subjects, which encourages post-school participation in the arts, including the benefits to our community and culture. While I feel privileged to work in a system that values the arts, I believe that much more needs to be done statewide to ensure access and equity to quality music and arts education, particularly in our primary schools. I look forward to engaging with the Committee, answering any questions you may have and contributing to this inquiry.

**JACINTA ADAMSON:** Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. Amadeus was conceived to address some of the barriers to participation in music education, including equity of access due to location and inconsistency of initial teacher education, particularly in primary schools. It ensures that all students can access a high-quality, consistently delivered music education, regardless of their location, cultural background or socio-economic status. Every child enrolled in Sydney Catholic Schools learns to play an instrument as part of their education. We have addressed inconsistencies in primary initial teacher education by employing performing arts specialists in every primary school to deliver music curriculum and tutors to deliver instrumental music.

The program's structure is supported by the research that music should be learnt sequentially, frequently and in groups. Amadeus is a significant investment from Sydney Catholic Schools that we believe will make a lasting contribution to the cultural life of Sydney and New South Wales. It is unique in scale and makes a bold statement about the value of music in the development of the whole person. Every year, 5,000 music students will graduate from the program and another 5,000 students will enter the program. Not only will we have more musicians contributing to the arts, entertainment and education industries, but there will be more graduates who have benefited from their music literacy and carry their aptitude for abstract thinking and problem-solving into professions across all industries and sectors.

**Dr JOE McGIRR:** To the Catholic schools and all independent schools, thank you for coming today. I'm interested with the Catholic schools, what led to this initiative? I think you said you're in the fourth year of the arts plan and third year of the Amadeus program. They sound quite radical or extraordinary. There has been a considerable investment. What was the thinking that led up to it? Was there a perception of a gap? Did it come out of the blue? Can you shed any light on the thinking behind the initiatives?

**JACINTA ADAMSON:** It was to address the barriers that we were witnessing—barriers to participation around equity of access. As you would have heard in the proceedings, not necessarily every child in primary school is receiving music education from a specialist. That's the first component. Then there's equity of access to instrumental music education. The opportunity that every child has a right to learn music education was essentially what we were tackling.

**EVA SPATA:** Before we started the program, we did a survey of all of our 110 primary schools to see what was happening, whether they had primary music teachers and what sort of music programs they had at the time. About 45 per cent of those schools had a music teacher or somebody who was trained in teaching music that was delivering the music syllabus. And then about 37 per cent were relying on the generalist classroom teacher to deliver it. We had a few other sorts of programs going on—so band programs coming in, engagement with Opera Australia schools tours and visiting musicians that would come in and run workshops. There was a variety. We decided that that was the strategy that we were going to do.

**Dr JOE McGIRR:** Would it be fair to say that, as a result of that, you felt the program wasn't being run properly and that children weren't receiving adequate instruction and opportunity? You said there were barriers. Someone must've valued it to even look at that. Someone must've become aware that there was a gap and decided to act.

**KEVIN CARRAGHER:** I think the leadership certainly identified it as a gap, but there's a view of education that's shared not only across Catholic schools, and we spend a lot of time reflecting on what the outcomes are that we're looking at for our children. Certainly, there are the intellectual outcomes that NAPLAN would point to, as we heard a little bit about earlier on, but the intellectual development of the child is not the education of the child. The formation of children requires their physical development from sports programs, creative development and relationship development. Trying to take a much broader view of what education is and what it should point to was at the start of that decision. As Jacinta and Eva have pointed out, when you look at the capacity of teachers to deliver beyond the things that there is an emphasis on—being literacy and numeracy, particularly in primary schools—it seemed to have left little other room for things that are valued. The syllabuses point to their value, but it did create a need for a disruptive exercise to put the emphasis that we have put into it.

**The CHAIR:** What were your findings in relation to the other creative arts subjects? Were the deficiencies as pronounced, say, for visual arts?

**EVA SPATA:** We found that more primary generalist teachers were confident in teaching visual arts out of the four art forms. We found less confidence in drama and dance generally. We found a mix. There were more music teachers employed than any other specialist creative arts person. In some schools, you would find they might employ some dance teachers that will come in and deliver some classes for their schools, and even less drama. Music was the most popular in terms of specialist teachers that were coming in out of the four art forms.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** It sounds like the Amadeus program is really exciting. I have a question about that, but I quickly wanted to ask about some of the specialist schools that you referred to in your submission. The Richard Gill School and Giant Steps Sydney in particular were really interesting case studies. Are those schools coming back to you and reporting the success of their programs and then allowing you to share that success amongst your members? How does that reporting and sharing of information work?

**CARLO TUTTOCUORE:** Those schools are responsible to their boards and their communities. They would be emphasising the educational outcomes that are being achieved within those particular schools and sharing those more broadly with the community. One of the things that we honour is that when we have opportunities to bring teachers together, particularly as part of our professional learning support, there are opportunities to showcase what schools are doing—diverse schools across the sector—to illustrate the quality of teaching and learning and how it's tailored to meet the particular needs of the students that they're supporting.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Have you found that that has occurred with music and arts?

**CARLO TUTTOCUORE:** Music and visual arts particularly have a very strong, robust community of practice. Dance and drama is represented but not in the same way because they tend to be the subjects that are included as part of the year 7 experience or stage four experience. Some schools will honour both drama and dance, as well, but that's a school-based decision to take in terms of which of the art forms they will offer beyond visual arts and music.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Are you suggesting music teachers and visual arts teachers are being—I think it has more relevance to music teachers. Are they being shared amongst different schools? Are they working in different schools on a part-time basis?

**CARLO TUTTOCUORE:** They can be, depending on the resourcing that is available for each school. There may not necessarily be a full-time load available. There may be opportunities for part-time expertise to come in and facilitate that offer within the school, particularly around dance. Drama may also have English teachers who are prepared to teach that in stage five, but dance is the one—unless they have those specialist teachers within their school—that is usually brought externally.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** On the Amadeus program, very quickly, you talk about having an evidence-based curriculum, essentially, in your submission. I'm curious about how you have developed the Amadeus program and how it interacts with the curriculum and what NESA requires.

**JACINTA ADAMSON:** It is designed to interact with the curriculum, and we go through context purely. If I'm looking at stage four—Eva has a team of curriculum writers working on stage four music at the moment. If they're learning a particular context, period of music or what have you in stage four, we would expect that that's the music they are studying on their instrument as well. It should be quite a direct link to curriculum.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** So it's basically going deeper into the curriculum—as deep as possible, I suppose, with the time that you have?

**JACINTA ADAMSON:** Yes.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** Ms Borg, in your submission, under "Workforce Challenges", you talk about tailored professional learning programs. Could you expand a little on that, please, and how that would look?

**KELLY BORG:** Yes, sure. Our organisation offers professional learning support across all of the curriculum areas. The creative arts, arts and music are offered as part of that suite of professional learning. At the moment, much of the professional learning is being influenced by the curriculum reform and the priorities around the implementation of the syllabuses K through 12. The other part of that professional learning, particularly when it comes to teacher workforce, is an initiative around growing and nurturing educators. It's specifically focused on recruitment of teachers into the workforce; supporting teachers, particularly in those really vulnerable first five years of their employment; retaining them to the workforce and looking at evidence-based ways that that happens; and supporting teachers in regional parts of New South Wales, where access might be not as possible as it is in metropolitan parts of Sydney.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** What about the capacity and the capability of teachers to take on more in terms of those tailored professional learning programs?

**KELLY BORG:** I think that's a worldwide dilemma, at the moment, not specific to any one sector. We know that teachers are under enormous amounts of pressure when it comes to being knowledgeable across everything that they do, meeting the needs of a diverse range of students in the classes they teach, and ever-increasing requirements around the way that they program and implement curriculum. I'm not sure that that's specific to music and arts, but we're certainly looking at what the evidence says about how students learn and how we might support teachers to be able to deliver in that way.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** Are you seeing a demand or a request for creative arts in terms of those professional learning programs?

**KELLY BORG:** We are. Carlo can probably speak with more clarity around that. As some of our colleagues have said earlier, the demand has been really heavily influenced by the curriculum reform. With the implementation of K-2 English and K-2 maths coming first, in that sequential way, and the K-6 creative arts having been parked to the side during the curriculum development, we've certainly seen more demand around English and maths than we have in creative arts. Now that we have the rest of the suite of K-6 syllabuses, we expect that the professional learning will be rolled out over the next couple of years with demand in those areas. Our hunch would be that the demand in those areas might be less than it has been around English and mathematics, for example.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** We heard evidence earlier that if you build it, they will come—build the curriculum and the rest will follow. Do you think, as opposed to finding the pipeline of teachers specialising in music or musicians taking a master's in education—the curriculum first, then the rest will follow. What are your thoughts around that?

**KELLY BORG:** I think there has been a lot of effort put into writing syllabuses that are accessible for teachers in terms of spelling out for them what it is that they need to do in a classroom to implement a really effective education for New South Wales young people, irrespective of what the subject is. We know that teachers had real concerns about the overcrowding of the curriculum and the vagueness associated with it. With these new syllabuses, we have a strong emphasis on essential content—content every student has a right to. There's a strong emphasis on teaching support materials so that whether you're a classroom teacher—I'm sorry, but I don't use the word "generalist" for primary teachers. I think primary teachers are specialists in up to seven subjects, and that's a huge demand. They are required to have expert knowledge across an entire range of syllabuses. These new syllabuses having a strengthened component in their teacher support materials is, I think, a real strength of them.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** I wanted to ask about the process of implementation for the Amadeus program. I think you said 37 per cent of the primary schools in the diocese didn't have a specialist teacher already. Did you encounter problems in terms of recruiting those additional teachers? Was it all done in one year? I suppose the parallel question is that this is the Sydney diocese, but there are other Catholic systemic areas. They're not running the program. If we're talking about 147 schools, that's probably manageable. If you widen out to the rest of the Catholic system, you start to encounter some serious problems in terms of recruiting teachers.

**KEVIN CARRAGHER:** Yes.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Can you talk about that?

**KEVIN CARRAGHER:** At the minute, Amadeus only sits within the Archdiocese of Sydney. We've certainly had interest from other dioceses, not only throughout the State but across the country, for a similar program and to learn what we've learned along the way. We've taken a phased approach to the introduction. We're

four years through a program of implementation that started initially in the Auburn-Lakemba network, a small cluster of schools where we piloted not only the program but also the recruitment of tutors. Each year, we've folded more schools into the program, so there has been a sequential development of that and a considerable recruitment exercise in terms of attracting tutors with expertise that can work within that context.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Can you clarify that? There's the tuition component around the instrument.

**KEVIN CARRAGHER:** Yes.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Is there also a classroom music teacher? Actually, the numbers are bigger than—

**KEVIN CARRAGHER:** Yes, that's right, and that's working with schools to ensure they're recruiting music teachers with expertise that can support the curriculum in the context of the school and work across schools. That's to have not only tutors who have musical expertise but also trained music teachers with that expertise.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Do they double up—the classroom teacher and the tutors? Are they the same person in some circumstances?

**JACINTA ADAMSON:** In some instances, yes.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** They would have a specialisation in a particular instrument. How do you determine what instrument is being taught in the schools?

**JACINTA ADAMSON:** We would teach everything if we could. We have 10 instruments that students can choose from. Each school offers those 10 instruments. They are taught in a ratio as to what creates a balance of sound. When you see an orchestra play, you will notice that there are lots of violins out the front and lots of string instruments. Relative to that, you will have fewer woodwind and fewer brass. When they are in their early years, we actually split them into concert band and string ensemble, which is about half-half each but obviously within that string ensemble there is a ratio of how many violins to violas to cellos. Students then have the instruments demonstrated to them. They spend a little bit of time deciding what it is that they would like and then they do a preference system.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** How do you work it out when you get too many violins and not enough cellos?

**JACINTA ADAMSON:** We do ask them to pick a stream—"Would you prefer the string sound or would you prefer that concert band sound", and we use that as a data point. We also ask them, "What's your first preference? What's your second preference? What's your third preference?" Obviously some students change instruments. It doesn't hurt if you upset the balance a little bit and have an extra trumpet here and an extra flute there.

**Dr JOE MCGIRR:** One of the points Mr D'Adam was making was in relation to recruiting teaching staff. We have heard from other witnesses about the lack of preparation in initial teacher education. Ms Borg, I think you referred to that, or Mr Tuttocuore referred to that earlier. In introducing this sort of program there is going to be a demand for staff. You said that you've introduced it in a phased way but, obviously, you're just one part of quite a big system and a small part of the total education system. Have you got any reflections on how you attract people into these roles or recruit them across the State if we wanted to do something like that?

**KEVIN CARRAGHER:** There are certainly different models. I think, historically, there have been music programs that have sat in schools where tutors come in for parts of days and work across any number of schools. Our approach has been to incorporate the tutors and the workforce as much into our community as we can and to work in full-time capacities across a number of schools, and to work to support communities. I think by offering employment that represents full-time roles—and we certainly have tutors who work full-time in our schools and who are still able to gig and engage in the music industry as they otherwise would. That has been a significant point of attraction. For them to be part of our workforce, belong to our communities where they are known and they are understood and loved, is an important part of it. I think the feedback that we've got from our tutors is not only to have employment within our system but to be part of a community is quite important and, I think, pretty special as well.

**EVA SPATA:** Just to add to that, the classroom performing arts teachers—the specialist music teachers—this gives them an opportunity to have a full-time position by joining together schools in a network. They might teach at three of our schools, not far from each other, and that creates a full-time position for them, where traditionally you might get one day in this school and you'd have to find some other work somewhere else to

supplement your income. This is a really attractive offer to say, "You could put together a full-time position as a classroom teacher."

**Dr JOE McGIRR:** Mr Anderson made the point earlier that this is a way of supporting careers in arts and music. There's a side benefit as well.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** Absolutely.

**KEVIN CARRAGHER:** Certainly an ambition is to see a pipeline of students as they work their way through schools. I think Eva mentioned it earlier. We do want to see more students taking up electives as they move through stage five and stage six and move off into university. We are hoping that this replenishes our supply as we move through and that feeds—

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** It's early days yet. After four years you might just start to see an impact on year 9 elective. In the feeder schools in the Lakemba-Auburn area has that been the case? You've seen, maybe this year, that there are more year 9 students electing music that have come through the program from a primary school that started with the program.

**EVA SPATA:** I was speaking to a teacher from Auburn in the past few weeks and he mentioned that, in the past, the year 9 elective class would be just a mix of students who might be singers and drummers, and perhaps no formal music training, or only some students might have had formal music training. He said for the first time his whole class—maybe 90 per cent—are all string players and they've all come through the program. It's really exciting because they were one of our pilot schools.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** That's at Trinity, is it?

**EVA SPATA:** Trinity, yes.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** That's my local area.

**The CHAIR:** Ms Borg and Mr Tuttocuore, obviously you represent the most diverse set of schools through the independent schools. For the schools that are small or poorly resourced—the low-fee independent schools—how are they managing to provide creative arts and music education in compliance with the curriculum? Obviously they wouldn't be providing it at the same level as, say, McDonald College or the specialised Richard Gill School. How are they managing to provide compliance with the curriculum and quality arts and music education in these schools?

**KELLY BORG:** I might get you to comment on specifics. I might just say that the diversity in the sector is a real thing. We expect to see in a school where there are 23 students from K-6 as compared to a school where there are 2,500 students from K-12—really diverse experiences. Each school in the independent sector is beautifully independent. They are able to make decisions that serve their communities really well. One of the things that never ceases to surprise us is that in the schools that maybe do not have as much flexibility with resourcing and capabilities we don't see any less passion around music and the arts and the implementation of the curriculum—not only because there is a requirement incumbent on these schools to implement that curriculum and they will be inspected by NESA in terms of their meeting of that requirement, but because teachers, by and large, believe in access to education and that includes all of the curriculum areas. If you want to talk about specifics, do you want to comment on that?

**CARLO TUTTOCUORE:** I think I'll just add to what Kelly has already mentioned. Independent schools prioritise arts or music education and offer opportunities for students to engage in the creative arts beyond the classroom. They have autonomy and they're not reliant or bound by decisions of the larger school system, like we've heard from our Catholic colleagues. In matters of the curriculum implementation, they will make those decisions locally and music education is delivered in a range of different ways depending on the school's resourcing, staffing and student population. As Kelly mentioned, all schools are registered by NESA and have to teach the approved New South Wales curriculum, which includes the creative arts.

The curriculum, in itself, provides flexibility for those schools to tailor that implementation to the needs of the students, their ethos or philosophy, as outlined by the school. This flexibility also shows the opportunity for teachers to scope and choose how students will explore and learn the curriculum content. Teachers within our schools are able to design learning in the arts and music that is contextually relevant and that meets the needs, interests and abilities of students. Within that there are obviously challenges around staffing in terms of expertise. One of the things that our schools do very well is to network with one another and also to contact us and ask us for advice as to how to support those particular teachers who may not necessarily have that in-depth understanding of, for example, the music curriculum, but we are able to provide them with guidance and advice about how to meet the outcomes of that particular syllabus.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you very much for your time this morning. If we do have any further questions, we will place them on notice and the secretariat will be in touch.

**(The witnesses withdrew.)**

Miss **BRENDA CUMMING**, Music Coordinator K-12, Redeemer Baptist School, sworn and examined

Mr **THOMAS McCORQUODALE**, Music Teacher 7-12, Cronulla High School, affirmed and examined

**The CHAIR:** Thank you very much for your time this morning. Would you like to begin by making a short statement?

**BRENDA CUMMING:** Yes. Good morning, Madam Chair and Committee. I would like to begin by thanking you for your wholehearted commitment to this inquiry, right across the political spectrum, and for inviting me to give evidence at this hearing. I was very pleased to be given the chance to forward a submission in response to such a unique and long sought after opportunity. I take it as a privilege to have been invited to present at this hearing in the company of so many distinguished educators and amazing arts and music associations. I hope what I have to share will add further support to what has already been said and perhaps even bring some fresh perspectives from an old music teacher—55 years at the grassroots level, 14 years in State high schools and 40 years in my present faith-based independent school.

I am presenting as an individual. I'm not presenting for an association or even a school. Further to this, it has been a joy to have had the opportunity to read the submissions and transcripts of so many others invested in this inquiry. Thanks again to the Committee for giving attention to my submission. While I recognise that my responsibility is to be prepared to answer any questions that you may have already decided to put to me, I would like to ask of you to allow me to elaborate on the value of music education for all, especially as it relates to the welfare of our students—not just the intellectual capacity that it has, although that's extremely important—for the whole of life. I'd like to provide anecdotal evidence, rather than statistical, if you would allow me. The statistical evidence for things has been expertly provided by so many other excellent contributors. Thank you.

**THOMAS McCORQUODALE:** Good morning, Committee. Thank you for inviting me to give evidence this morning. I would like to acknowledge Mr Tony Ibrahim, principal of Cronulla High School, and the Hon. Mark Speakman, member for Cronulla, for their unwavering support of my work and for allowing me to be here this morning. I'm a proud public school teacher. As outlined in my submission, I'm advocating for every student in every New South Wales public school to have access to 60 minutes of classroom music each week, with a dedicated teacher, from kindergarten up to year 8. Although this cannot be achieved overnight, I believe that, with a well-considered change of policy, this can be achieved over the next several years. Although I am a high school teacher, I'm trained and have success and experience in music education from kindergarten up to year 12. I have a vested interest in the success of music at our public primary schools as their students of today are my year 7 students of tomorrow.

In preparation for this hearing, I've conducted research at six primary schools in the immediate catchment of Cronulla High School. This included teacher interviews, lesson observations and data collection. I will be pleased to present a summary of my findings to the Committee, tender a summary document or answer any questions that the Committee might have. As you will already be aware, there is wonderful music education happening across all corners of New South Wales. However, as NESAs and the Department of Education do not recognise music K-6 as a teaching code, there is considerable inequity. In particular, students in smaller and more isolated primary schools are at a considerable disadvantage for access to quality classroom music education. In addition, I will be pleased to answer any questions that the Committee might have about my work as a full-time music teacher at a comprehensive co-educational high school.

Although I am a trained pianist, conductor and music director, and one of Australia's leading Argentine tango piano specialists—I draw on this experience every day—I am first and foremost a musical pluralist. This means that, as a classroom music teacher, I acknowledge and give a voice to a wide range of contemporary music styles and genres in my classroom, and I continue to learn every day. Although I will only speak directly to my context at Cronulla High School, I'm confident that my evidence will be a voice for thousands of students and teachers across our great public school system. Although I will be identifying barriers to cumulative, sequential and quality music education in our public schools, I would like to speak from a position of optimism. Once again, I believe that, with a well-considered change of policy, New South Wales has the potential to lead the country in classroom music education. I would like to commend Ms Julia Finn for establishing and chairing this Committee and for the progress that has already been made. Thank you.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** In your submission, you talk about the dwindling uptake of music in your context. I wanted to ask about whether, at HSC level at Cronulla, you're running music 2 or extension. If not, how long has it been since the school has run music 2 or extension?

**THOMAS McCORQUODALE:** Excellent question. We don't have the capacity to run music 2 or extension as a class on the timetable full-time, but every couple of years we'll have one or two students willing to take up the course. We have that conversation in year 10. This year, we have one HSC student doing music 2. It's with my colleague the head teacher of performing arts, and the arrangement is off the school timetable. He's given a small allocation to be able to deliver that, but he's going above and beyond to give this student his time to access that course. We had music 2 candidates in 2024, this year; one candidate in 2020, who also studied music extension; and 2015 was music 2 and music extension, as well. We're an exception; a lot of public comprehensive high schools don't have the capacity to do this. But we have staff that are willing to go above and beyond to deliver this because access to music 1 and music 2 is important, and students should be able to make that choice when they're in year 10 and they're deciding what their future ambitions might be.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** In your submission, you say that the Amadeus program is not the solution—in a general sense, it seems—in the public education system. Can you elaborate on that? We heard from Amadeus earlier. Can you elaborate on why you think that's not the way forward?

**THOMAS McCORQUODALE:** I commend the Amadeus program for setting an agenda and setting a very high level of music access for every student of every school within their system. However, it is limited to 10 orchestral instruments. I believe students should be able to choose any form of music making that is relevant to them, be that contemporary, guitar, singing or music production and composition. I believe that, rather than a one-size-fits-all approach across public schools in the State, it's about having that teacher on the ground who is well equipped to decide what instrumental and vocal opportunities are best suited to their context. In short, I believe that students shouldn't be forced to learn certain instruments or voice but to have that choice themselves and for the teacher on the ground to be the one making that decision. Music education is nuanced and unique to each local context. We need to be culturally informed about what policies we implement, and I believe that it's about the teacher on the ground making that decision.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** The final question from me is in terms of the interaction with feeder schools and primary schools. I had advice that the absence of band programs in primary schools is a major issue in terms of generating uptake of music at a high school level. Can you perhaps elaborate on the issues you've encountered with engagement with your primary schools?

**THOMAS McCORQUODALE:** Concert band programs are a wonderful opportunity for music education, but they're not the only component of a quality music education. I found, especially post-COVID-19 lockdowns, for those two years schools weren't able to continue to run their concert band or instrumental tutorial programs or contemporary music programs. That's had a bit of a flow-on effect over the next few years. If we're thinking about year 5 and year 6 in 2020 and 2021<sup>1</sup>, those students are now up to year 8 and year 9. I do have numbers for my concert band and instrumental ensemble programs at my school but, broadly speaking, there are currently a lot of students in year 10, year 11 and year 12 in these programs and the uptake in years 7, 8 and 9 has dwindled over the past few years. Out of all of our six feeder primary schools that I have visited and conducted research at, one of them has a fully resourced and functioning training band program for woodwind, brass and percussion.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Thanks so much for coming and for your lifelong dedication to music education; it's excellent. I enjoyed reading both of your submissions. Ms Cumming, I was curious about your comments on the quality of education at a tertiary level and how you're perceiving a possible decline in the standards that music teachers have to uphold to even enter the course. I'm wondering if you have seen an outcome of that on the ground and whether that quality has shifted over the years that you have been teaching?

**BRENDA CUMMING:** I can only speak from the experience of meeting people who have come into the school and knowing some young people that have done degrees. There is only one place—I write in my submission that I learned to teach at a specialist music course way back when. Some of it was a bit dinky, some of it was interesting and we didn't always think it was terribly relevant. But we came out with an understanding of pedagogy et cetera. I think the only place that really does that nowadays is still the Sydney Conservatorium, along with its education degree. Sometimes these days I remember when there was a change, where it was important to do more than one thing, never to be quite sure what you were going to do because of the changing economy and job market and so on.

---

<sup>1</sup> In [correspondence](#) to the committee received 9 September 2024, Mr Thomas McCorquodale, provided a clarification to their evidence.

It was very good to have more than one thing and not really concentrate on one subject, which is what we really did, even though we did have a second teaching subject which we didn't expect to teach. But they come out with minors in Music and they want to teach music. Yes, some of them are very good and they can learn, and they can upskill. This is one of the reasons, I think, why there's nobody jumping in to teach Music 2 and Music Extension; you have to have certain skills for that. You also need to understand, even when you're teaching high school, the pedagogies that come before high school. They're missing that. People come out with no understanding of well-known musical pedagogies. They come out with topics that they have learnt. Actually, they haven't had very much experience in practice teaching. A couple that I'm very close to, they did their Master of Teaching after their Bachelor of Arts, and they had two practice teaching sessions and only one of them was in Music before they came to teach.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Mr McCorquodale, you are a graduate of the Bachelor of Music (Music Education) from the Con yourself?

**THOMAS McCORQUODALE:** Correct.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Did you find that was an appropriate level of teaching? Do you have any comment about the fact that the Con is the only place that you can get that level of education and whether it would be beneficial to have that available throughout the State?

**THOMAS McCORQUODALE:** It probably is the only place you can get that level of education within a four-year degree. There are still quality music teacher training courses all across the State at other institutions, but the rigour at the Con, the focus on a range of methodologies, as Brenda made reference to, the focus on performance, composition, musicology, aural skills—that integration is quite unique. I am very grateful to have gone through those four years. It was rigorous, but it was rigorous for a reason.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Did you make a very conscious choice to go and teach at a public school? We have heard that a lot of independent or Catholic schools are really taking a lot of the talent that's coming out of that high level of education and offering, often, more secure work or higher salaries. How did you make that choice yourself?

**THOMAS McCORQUODALE:** I went to public schools myself. I didn't go through my four-year degree with an agenda to only teach in public schools. But, upon graduating, the opportunity did arise and, in the time since, I have come to understand the importance of it. I don't have numbers on hand, but I know that from my cohort—about 25 graduating students in 2019—the vast majority have gone into the private system.

**Dr JOE McGIRR:** Mr McCorquodale, you mentioned your survey of six primary schools. I think you might have a document.

**THOMAS McCORQUODALE:** Yes. The secretariat might be able to tender that.

**Dr JOE McGIRR:** Could you describe in a little bit more detail what the state of music education is like in those schools as a sample?

**THOMAS McCORQUODALE:** Out of the six schools that I visited, three of them have a teacher that's dedicated to teaching music at the school. The other three schools, it's up to the classroom generalist teacher, for lack of a better word. Interestingly, all three of those schools that don't have dedicated music time with a dedicated music teacher have the Amplify program that you heard from this morning. If you all have a copy of my document, I would say that school E was in the best position to deliver music. There was a permanent member of staff. She's been at the school for several years, but she has some music experience outside of school—sings in choirs, has completed AMEB—and just this year she's been allowed to implement the music program of her dreams. There's a music classroom. Each student in the school accesses one hour of music each week. There's a wonderful choir program as well, and they were involved in events just over the past few weeks. I'm very grateful for this school and to this teacher for allowing me to visit during such a busy time.

If I look at school F, this is another wonderful program, but it was a range of approaches to make sure that each student got their access to music. It wasn't 60 minutes across the year; it was at least 60 minutes a week for a term. There are some RFF staff at that school, but there were also some lesson-swap arrangements. The lesson that I observed, it was a kindergarten teacher swapping with a year 3 teacher to deliver a music lesson. Some students at that school just have music from their generalist teacher. It's really about schools making the best with what resources they have. If we go to school A, as another example, this school is quite remote. They've found it difficult, even when trying to establish their own instrumental tutorial programs or music opportunities, to have people willing to travel that distance and also to be able to engage in events such as combined school choirs. The

cost of transportation on a bus was a significant factor. I would say that from these six schools, schools B<sup>2</sup>, E and F were the most advantaged and schools A, C and D were the most disadvantaged.

Although this is only a small sample of what's happening right across our great public school system, I believe it is clear that schools with smaller enrolments are disadvantaged in terms of having the economies of scale and access to deliver music to their students. I would be interested to see a study of this type deployed across our State to see exactly what's happening in schools. As a teacher I'm in a unique position to have access to any local school; it's just a phone call away. I had a wonderful time. Just whilst I'm speaking, I would like to thank all the principals and staff that allowed me to visit and to observe their music lessons. It was wonderful.

**Dr JOE McGIRR:** Which were the advantaged and disadvantaged?

**THOMAS McCORQUODALE:** The larger schools.

**Dr JOE McGIRR:** Which ones?

**THOMAS McCORQUODALE:** I just said that for the record.

**Dr JOE McGIRR:** I thought you named one twice. I just want to clarify.

**THOMAS McCORQUODALE:** Absolutely. School B, school E and school F. If I had to rank those, it would be E, then F, then B.

**Dr JOE McGIRR:** In terms of disadvantage?

**THOMAS McCORQUODALE:** In terms of advantage—in terms of consistency of music across the entire year, in terms of students being able to access music in the classroom and outside of the classroom, in terms of the amount of staff at the school and the breadth of experience to draw upon for access to music.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Can I quickly ask about the Schools Spectacular program? Some schools are engaging in Schools Spectacular but others aren't. Are you aware of any changes to that access? I assumed that lots and lots of schools participated in it, but that's obviously not the case.

**THOMAS McCORQUODALE:** There's a mass choir, which is about 4,000 students, and that draws upon schools from across the State. We're very lucky at my school. We have a featured artist who was selected last year and was selected this year, as well, but chose to focus on her studies in year 11 instead. Schools Spectacular is wonderful—I have colleagues that put incredible amounts of work into it—but it doesn't represent what's happening across the entire State. The most important space to learn music is inside the classroom. We can't think of Schools Spectacular as a way to give music to every student because in order to be able to participate in that, first of all, your school needs to be able to transport you to rehearsals. The students that perform at an elite level in Schools Spectacular, in a core choir or in the orchestra, have had extensive music training outside of school to reach that level. Schools Spectacular is wonderful, but it doesn't encompass our whole public education system.

**Dr JOE McGIRR:** Do all these schools get ticked off as NESA compliant?

**THOMAS McCORQUODALE:** It's at the principal's discretion.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** There are effectively two models here. There's delivering music education as part of the RFF and then there's the mixed. Do you have a view about which is superior?

**THOMAS McCORQUODALE:** It's wonderful for generalist classroom teachers to be involved in music. In a lot of RFF cases, the students are dropped off to their 60 minutes of music each week and it's not really thought about throughout the rest of the week. If there's a bit of a collaboration between the classroom teacher and the RFF about songs or repertoire or themes, that's the best practice for RFF. Can you repeat your question so that I can answer it directly?

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Which is the better model? If it's in RFF, the generalist teacher is unlikely to build music into the rest of their program. Isn't that the case?

**THOMAS McCORQUODALE:** That can be the case. It's really up to the teacher and up to the individual school context to allow that to happen. Are you're asking about whether it's better for RFF or generalists?

---

<sup>2</sup> In [correspondence](#) to the committee received 9 September 2024, Mr Thomas McCorquodale, provided a clarification to their evidence.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Which model do you think is the most effective in terms of ensuring that the music curriculum is delivered and that the minimum amount of time is allocated?

**THOMAS McCORQUODALE:** It's a tough question because we're such a large school system, but there are studies that show that many generalist classroom teachers don't feel confident to deliver music. It could be something as simple as not being confident and being self-conscious about that. But, very much, it's about the music training in initial teacher education. If there was a choice between one or the other, I would say that each student having RFF or a dedicated music teacher for 60 minutes each week is the best way forward.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** The school choirs that you talk about are obviously happening outside of that 60 minutes that's allocated. What kind of support can we provide to make sure that those additional curricular activities that are being undertaken by teachers are supported?

**THOMAS McCORQUODALE:** Absolutely. It's at the principal's discretion about what allowances might be given for teachers who deliver any opportunities that are above their normal classroom time. I'm very fortunate at my school; I'm given an allocation to direct a concert band and to direct our music production every two years. It's about ensuring that each public school has the funds to relieve a teacher for the time they're spending at a rehearsal on a weekly basis from the time that would be spent in the classroom, to make sure that it's not doubling up their work but is allowing parity between all teachers. At some schools, the principals will use that funding to make sure that their music teachers are given a fair allowance to direct ensembles and to provide music opportunities but, very often, schools are stretched.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Can I ask about musicals? We were at Bowral High School yesterday. They gave us evidence around just how important running a school musical was. I wanted to get your views on that. An adjunct to that was that I've had some feedback that having a dedicated CAPA faculty within a school is important to facilitating the holding of those ensemble productions.

**THOMAS McCORQUODALE:** Absolutely. Having a CAPA faculty means that you have music, dance, drama and visual arts teachers together in the same room, and that means that natural collaboration can happen. A musical production, by nature, involves all of those art forms. You have visual arts, set design, dance, drama and music in the student performances. As a music teacher, I have an extensive involvement in musical theatre outside of school life. I music direct shows for community societies, and I genuinely believe that a school musical brings the entire school together. It brings together teachers from other faculties that might contribute to marketing or catering for the event. It brings together students that might not necessarily see themselves as performers but have a role in the production behind the scenes. I think that if every school could do a musical production, whether that was a musical theatre show or a variety show of some description—they're some of the best project-based opportunities for students to engage in music and in performing arts more broadly. Anybody who has been in a school musical will tell you that the experience and the memory lasts with them for life.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** Mr McCorquodale, coming back to your submission, you talk about New South Wales employing accredited music teachers. What would be your advice for the education department on how and what they need to do to make that happen?

**THOMAS McCORQUODALE:** Excellent. In high school, you can have approval to teach a subject or your principal can sign off on willingness to teach a subject. As I've said before, there is wonderful music education happening in all corners of our State. There are generalist-trained primary teachers delivering great music programs despite a lack of qualifications. I don't want to gatekeep those teachers from doing what they do incredibly well. In the case of a teacher not necessarily having a qualification to teach music, it could be a matter of the principal signing off, if the teacher has delivered music successfully for the past several years, to have approval or willingness to teach it.

In terms of deploying my vision across the entire State, it would have to be a staggered solution. We'd have to think especially about our more isolated rural, remote and regional schools, and potentially about having a music specialist not necessarily deployed to one school but deployed to the department and being able to extend their outreach. I think it's also important to think about communities of practice and how high school teachers can work with their feeder primary schools to develop music partnerships into mentoring, and for the department to potentially support that at a statewide level.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** Further to that, how do you boost the stocks of music teachers?

**THOMAS McCORQUODALE:** We need more engagement with music in society more broadly because if you have wonderful experiences in music, you might be inspired to become a music teacher yourself one day. But it has to start with music happening inside the classroom. In the immediate short term, programs such as Music in Me mentoring, allowing generalist teachers to be upskilled and to be confident in delivering music—

that's a short-term solution. In the longer term we should look into deploying music specialist teachers in the same way that we deploy language teachers and library teachers, because musical learning is very much like learning a language. You need to have that continuity to it throughout the years, and you need to have someone that is confident to deliver it.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** In summary, light the spark in the classroom with the students. Ultimately, if they want to get into the education system, then they'll become music teachers—hopefully.

**THOMAS McCORQUODALE:** Absolutely. In my conversations with principals, I talk about the snowball effect. If we get it right at this grassroots level in the classroom, it will only continue to expand.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** Thank you very much. And thank you for your service, Miss Cumming.

**The CHAIR:** Before we wrap up, Miss Cumming, is there anything you'd like to add? I'm conscious that we haven't heard as much from you.

**BRENDA CUMMING:** There is something that I'd like to focus on, and that is the value. We all agree that music has value. But over 55 years I've asked myself the question "What has changed?" The perception of teaching, the perception of a music teacher—who would want to teach? Who would want to be a music teacher? And I believe the answer is that you must know that you are relevant, that you've got something to give and that it's something that they need. It's absolutely essential. One of the things we haven't spoken a lot about I think is the change of the student. The student that I taught 55 years ago presented differently in class to the students I have today. We had a different society. Students that I meet today—they're anxious. They're afraid.

They're in the middle of terrorism, violence, climate anxiety and wonder if there's going to be a war—big identity crisis. They've always had that as a teenager but, boy, they've got it in spades now. "Just had COVID. Is that going to happen again?" Screen addicts—they're much more distracted because they might come to school half asleep because they spent the whole night playing games and engaging with social media. We've got mental health problems, anxiety problems in the classroom, in a way we never had before. I believe that the subject that they need most is Music because music has the ability to do what Thomas was talking about here and, that is, to bring them together. I have mentioned somewhere in my submission that you can do that with a class. Give them a happy ending to the day. Send them away at the end of the week with a song and something that gives them hope.

We, in our school, have the whole school singing. The entire school comes together twice a week, once in Chapel, once with School Music. They sing in four parts. The children, Kindergarten or just "infants"<sup>3</sup>, can sing the entire *Hallelujah* chorus soprano part. They have a sense of achievement, but they also have a sense of school ethos, which is developed through music. There's nothing better for school ethos than all-in music—music for everybody. I'll just give you a few anecdotes. Just over the last little while we've had musical productions by Kindergarten—open days for the parents to come to—years 1 and 2, years 3 and 4. They put on an open day. They love to put on a production, and they can manage it. They can sing. I don't even have to have anything to do with it because the class teachers are right in there. They organise it. The content that they do is great content. The music—the parents love it, the audience loves it, not because these little kids are cute and isn't it lovely to see them sing, but because what they produce is really quality. The music is quality, every child is involved—autistic children, children with other needs, children where English is their second language and some of them can hardly speak English. They're all in there.

When we have the whole school together, it's great. There's nothing better for the older, cool kids than the little kids making a big noise and enjoying singing. It unites them as a school family, and that includes the parents, who love it. So that's just School Music. You could do that with a class. All of those key competencies that we have are covered in music where you can have this social thing of connecting to other people with dance; you can have sensitivity to other people with music; it's got an emotional thing that happens. I'm just talking to the welfare of all of those things—to your societal connection, to your emotional wellbeing. I imagine lots of people here would have a similar experience to me. I had maybe a troubled childhood. I would love to go to the piano and just play, and it's the same with children. They're emotionally fulfilled or emotionally helped. I think I have got in my submission here—have you ever seen one of your friends with dementia who can't say a word? She stutters when you get there. You start singing something she knows and off she goes. She can't say the words but the tune is there, and the memory is there.

---

<sup>3</sup> In [correspondence](#) to the committee received 25 September 2024, Ms Brenda Cumming, provided a clarification to their evidence.

Music is there for all of life. What you give to a pre-K or a Kindergarten child, especially when we do some of those memorable activities, they are never going to forget that. There's an earworm; we say that at school. The last song you sing is going to stay in your head for the week and then it's there for life. At the time you don't know when they are suffering or whatever happens in their life. Something is there, so that's important to make sure that your content is good too, and that the content gives them hope and it gives them something that they will always remember, that you never know in a difficult situation will—a personal anecdote: I love Beethoven's Fourth Piano Concerto, the reason being is that it has this really deep joy. We know Beethoven had a really tortured life. But the joy that came out of that composition gives you the hope that there's joy in life and joy in suffering, and many of those kids are going to need that later on.

In the life that they're living, within the context of this society and what's thrown at them and what they have to deal with, which is different to what students 55 years ago had to deal with, this is going to be the subject that will matter most. What happened in the pandemic when people were isolated? That's another thing. Our kids have been isolated and that has had an effect. What happened in the pandemic? Witness the effect of singing in a choir, even virtually, people wanted to get together to sing. What happens when you get dementia patients together? You stick them in a choir. I have seen Sydney Symphony players go to the Children's Hospital and play for babies, and I have seen the effect on children as they listen to music and the healing that it brings. I don't want to say too much more, except that you need to give them an aesthetic—music has an aesthetic quality that reminds them that there's beauty, and that there is worth, and things beyond the life that they're leading. I'm not saying everybody's life is dreadful, but I loved something that—

**The CHAIR:** Sorry, Ms Cumming, can we wrap up?

**BRENDA CUMMING:** Richard Tognetti said when he picked up a violin and he had that opportunity—and later on he became this wonderful director of the Australian Chamber Orchestra—he said, "A world of possibilities beyond my small hometown emerged." It's like reading a great book. It lifts you out of where you are, and it shows you hope and the possibilities that can be there. Music does that in spades. Just to give you one final thing, and sorry if I'm taking your time, but the Bach Akademie has come to our school. I don't know if you know them; they're a dedicated Bach orchestra—beautiful historical instruments. I happen to know the director.

**The CHAIR:** Could you possibly table that information? We are now running quite behind time.

**BRENDA CUMMING:** Yes, I will. I will send it to you.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you so much for your time.

**(The witnesses withdrew.)**

**Ms KELLY MARKS**, Research/Industrial Officer, Australian Education Union, NSW Teachers Federation Branch, affirmed and examined

**Ms GEMMA QUINN**, Chief Executive Officer, Federation of Parents and Citizens Associations of New South Wales, affirmed and examined

**Mr ROBERT HUNT**, Manager, Member Services, Federation of Parents and Citizens Associations of New South Wales, affirmed and examined

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

**KELLY MARKS:** I'd like to start by acknowledging that we're meeting on Gadigal land of the Eora nation. It always was and always will be. I acknowledge their Elders past, present and emerging, and acknowledge any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people joining us today. Thank you to the Committee members for, firstly, doing the work necessary to get this joint select committee established, for providing the federation with the opportunity to make a submission to this inquiry and for inviting the federation to be here in person today to elaborate on the same. It's lovely to follow a proud public school teacher. He was a great advocate, I'm sure you'll agree. It's also lovely to be alongside the P&C federation, with whom the federation has had a long and proud history of collaboration and joint advocacy on many issues, including but not limited to the proper and full funding and resourcing of New South Wales public schools.

That is where this starts. Right now, not a single New South Wales public school is funded to 100 per cent of the school resourcing standard. Clearly, this failure to fully fund New South Wales public schools is having an enormous impact on the ability of the system to provide high-quality education and a broad, rich curriculum to every student in every classroom, every day. And, yes, that broad, rich curriculum does include arts and music education. The evidence says that the delivery of these enormously educationally and socially beneficial areas of the curriculum does differ from school to school. I'm going to focus on music education, but I do not want the Committee to interpret that as the federation having no interest in the arts. That is not the case. But the evidence of the educational benefits and the specialisation required for the delivery of high-quality music education does make it somewhat distinct.

Despite the promise of free public education, we do have a situation where parents' and carers' capacity to pay is an enormous factor. And despite the syllabus being mandatory for all, we do have a situation where geographic location is an enormous factor. But, most importantly, our primary school teacher members feel pressure to focus on certain elements of the syllabus, in which there is no mandatory minimum time for music. Many of our members are not equipped with the skills and training to deliver a high-quality music education to their students, despite the attainment of their degree indicating that they should be able to do so as a primary school teacher. I look forward to further discussion. Thank you.

**GEMMA QUINN:** I echo the acknowledgement of the traditional custodians of the land, where Aboriginal people have performed age-old ceremonies of storytelling, music, dance and celebration, and have shared that musical knowledge from generation to generation. That's a sentiment that we want to impart here today. The P&C federation's submission is short and to the point. We come back to three core points: that the Government should be providing funding and resourcing of music teaching in public education; that there needs to be systematic and transparent data collected regarding the teaching of arts and music; and, finally, that we support the embedding of arts and music programs through all initiatives and policies undertaken by the New South Wales Department of Education.

The P&C federation is here representing 1,900 members. Those are 1,900 P&C associations in public schools in New South Wales. We represent 25,000 volunteers, who are doing nearly seven million hours of work annually to fundraise over \$42 million that is invested back into public schools. I echo Ms Marks' sentiment that this is a funding issue that we need to continue to advocate on and address in this forum and in every forum available to us. We look to the members who are telling us that nearly 48 per cent—that's 900 P&C associations across New South Wales—are funding extracurricular activities, including arts and music, in public schools.

We want to confirm that these are parents who are out there running barbecues, turning up on election day and running businesses and services in their public schools. They're running out of school hours care. They're running canteens. They're running uniform shops. They're running band programs. They're running dance programs. They are all there with a view to make sure they provide a rich and healthy public education landscape for our children. But we cannot continue to engage parents in the role of the Department of Education providing arts and music in public schools.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** Thank you very much for coming along to give us some updates today. I would like to explore, Ms Marks, the contribution that P&Cs make to students' creative arts experience. In your experience and understanding of the need for P&Cs' contribution to other parts of the curriculum, do you have a percentage in terms of how that sits—the creative arts experience contribution by P&Cs versus other parts of the curriculum?

**KELLY MARKS:** There are a couple of things that I'd like to say about that. One is that it's not just P&Cs that are coordinated. It's also individual parents and carers, as well, and that is an enormous contribution. If I just talk about creative arts, that would be private tuition for band. That's very, very common. That still requires our teachers or our members to be a coordinator of the band program, but it almost universally requires private funding from individual parents and carers. Also, our P&Cs do enormous amounts of fundraising, not just for creative arts but for other parts of the curriculum, including books and resources, which is shameful. Those things should be provided by the Government, of course.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** Elaborating a little further, the private providers of band and orchestra and so on, if that was provided in schools, then the need wouldn't be there to go down that path?

**KELLY MARKS:** That's what we believe, Mr Anderson, yes. One of the real problems with that is that it creates enormous inequity. As you would know, being from the regions, those private band tutors might not be available in the regions. There might be capacity to pay and there might be availability of those people to come into schools to help coordinate and offer those opportunities—but not everywhere, that's for sure.

**The CHAIR:** Ms Marks, in your submission, you said the only way to achieve quality music education is to have minimum mandated hours of regularly timetabled music education in primary schools taught by a qualified music teacher. I want to get your perspective and the federation's perspective on the Amplify program and on all of these philanthropic groups that are filling the void in our primary schools, and how the federation feels about that. What capacity do you think there is to upskill the current workforce to make them feel more comfortable about providing music education? Why do you believe that having a dedicated music teacher is the solution?

**KELLY MARKS:** There are a lot of questions in there for me to go through. It needs to be sequential because that's what the research says—that it needs to be ongoing, not just one-off experiences. As wonderful as some of those one-off experiences are for our students, it does need to be ongoing. We're talking about mandatory minimum time because, at the moment, as we outlined in our submission, there is creative arts across the four areas and it's not a dedicated time within the dance, the drama, the art and the music. What we think about the mandatory minimum is that it would ensure that there is required to be a pipeline. If you set that as a target, then there's a need for trained educators.

If I can go to the quality music educators, we're not suggesting for a moment that primary schoolteachers should not retain their ability to teach across the curriculum. But we are suggesting that potentially there could be a range of options. For example, some could have specialist music teachers that have those two streams, so they are a primary schoolteacher and they have that degree but they are also a music teacher, and they could be employed across a couple of schools. They could be employed as someone that can upskill everybody in that area. We wouldn't be advocating for those opportunities to teach music to be taken away from our primary schoolteacher members, because they just need confidence.

In terms of professional learning, it's our absolute commitment that our members get professional learning as much as possible in person, in their hours of duty, rather than online. I believe there are some magnificent resources online, produced by the Arts Unit. A lot of those people in the Arts Unit are non-school-based teachers who are our members, and they do an amazing amount of work supporting the entire 2,200 public schools in the system. But, because it's not mandatory minimum delivery, there is really no impetus for teachers to take the time to do the PL unless there's a school-based decision to do so.

**Dr JOE MCGIRR:** Ms Quinn, Mr Hunt and Ms Marks, starting with that last comment about the mandatory hours and following on that theme, is there mandatory time required in other areas of the syllabus? Is there a minimum time?

**KELLY MARKS:** I believe that there is, actually. I don't specifically have that with me, so I could provide that on notice. But if you look at the federation's submission on page 2, there's a chart. That was for the current curriculum. As you know, we're in a curriculum reform phase at the moment, so there was a guideline for how those activities should be split up. As you can see, creative arts is 6 to 10 per cent, but there are four different areas. Some of what the syllabus requires is quite extensive. Performing requires there to be the instruments at the schools. We're not even convinced that the Department of Education has any idea of what instruments and resources are out there in every school.

**Dr JOE McGIRR:** That leads onto a question—it came up in the submission from the P&C federation—about the need for data. As I read it, we've gone from a situation where there was a guideline on hours per week to one in which there's no minimum standard with this new syllabus. That raises the question of how you monitor that music and arts education is actually being delivered. I might start with you, Ms Quinn, because you highlighted this need for data. We heard earlier that it's up to the principal to more or less sign off that the standard is met, but that must allow for a lot of variation, I would have thought, across the State. How would parents, for example, know that arts and creative education, music education, is meeting a NES standard at their school?

**GEMMA QUINN:** I think the reality is that parents don't know, and that is of grave concern to us. We know that parents have high demand for these programs and to understand the programs that are being run in their school, but they are clutching at any piece of information available to them that is inconsistent and patchy in order to work out what their children are learning, how their children are learning it and what gaps they need to fill as a P&C association or as a parent finding resources for their kids and their kids' interests outside of the school environment. It's not something that is sustainable, particularly when we have a cost-of-living crisis and particularly when parents are strapped for time. They don't have unlimited resources or hours in the day. They rely on the school to provide that information and that learning—that enriching environment for their children. And yet we know that there is a gap in what parents are expecting and what children are getting, and what the department has been willing to provide in terms of resourcing for arts and music.

**Dr JOE McGIRR:** That's very helpful. Another issue that came up this morning was the development of the syllabus and the curriculum, and a contention that it was a pretty opaque process. The consultation around it wasn't clear, particularly in regards to the new music curriculum in 7-10. Any comments about that consultation process for the new curriculums, K-6 and 7-10?

**KELLY MARKS:** I don't think we have particular problems with the consultation process. I think it's quite widely advertised as to when deadlines are, and the information is provided. For us, it's more about implementation and time for that to be discussed and collaborated on amongst the staff. That's much more of an issue, which is why we're really pleased that the reform of the new curriculum across all of the syllabuses has been pushed out a little bit, delayed a little bit. That's more of our focus.

**Dr JOE McGIRR:** For the P&C, did you make any submissions in relation to the curriculum review panel or process? Did the P&C association do that?

**GEMMA QUINN:** We didn't. I think that, for us, the consultation process is robust. We looked to the federation in particular to guide us on matters regarding curriculum. It's not our primary focus, and I think that there's also enough consultation occurring with parent groups in the rollout and the feedback gained once their curriculum is embedded. That is sufficient for us at this time.

**Dr JOE McGIRR:** I understand the importance of the of rollout mechanism and getting that right. I respect that. What we heard this morning was that groups had made submissions to the development of the process. It wasn't clear whether those submissions had been listened to or what part of the them had been incorporated. In fact, we heard that, in the view of one witness, the curriculum had missed a big opportunity to be brought right up to date. I think that is an important issue, but it's not one that either of your groups would particularly be able to comment on, so I accept that.

**KELLY MARKS:** Mr McGirr, I think you did mention finding out a bit more about what's going on in schools. The federation is also aware of the survey that is going to be rolled out to about 100 public primary schools in New South Wales. We are encouraging the schools that are chosen and that receive that survey to take the small amount of time to complete it so that we have a little bit more hard data. It's only 100 schools, so it's a sample only, but it will be a good start in finding out what is actually happening in our schools and whether it does reflect what we think we know.

**Dr JOE McGIRR:** Is that survey for arts education and music education?

**KELLY MARKS:** It's for music only.

**Dr JOE McGIRR:** And when was that begun, do you know?

**KELLY MARKS:** You might have to ask the department this afternoon. My understanding was that it was going live last week, as I said, to a sample of a hundred schools. It was going to a number of areas—resources. It was going to who is teaching it at the school. Are they temporary? Are they full-time? Are they permanent? Are they doing it through the RFF program? I know Mr D'Adam asked about RFF earlier. What way is it happening? Are your staff confident or not confident? It's a good start.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** I wanted to get some clarity. Earlier today, Dr Humberstone made a recommendation around an employment code for specialist music teachers in primary. Is it the federation's position that you support that or that you don't support the creation of a separate employment code?

**KELLY MARKS:** No. I might have to take that on notice, but I don't think, generally speaking, we would. Primary school teachers, in their initial teacher education, should be getting the relevant training and skills to teach across the entire curriculum. That is where the focus needs to be and the professional development of the current cohort of our primary school teachers. Generally speaking, we're not in favour of those smaller codes because we have a statewide staffing system, and we want the transfer system to be a robust mechanism so we wouldn't want people to be coded out of positions. At the moment there are two strange primary teaching codes—one for maths and one for science. There are very small numbers of members who actually have those codes. Really, we just want K-6 primary and infants' codes.

The only thing I would say is that it would be a useful data point to see how many teachers in the system could meet the requirements but, again, that would need to be a discussion between the federation and the department because there are a variety of mechanisms to get additional codes, apply for additional codes to teach, whether it's through your qualifications, which is our preferred option, or through your teaching experience. That's a very—as it should be—incredibly robust and rigorous process. Just because there's a shortage of teachers, the answer is never to drop the qualifications.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Can I just expand on that, from the university perspective? You note that the number of hours that are required for music is too small, so just clarifying that you would support an increase in the number of hours that are dedicated to music education in the teaching degree?

**KELLY MARKS:** There were a number of elements. I certainly note one submission—Music Education: Right from the Start—talked about a couple of different things in the initial teacher education. I believe there are some questions around that, too, in the survey that's going out to our 100 public primary schools. There are a couple of different things. It's not just the quantity of time that's dedicated in their ITE course but also the quality. Who is actually delivering it to them and what are they being required to do in those 10 hours, 20 hours. That's quite an important point, I think.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Just following on from that, in the absence of the code, how would you propose the model for a specialist music teacher in each primary school would operate?

**KELLY MARKS:** We are operating in the context of a significant teacher shortage, less so for primary schools than certain areas in secondary; I'll make that point. However, I think our submission says that there need to be multiple factors and multiple stages. One is addressing ITE, but another is offering pathways where, through ITE, you might become accredited and attain two dual qualifications where you are a specialist music teacher but also a generalist primary school teacher. That's certainly something that was actually recommended at some point by the previous Government under Great Teaching, Inspired Learning, so I recommend you have a look at that. There is a link to it in our submission.

But as I said earlier in my evidence, it wouldn't necessarily be one of those people for every single primary school. We have such a vast system. Twenty-five per cent of our schools are in rural and remote areas, so those people are not going to have—the idea of having a teacher that fits this criteria in all of those schools is absurd. But we need to think of different ways we can—that's why the upskilling of the current cohort is so important. That's why the access to specialist staff is so important. We believe the Arts Unit should be larger, should be greater. They are operating on goodwill, I would say.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** Mr Hunt, just ducking back to your submission, you talk about facilities and space. Yesterday we had the pleasure of going down and having a look at a couple of high schools and there seemed to be adequate space to be able to teach creative arts. A lot of schools may not have that. What are your thoughts around that?

**ROBERT HUNT:** Thank you very much, Mr Anderson, for the question and thank you for the opportunity. Asset development in the public school environment is a challenge. From the P&C federation's point of view and our members, we're challenged all the time about funding facilities and equipment for the schools. That is one of the two major objectives of a P&C. Our members are regularly challenged about funding facilities. What we have seen from our members and in our submission is that when they're not assets, principals and the department are not looking, in our view, wide enough about multipurpose. When we come to music, of course, what are the things that we need for music performances? We need a stage, audio equipment, but also the odd room or two that is soundproofed and can be used for one-on-one or small group tuition.

Part of our submission was: could we start thinking ahead about all of our asset developments with some of these other policy areas in mind, that we don't just build a square box hall; that we actually think about how that could be a performing space as well as a basketball ring and whatever else. There are some areas where that's happening, Mr Anderson. I'm not suggesting that across the board that's not, but our point is if we're about putting a future plan in place for growing the teacher population, embedding music into the curriculum, we also need to look at those performance spaces.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** Do you think lack of space could be a barrier to some schools taking up creative arts?

**ROBERT HUNT:** I think lack of space—I've lost count of how many portable classrooms are around the schools now, but I would suggest so. We don't have that sort of data; that's not in our remit. But I think all schools are challenged somewhat by the space issue.

**GEMMA QUINN:** Mr Anderson, if I may just add an anecdote. There's a school in north-west Sydney, Epping North. Their P&C association worked for 10 years to fundraise for a performing arts demountable to be put on the school because they were walking children out of the school environment down to a local community hall in order to run their dance and band programs. This is something that is a recurring theme for us, talking to parents. We have parents who are in their personal cars bringing the instruments to and from school to run the band program because there's no storage space on the school site. This is something that requires a bit of a holistic approach—a step back to have a look at how infrastructure is rolled out in our schools and what the community needs—so we don't end up with a homogenous offering, the same buildings being put on every school, when we know there is diversity in communities and how things are being rolled out.

**ROBERT HUNT:** May I add that apart from just the buildings and where you can do this, you heard yesterday about a certain school in Goulburn where, pre-COVID, every student had a violin. Where are all those violins now? They're in a storage cupboard at the Hume Conservatorium of Music.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** We heard that yesterday. We visited the Hume Conservatorium of Music.

**ROBERT HUNT:** That's where the spark came from.

**Dr JOE MCGIRR:** That's right.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Ms Marks, I just want to clarify the federation's view around data collection. In the submission there are comments about the heavy focus on literacy, numeracy and explicit teaching, and that—in a primary school environment, at least—teaching of different subjects occurs in, I suspect, what you might consider a more organic way in periods of learning particular subjects. Would you say that is a correct characterisation just before I go on?

**KELLY MARKS:** It should be, yes. It certainly should be.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** If that's the case, how do you propose ensuring that students get an appropriate amount of time dedicated to each subject? How do we report that, for example, to teachers or to NESAs, if there is so much fluidity?

**KELLY MARKS:** It is an interesting question. I suppose the point we were attempting to make in our submission was that focus on "literacy" and "numeracy"—I'm going to put them in inverted commas. There shouldn't be a dichotomy between those and targets to lift those versus the delivery of creative arts. They should be seen not as opposite things. We've got a lot of evidence—I'm sure the Committee has already heard it—of the benefits onto literacy and numeracy. We also wanted to say that sometimes where there are targets for lifting those specific areas, it puts pressure on teachers to focus their week around those things and potentially even provide evidence that that's what they have been doing—prioritising those things.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** So it's more about the goals end of things, rather than the measurement in the first place?

**KELLY MARKS:** Yes.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you very much for your participation today. If there are any follow-up questions, the secretariat will be in touch.

**(The witnesses withdrew.)**

**(Luncheon adjournment)**

**Ms KIM PAINO**, Chief Strategy and Engagement Officer, Universities Admissions Centre, sworn and examined

**The CHAIR:** Thank you, Ms Paino, for addressing us. Would you like to start by making a short statement?

**KIM PAINO:** Thank you for the opportunity. I wanted to provide a very short introductory statement about UAC. We are the body that processes applications for entry into university for universities in New South Wales and the ACT. One of the key things that we also do is calculate and provide the Australian Tertiary Admission Rank, or ATAR, to New South Wales HSC students. We're at the intersection of secondary school and university study, typically, but we also deal with applicants that are not coming straight from year 12. But that's a big part of what we do and, I think, the one that the public would know us most for.

**The CHAIR:** There's often a perception that the creative arts subjects are weighted in a way that makes it very hard for people to maximise their ATAR. Could you give your feedback on whether you think that perception is real and whether it's in some ways self-fulfilling? One of the earlier submissions that we went through today pointed out that some really talented music students, in particular, might be put off by the higher university entrance required to study education, fearing that they will have their marks brought down by studying music, even if they would love to become a music teacher.

**KIM PAINO:** The perception can be reality, I suppose. We're very aware that, in schools and amongst the year 12 community and even amongst parents, there are quite a few perceptions that are not necessarily based on fact, but they're very persistent myths about how certain courses are treated in the scaling process. From our point of view, all courses are treated as data points, effectively. Depending on the results of the students in those courses, that will obviously have an impact on how we scale those courses. Essentially, though, our advice to students is always that they should do those courses in the HSC that they are interested in, that they can perform well at and that best prepare them for whatever their post-school plans may be.

Having said that, particularly in an environment which is more and more common—that students focus their year 12 study on just 10 units—if you do more than 10 units, only 10 units are included in your ATAR calculation. When students are only doing 10 units, they obviously want to maximise the performance of those units if they're looking to achieve a higher ATAR to get into a particular course. The unfortunate effect of this perception can be that sometimes they will choose courses that they think will give them a better ATAR. Whether that is actually true often gets lost, I think, in their decision-making. They may also be influenced by schools. We do a lot of work with schools to help them give the correct messaging to students, but some schools, perhaps for other reasons, may want students to study particular courses, depending on what they're offering.

This doesn't just impact arts and music courses. We sometimes see that incentives around maximising the number of students in performance bands can lead to some unfortunate consequences in student choice. For example, a talented English student may be persuaded to choose only standard English, rather than advanced, with this notion that that would maximise their band. They're more likely to get a band 6 in standard English than in advanced English, even though they're suited to it. They may only get a band 5. Those sorts of things do come into play. From an ATAR calculation and scaling point of view, we're completely agnostic about the courses that students choose. We simply want them to follow the best advice because that really is how they will maximise their ATAR. But, at the same time, there is a broader context in which all these conversations are happening.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Perhaps you might be able to explain how the ATAR is worked out.

**KIM PAINO:** Certainly. If it's of interest, I have a document that I'm happy to table which provides a bit of the information that I'm giving today. Essentially, there are rules around being eligible for the HSC and there are rules around being eligible for the ATAR, and they are a little bit different, even though we are using HSC marks when we calculate the ATAR. The benefit of that—or one of them; there are a few—is that students don't need to do an additional test to have a base rank on which universities will assess whether they're suitable for making an offer to their courses.

When we look at the ATAR, essentially the key difference between the HSC and the ATAR is that the ATAR is, as the name suggests, a rank. The HSC, as we know—I just mentioned performance bands. For each one of your courses, you are being assessed against how far you have reached the performance descriptors of each of the bands of that course. It's how you have measured up against the standards for each of those courses. When it comes to the ATAR, we're trying to rank students in order. We're literally putting them in order. As we would all know, the top rank is 99.95 and it goes down from there. The only way we can effectively do that in a fair way is to scale the marks that we receive from NESA, from the HSC. The marks that a student receives on their HSC—

we are using those marks, but we have to scale them in order to come up with an aggregate that's fair. We then are able to derive the ATAR, which is the percentile.

The reason is that in the HSC, as we know, there are so many subjects or courses that students can choose from, and they've grown over the years. That may be one of the challenges for certain subjects trying to attract students because they have a lot of choice in the HSC. Because of that there are, I think, something like 28,000 different patterns of study presented each year amongst the HSC cohort. If we're looking to fairly rank students, we need a mechanism which takes account of the differences between courses. Achieving a performance band 6 in one course can be quite different to achieving it in another. That's the scaling process that happens. Because it's a mathematical process—we have equations that we have in various documentary form that people can share—it's hard for people to really get a grasp of.

But the underlying principle is that students should neither be advantaged nor disadvantaged by any of their course choices in the HSC. We're trying to compare apples with apples, effectively, putting everything on a common scale. Then we are able to see and compare performance across different types of HSC courses. So how does a band 6 in visual arts stack up against a band 5 in physics, for example? They're very different courses. The scaling mechanism is a mathematical way to represent the strength of the candidature in each of the courses. Effectively, what happens is for every HSC student when we scale their marks, for each one of their courses they will have a scaled mark and that is the interaction of the scaled mean, which is the representation of the academic ability of the cohort in that course—the interaction of that number with their own position in that course.

This is why we say—quite apart from the fact that it's obviously in the student's best interests to pursue courses that are going to be of interest and benefit to them in the longer term. It's because those two things interact. If something has a high-scaled mean, it means that when the scaling process takes place that mean will bump—"scaled up" is the common parlance. I'm always reluctant to say it because we don't want to persist with these myths and perceptions. But, effectively, that will boost the marks from that course.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Are you saying that the candidates within the course that's being scaled up—the overall candidates in that course—how are you determining that they're performing at a higher level?

**KIM PAINO:** It's based on how they've performed in all their HSC courses. You can imagine that a lot of data is coming into this algorithm that we have to do this calculation and, effectively, for each student we're looking at how they have performed across the board to get a sense of their average academic ability, I suppose. If you're in a course with lots of high academic ability students, the scaled mean for that course will be relatively high, but you've also got strong competition. Your scaled mark for that course is the interaction of that scaled mean and your position. We put out this data every year in a scaling report. If you look you can see the courses that might have high-scaled means. Typically, this doesn't change too much because schools, on the whole, are quite good at putting students into the courses that suit them best.

You could look at that and say, "Okay, the key to getting a high ATAR surely is to do all these courses that have the high-scaled means." But that doesn't take into account the other part of the scaled mark, which is your position in that course. If I look at the data that we produce every year and say, "Okay, clearly, if I do maths extension 2 and physics and chemistry—these typically have high-scaled means—that will benefit me." If I'm not very good at those subjects and I have a low position, my scaled mark will be reduced, so the benefit of the high-scaled mean or the scaling up won't really help me that much if I'm not doing well in that course. Realistically, the students that achieve the highest ATARs are those who have maximised their position in their courses.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** What information do universities have access to? When they're assessing students that might be suitable or unsuitable for different courses, do universities have access to the bands, for example, or the pre-UAI calculation? How does that work?

**KIM PAINO:** Yes, indeed. In terms of admission into university courses, it is a broader picture that we're looking at. For students coming out of the HSC, the ATAR is the base ranking that we have. But universities take other things into account. What we know is that many universities will give adjustments—they're called adjustments—for performance in particular subjects. They also know—we actually do all this. It's all automated within our system. If it's an arts-related course at the university and they're looking to attract students who have done well in courses like that in the HSC, they can give adjustments. For example, I might have an ATAR of 75. I am applying to go into a visual arts course at university and, because I got a band 6 in visual arts in the HSC, they'll give me three adjustments.

My selection rank overall is my ATAR at 75, plus those three adjustments. They do take a broader picture into account and it's very relevant for arts and music education post-school because, typically, it's not just based on ATAR. Usually there's an audition or a portfolio or some other additional selection criteria on top of things

like adjustments. The final rank that a student is presenting to a university—and this is all automated within our system—is higher than their original ATAR anyway because they're taking into account other things, and they'll give a numerical value to how they performed at an audition or what they think of their portfolio and add that into an overall selection measure so that they can make those offers.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** That's assuming that the person is seeking entry into an arts-related course. But the issue that we're trying to grapple with is that the operation of the scaling system is dissuading candidates to select those courses of arts and music in particular. That's leading to reduced numbers and obviously the overall pool of people that are available to do those courses has an effect on the staffing numbers and has a cascading effect through the system. Is there some form of intervention in the ATAR system that could address that problem of dissuading people from selecting those courses?

**KIM PAINO:** There are two things I'd like to say in response to that. One is the communication program that I alluded to earlier. It is incumbent on organisations like UAC, the universities and schools to best advise their students when they are choosing courses for the HSC. Our interaction with students does indeed begin in year 10 for that very season. In terms of what the data is telling us at UAC, the number of students taking courses like visual arts, music, dance and drama in the HSC over the last decade has been relatively stable. We haven't seen a decline, particularly in those areas, over the last 10 years. Because, as I said earlier, the HSC has so many course options, some courses have indeed had a bit of a decline over the last few years in favour of other courses. You have something like economics, which has declined, compared to business studies, which has grown a lot.

Students are making choices for a whole range of reasons, one of which is whether they're getting good advice. As I said, I think it is incumbent on those of us who are providing advice to those students to give advice that will be of maximum benefit to them for their longer term plans. There is a broader context around which students are making these decisions. So, yes, we're very aware of how unhelpful these perceptions about visual arts being scaled down and these sorts of things are to students choosing. We're not seeing it in the data in terms of the volume of students at this stage. We are seeing it, however, in the number of applications to arts and music courses post-school.

In the applications that we receive there has been a decline in the percentage of students having those kinds of courses in their preferences because they're coming through the HSC with those courses and then choosing other things in their university application. That can be for a number of things. We don't necessarily have all the data ourselves to be able to fully analyse that. One thing that we need to acknowledge is that not all of these types of courses come through the UAC. Obviously we predominantly service universities and there may have been a decline in the number of bachelor degree courses that universities are offering in this area. We have some private providers, but a lot of these courses at the tertiary level are handled outside the UAC system. I give the example of NIDA in dramatic arts. We do not handle those applications, so I would not know if they've had a growth there.

Perhaps some students are taking these courses for the HSC and then going down a different post-secondary education pathway that doesn't involve an application through us. That's an interesting thing that potentially could warrant further investigation. If the data is telling us that the number of students doing those courses in the HSC has been quite stable over the past decade, whether at the beginning of the decade it still wasn't enough is a worthy question. Then what's happening to them? Why are they not pursuing those after school, if they are not?

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Is the sector distribution the same within the cohort that is selecting these courses? I don't know whether you have access to that data about the Catholic, independent and public systems.

**KIM PAINO:** We could analyse the data on that basis. We typically don't, but that's something that I could take on notice if that was an area the Committee would be interested in.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Yes. If you could, that would be useful in terms of the number of candidates.

**KIM PAINO:** Certainly. I don't have that at my fingertips, but we can break down the data into those areas.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** In terms of music particularly, where there are options for a higher level—music 2 or an extension—are the candidacy numbers remaining constant for those courses?

**KIM PAINO:** That is very interesting, isn't it? As you've just alluded to, potentially we could be seeing a total number that hasn't changed much in 10 years, but the make-up of the students within those numbers may, as you say, depend on the type of school. I don't know the answer to that. I'm happy to take that on notice. It certainly is an interesting thing to consider the other contexts in which students are making these decisions, some

of which are based on faulty information but some of which are based on purely practical considerations such as timetabling or "My school doesn't offer it". Arts and music courses are not the only ones that suffer that. There are quite a few HSC courses that may not be available to certain students because their school doesn't offer it or, if they do, it's in tandem with another local school that they have to arrange transport to get to. I'm sure you may have heard these sorts of things from other people giving evidence.

**Dr JOE MCGIRR:** To follow that up, would you need to go back and get additional information to assess whether there'd been a shift, say, within music between the numbers over that period of time doing extension and music 2 versus music 1?

**KIM PAINO:** Not so much that. The numbers are quite stable. There's been a slight decline in music 1 and dance. The others are very, very stable. When I say "a slight decline" I mean perhaps a percentage point.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** That's interesting because there's another submission that suggested that music 2 and extension had declined but music 1 had increased. I'll go back and have a look at that.

**KIM PAINO:** Perhaps I can double-check that. It's in my document that I'm happy to table, as well. The thing I would like to come back about is whether those numbers have changed in terms of the proportion of students within them from the public system, the independent system or the Catholic system.

**Dr JOE MCGIRR:** Yes, that would be useful. Can I go back and clarify? One of the key issues here is the assessment of the mean of the academic strength in the cohort of people attempting a subject, and then that's linked to rank to get your ATAR. How is that sense of academic strength within the cohort assessed?

**KIM PAINO:** It's data driven, so it's based on the HSC marks of those students. Let's say we're looking to scale music 1. All the students in music 1—we have all their marks for all their courses. That is all the data that is used to assess how they've done in all their courses, not just in music 1. Effectively, how academically strong are the people in that course? You can imagine some courses, by dint of not very many schools offering them, for example—certain types of students are attracted to it. If you had Latin Continuers, for example, it's a very high-scaled mean because it's a very, very small group of students at very select schools that probably are curated into that course, so they're high-achieving subjects. Then when you have something that is much broader, like society and culture, the cohort of students doing that is very diverse. That will have an impact on the scaled mean of that course because you've got students of varying abilities across that course. The way we measure their varying abilities is by looking at their marks across their HSC program.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Doesn't that approach create a socio-economic bias? Latin continuous is a good example. As far as I know, there's only one public school that offers Latin in the State. You've got a course that has a very narrow cohort that's given a particular advantage that's not universally available. You're building in a bias, aren't you, into the UAC ATAR system?

**KIM PAINO:** As I said, we're agnostic about courses. We are operating in a wider context that is, in some ways, beyond our control in terms of what the courses are available to students.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Shouldn't the algorithm take that into account?

**KIM PAINO:** I wonder how it could do that while maintaining its unbiased nature, and I think we need to remind ourselves that this is a tool for university entry only. It is a tool that we calculate and provide on behalf of the universities, and their objective is to have the most suitable students enrolling in their courses. The extent to which they may wish to broaden—

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** It's a compounding privilege, though, isn't it? Really, you're just creating a situation where—

**KIM PAINO:** The ATAR doesn't exist in a vacuum. There is a strong focus at the Federal Government level on greater equity in tertiary admissions, and this is why universities don't just rely on ATAR. I think there's a way in which they can preserve the unbiased, data-driven approach of ATAR while acknowledging that there's a broader social context in which all this is playing out. It may well be much broader than whether the subject is offered by the school; it's also how much support students have to achieve academically. There's obviously a lot that's packed into it. But their way of counteracting that is other programs, and we run some of them on behalf of universities. One of our biggest schemes is called the Educational Access Scheme. This is a scheme that allows for consideration of any disadvantageous circumstance that a student may have experienced during their schooling. There's 20-something different circumstances that we'll take into account. It can be things like family separation, excessive caring responsibilities, disruption with schooling—all sorts of things.

I suspect the universities would say that's one mechanism through which they can offset the social context that may feed into some biases, as you frame it, in terms of the ATAR whilst still preserving the ATAR, because it's not the only thing they're taking into account. They are looking at circumstances beyond students' control that may have affected their performance in the HSC. They're also looking at things like adjustments. They're looking at alternative selection criteria. There are different pathways for First Nations students. University admissions is quite broad. ATAR is an important part of it, but it's a single part of it, and there is a much broader context of how universities assess the suitability of students for their courses. One would hope that at least some of those other measures are offsetting the social disadvantage that you've alluded to.

**The CHAIR:** Is there an issue with assessing performance or presentation instead of by exam, like the major work in visual arts? The students engaged in those subjects are very focused and very capable of self-correcting and put their whole heart and soul into this, and then you're spreading them out over a bell curve which might be artificially driving down their results. Apart from the ones who don't really put any effort in, most of them are going to give their all. They might end up all clustered around the 80 to 100 mark and then get dragged down into a bell curve before you even add the scaling onto that because of the nature of the ability to self-correct, rather than sitting in an exam room and doing your best and having no idea how you're performing compared to everybody else.

**KIM PAINO:** When you mention the bell curve, do you mean when they're put into performance bands?

**The CHAIR:** When you're assuming that the average performance is 60 per cent. I don't know that that many people want to do a 60 per cent dance performance in front of examiners or a 60 per cent visual arts major work. I would imagine that a lot of them are, in their own self-correcting and dedicated way, aiming a lot higher than that, even if they're not thinking of it in a numeric sense. They're aiming to do the best they can. These are very time-consuming subjects that then get scaled really badly.

**KIM PAINO:** The scaled mean may be lower than some of the other subjects, but if a student does really well in it, they will have a high-scaled mark for that subject because their position is high and that will offset any effects of having a lower scaled mean than, say, our nice example of Latin continuers. Students in those courses are still capable of and are achieving very high ATARs. One of the tables that we produce each year when we have calculated the ATAR is the maximum ATAR that a student in each course achieved that year. For most courses it's 99.95. There are very few courses where a student hasn't achieved a 99.95 doing that course. It's no barrier in that sense. Position is very critical to the scaled mark that you will achieve. If you are a very talented artist and you have put your heart and soul into your major work and done extremely well, you will have a high-scaled mark for visual arts; there's no doubt.

However—and this may well be an issue; I'm not qualified to expand fully, nor do I have the expertise—if doing that major work has taken a lot of oxygen out of your year 12 year and it has meant that you have had less time to devote to your other courses, that could be an issue for some students. As I said, our data is showing that we haven't seen a drop in students taking these courses. Whether there's a difference between different types of schools, I'm yet to uncover. But they are time-consuming and there's a student passion involved there. This is why it is good that universities are looking at other criteria for students wanting to pursue that after school. They have done a fantastic major work; perhaps they're in ARTEXPRESS. Universities will be looking at their portfolio and they will be looking on that very favourably for those types of courses, and not looking so intently on ATAR in that situation.

**Dr JOE McGIRR:** The assessment of the mean academic strength in the cohort depends on their assessment across all subjects.

**KIM PAINO:** Yes.

**Dr JOE McGIRR:** Most students in the State will be doing English and maths of some sort, I would imagine.

**KIM PAINO:** They must include English in their ATAR calculation. That is one of the ATAR rules. They obviously need English for the HSC as well. Maths is not compulsory.

**Dr JOE McGIRR:** In terms of the sorts of courses that contribute to that assessment of mean academic strength, I don't know the numbers, but I would imagine that subjects with a large number of students doing them would put a whole lot of weight into the assessment of the particular academic strength of a subject. It seems to me it would be possible that visual arts, for example, the strength of that is being essentially calculated on how a student does in English, maths, science and other subjects. It would be interesting to look at the data to see which subjects go to contribute to, in most part, that assessment of strength. I suspect there's a bit of a bias towards subjects with a high volume of students, and that will include maths, English and perhaps the sciences—I don't

know. Because of the weight in the volume of the number of students doing it, there may be a bias in the assessment of an academic strength of a particular subject, depending on that.

**KIM PAINO:** As I said, the assessment of the academic strength of the candidature of each subject is based on how they have performed in all their courses. It's not necessarily volume based; it's how they've performed in all their courses. Typically, the courses with the highest candidatures in the HSC have the most mixed abilities because you've got a broad sweep of students. Some courses have well over 10,000 students in the course with a broad range of abilities. This is where it's important that we have that individual component as well to the scaled mark. It's not just about the strength of the competition; it's how you've performed against it as well, which is why it all comes back to the fact that it's a ranking. It's a tool. It's not perfect. It's not meant to represent all the strengths of a student and nor should it. It's a single measure that's used as a basis.

It is used in conjunction with other criteria, other factors, to acknowledge other aspects of what a student can bring to their post-school study or life. Of course, at the same time, I think the whole tertiary sector—and certainly UAC is involved in this also—is looking at a broader way of assessing students as well, things like general capabilities and those things that sometimes people refer to as twenty-first century skills or soft skills. A certain amount of those are packed into—having achieved the HSC and achieved an ATAR, you've obviously shown resilience; you've performed. Those things are there but non-explicitly. As I said, ATAR is not used singularly, but over time it will become part of an even greater way in which we can assess students for suitability for tertiary study.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** How does the interaction with the school rank work? Obviously there's a 50 per cent component for school assessment, so the ranking within a school is important.

**KIM PAINO:** Yes.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** I have a subsidiary question, which is: What's to stop schools with a strong cohort in music offering music 2, pushing the weaker students from music 2 down into music 1, and that obviously then has an impact on the overall cohort in music 1 across the State? If that phenomenon is occurring at scale in a number of places, can you perhaps offer some comment about those two things?

**KIM PAINO:** In terms of schools manipulating which students go into which courses, I have to acknowledge the limit of my expertise. I'm not a teacher; I'm not currently working in a school. I certainly know that, anecdotally, UAC intersects with students providing feedback about the advice they've received at school and not always is that advice in the interests of the student so much as it is in the interests of the school as a whole. It's not just the courses that you are particularly concerned with here. It can happen, as I have referred to, with things like English advanced and English standard, maths advanced and maths standard, in the drive to achieve a maximum number of students in performance band 6.

There's also, unfortunately, some university level requirements that might also drive student behaviour in ways that might not be at the individual student level best interest. I'm thinking here of criteria for entry into teaching courses which have required that you have a minimum of three band 5s, one of which must be in English. If you have a talented English student who perhaps would be best suited at a personal level to advanced English, you might see an incentive there in doing standard English because you're more likely to get that band 5. You might be a bit worried about achieving a band 5 in advanced because that, effectively, is a harder academic course. There are some issues there. I don't know if that answers your question. Is there something more that I can provide to help with your question?

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** I was asking about the interaction within the school ranking and how that works.

**KIM PAINO:** As I said, I'm not working in a school; I'm not a teacher. From our point of view, as I said right at the beginning, in terms of ATAR calculation at least, we are literally just looking at whatever the numbers are that we're given. In terms of the school assessment, however, the process of moderation is absolutely key there. Schools may well handle their assessments. They obviously have guidelines that they're all following, but different schools have different approaches to the assessment of their students. To counteract for any differences between schools in the same way as we're counteracting for differences between student choices of subjects, we're using the moderated assessments, and they are moderated against the exams. In terms of rank order of students within schools, that's preserved for their assessment marks. But their assessment marks that we receive from NESAs are shifted, depending on how they perform in the exam. I guess that is the yardstick because everyone is sitting the same exam, so you are trying to provide that consistency and fairness there.

One of the myths we encounter with this confusion between the assessment that NESAs oversee with schools, the exam mark and what we do over the top of that is that sometimes students feel as though the rank

they have been assigned by their school means that even if they achieve the best exam mark in their school, they won't get it. Let's say I'm doing biology and I'm ranked three in my school, and then we all go and sit our biology exam and I get the best exam mark for my ATAR. I'm only going to get the third-best exam mark because I'm ranked third. That's not true. Your exam mark is your exam mark. The thing that changes is the number attached to your school assessment, because that's moderated against the spread of marks within the school.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you, Ms Paino. I appreciate your time and your expertise this afternoon. If there are any follow-up questions, the secretariat will be in touch with you.

**(The witness withdrew.)**

**Ms ANNETTE PITMAN**, Chief Executive Officer, Create NSW, affirmed and examined

**The CHAIR:** Ms Pitman, welcome. Thank you for your time this afternoon. Would you like to start by making a short statement?

**ANNETTE PITMAN:** I would, thank you. The New South Wales Government recognises the broad social and economic value that comes from an investment in the arts, its power to connect people, its ability to inspire and the skills that it offers to children, young people and lifelong learners. Participation in arts and music education promotes problem-solving, inventiveness and entrepreneurship. Furthermore, it encourages expression and communication. It leads to healthy, connected communities. From the small-to-medium sector to our major cultural institutions, our State's arts and cultural organisations are prolific contributors to arts and music education. Beyond the class excursion or field trip, they provide vital training grounds where professionals hone their skills and gain on-the-job experience.

In December last year, the New South Wales Government launched Creative Communities, its 10-year arts, culture and creative industries policy. Encompassing both the traditional arts sector, cultural institutions and the broader creative industries, Creative Communities is intended to strengthen, support and enhance creativity within Australia's biggest State with the largest cultural workforce. This policy was developed on the back of extensive consultation with the New South Wales creative sector. Across regional and metropolitan areas, stakeholders expressed the value of participation in arts education and the role of the education sector in establishing vital career pathways and a sustainable creative ecosystem. Furthermore, Creative Communities articulates the value of partnerships between governments, the not-for-profit sector and commercial enterprise. This is enabling the New South Wales Government to support creative practitioners and generate new opportunities that allow creativity to flourish. The policy complements Revive, the national cultural policy, and shares its commitment to prioritise First Nations culture and take our stories and creativity to the world.

New South Wales is currently embarking on the single largest commitment to Australian contemporary music on record, with the New South Wales Government investing \$103 million in contemporary music over four years. Sound NSW, New South Wales Government's new contemporary music development office, aims to foster creative careers, encourage innovation, enhance export opportunities and create positive outcomes for artists, industry professionals, music businesses and audiences. Championing and investing in New South Wales contemporary music will not only benefit New South Wales; it will also provide significant benefit to the music industry nationally.

In addition to this, late last year, New South Wales began implementing a whole-of-government approach to restore vibrancy to the State through regulatory reform to support venues, artists and performance in New South Wales. This reform includes a target to double the number of music venues and increase creative sector employment and skills growth. Creative Communities also aims to ensure that over the next decade, everyone in New South Wales has access to cultural and creative activities, services and goods from early childhood to old age. As this Committee has already heard and as the policy notes, the evidence is clear that young children who participate in cultural and creative activities are much more likely to do well in school, find connections and thrive later in life. Finding ways to make participation in music, art, dance, video and drama part of every student's education will be an investment in their future and future of the State.

Creative Communities commits the New South Wales Government to sustainably grow the size of the creative industries in New South Wales by enabling creative communities throughout the State to reach their potential. Over the next decade, growth in the cultural and creative industries will provide opportunities for education and training, leading to sustainable, meaningful careers for creatives, their professional collaborators and co-workers. Creative Communities commits to a whole-of-government effort to advocate for, enable and invest in the arts, culture and creative industries. This will include but is not limited to formal partnerships between Create NSW and the Department of Education, TAFE NSW, the Ministry of Health, Transport for NSW and other agencies to further develop priority streams of work.

The New South Wales Government recognises that it will take time to fully realise this broad vision and that it cannot be realised by the Government alone. Partnerships will be crucial to ensuring that New South Wales remains a thriving and creative place to live, work, study and visit. The New South Wales Government is committed to being an advocate, enabler and investor to grow and foster vibrancy and engagement across the State. This will involve partnering with public, not-for-profit, community and commercial enterprises, individuals and all levels of government. Thank you. I'm happy to take any questions you have.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** I'm curious about the support Create NSW provides for the maintenance and development of culturally diverse forms of music. Are there any specific programs or grant

schemes that are operating to assist in maintaining the vibrancy of non-Western, non-traditional forms of music making in New South Wales?

**ANNETTE PITMAN:** As I mentioned, we recently commenced and stood up Sound NSW. Right now Sound NSW is in the middle of developing a contemporary music strategy for New South Wales, a 10-year strategy that will be very comprehensive, looking across the entire breadth of that industry. The benefit of that strategy is that it will drive the number of programs and investment that occurs from the \$103 million commitment over four years. There are a number of programs that have started. Those include programs for venues, in particular, to enable venues to be available for use as contemporary music performance spaces. There will be a number of additional programs that come out of the policy, which will be complete later on this year. Watch this space. We're still developing those programs, but we certainly recognise that there is a very broad milieu of contemporary music, and we very much want to ensure that the work we are doing with Sound NSW is benefiting the breadth of the contemporary music sector, especially including culturally and linguistically diverse organisations and artists.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** We heard some evidence earlier today about equipping venues to be more accessible to artists with a disability. Can you perhaps speak to whether there's any work being done in that space by Create NSW?

**ANNETTE PITMAN:** Yes, there are a number of programs that Create NSW has run over the course of the last five years or so that are directly contributing to the viability, if you will, and the modernisation of venues across the State. The Regional Cultural Fund and the Creative Capital program, in particular, as well as the CLIRP program, which is the program particularly in the Northern Rivers post the flood experience—those programs have worked to modernise facilities. A big component of that modernisation, of course, is providing access, in particular, access for people with disabilities, to ensure that there is equity of access, if you will, across the State in the venues, in people's communities.

**The CHAIR:** We heard from NIDA and AFTRS about there being a skill shortage particularly with back-of-house-type roles. What role, if any, does Create NSW have in conveying the problem that's coming from industry through to the Department of Education to make sure that they realise there are opportunities for students to pursue creative careers?

**ANNETTE PITMAN:** Through Sound NSW and Screen NSW, both of which sit within the remit of Create NSW, there are direct relationships with those individual creative industries. The screen sector, in particular, has been quite specific around the areas of skill shortages that they're experiencing. As you say, Chair, those sit significantly in the technical careers, in particular. We also know that in the arts sector, and particularly in theatre, the theatre tech skill sets are really in high demand. We know that part of the reason for that is that during the COVID shutdowns a lot of the people who were employed in those careers made other career arrangements and it's been very difficult to get those people back into the sector, which has left a gap in that area of skill set. We've been working quite closely with TAFE and with the specialist schools, like NIDA and AFTRS, particularly around ensuring that they have the awareness of the requirements from industry. We play, in some respects, that convening role, bringing those organisations together and working closely with them to identify where there are opportunities for programs to fill those gaps.

**Dr JOE MCGIRR:** Following on a little bit from that, because the Chair has just identified that issue with skills shortages, which you've spoken to, I think that came up in the feedback to developing the policy. There were a couple of other items that came up. One was the impact of the job-ready graduates program on people studying visual arts and arts-related and creative industry-related issues at university but also the varying levels of education in these areas at schools. I'm just interested in your action, or Create NSW's actions, to address those issues as you work with the Department of Education and other various bodies going forward.

**ANNETTE PITMAN:** It is clear that, depending on where you grow up, where you live, what school catchment area you're in, there is a vastly different experience in terms of access to arts education, particularly earlier in the schooling experience. That is something, as you say, that was brought up quite a lot during the consultation that we did for the Creative Communities policy. It was interesting that the consultation process yielded three key areas for us, one being the three highest priorities of things that over and over again were talked about no matter where we were across the State. That equity of education, and the pathways and the opportunities, particularly in early education, was in the top three continually. That not only has an impact in terms of people who might choose to pursue a career in the creative industries, but it also has an impact in terms of building audiences and building awareness and building support for arts and culture across individual communities, so it has quite a large impact.

The Creative Communities policy includes a number of commitments that we've made to collaborate both across government and, in particular, with the Department of Education and TAFE NSW through formal partnerships, which we're in the process of developing now that the policy is complete, working very closely to identify opportunities to collaborate. That is a serious commitment. It is an area that both TAFE and the Department of Education have welcomed. Equally, as I mentioned, we are working very closely with tertiary organisations—the specialist schools like the National Art School, NIDA and AFTRS, as well as the universities across the State—to ensure the collaboration and the opportunities to really have a very deep focus on that educational accessibility is available.

**Dr JOE MCGIRR:** So it's an area of focus.

**ANNETTE PITMAN:** It is.

**Dr JOE MCGIRR:** But in terms of the actions, I suppose at this stage that's still being developed.

**ANNETTE PITMAN:** It is. The specific actions are still being developed. Internal to government we have an interdepartmental committee which is governing the implementation of the policy, and those organisations are represented at that table. There's an implementation plan that is just being finalised with very detailed actions and initiatives coming out of that.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Are those actions as detailed in their description for work as they are in responsibility? Is it very clear who does what?

**ANNETTE PITMAN:** Yes, absolutely, and they need to be measurable to enable us to track our progress to achieving those and to hold ourselves and our colleagues accountable for that. So, yes, absolutely.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** And are they intended to be made public?

**ANNETTE PITMAN:** We are just working through the machinations of that. They will form the basis of a memorandum of understanding between ourselves and those organisations and we will be reporting publicly on the progress for that, absolutely.

**Dr JOE MCGIRR:** What's the timeline around that?

**ANNETTE PITMAN:** This is a 10-year policy. Each will have its own timeline and we—

**Dr JOE MCGIRR:** My apologies—I meant the timeline for the MOU implementation plan to be finalised and made public. I realise you'll have a number of initiatives over time, but I was keen to hear when we'd be able to see that documentation.

**ANNETTE PITMAN:** The implementation plan will be done by the end of the year—probably much sooner than that. It's just nearing completion. The MOUs will fall off the back of that. I suspect that in the first half of next year, all of the specific documentation of that intent to collaborate will be in place, at least with the key organisations we've spoken about.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** Thanks, Ms Pitman. We're looking forward to seeing how the detail on that collaboration with the education department works out. With Sound NSW and regional New South Wales, this inquiry has heard of the tyranny of distance and how opportunities in regional New South Wales perhaps are not as forthcoming as they are in metropolitan areas like Newcastle, Sydney and Wollongong. Are there any regional members on the Sound NSW board?

**ANNETTE PITMAN:** I believe there are. I don't have the list of members in front of me, so I can take that on notice to provide a list of the members to the Committee.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** Thank you very much. The music side of it that we're talking about, lighting that spark in education—your organisation has a big role to play in that. On the new music board, are there any musicians on that board?

**ANNETTE PITMAN:** Yes. Again, I can provide the specifics of that to you on notice.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** Great. The reason I'm asking those questions is because some of that expertise around the table can provide valuable insight into how to tap into some of those markets. Thank you very much for that. The contemporary music strategy—again, it's about arts in education. How do you think that contemporary music strategy—firstly, do you have details on what that is? Then I'll get to the next part of the question, if possible.

**ANNETTE PITMAN:** As I mentioned, we have undertaken to deliver a 10-year contemporary music strategy, which will be complete by the end of the year. We're putting the flesh on the bones of that at the moment.

One of the things that's really clear with contemporary music in particular is that a lot of the pathways that exist currently for music education don't provide contemporary music education. There is a significant issue around the availability of education opportunities in contemporary music generally, and particularly when you get into regional areas, it becomes even more acute.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** The night-time commissioner is doing a great job. In terms of those venues providing live music—if you're going to encourage young people to come through music, they've started in school. They start bands and then they get into venues and work their way up. Is there a strategy to look at promoting young entertainers into venues not just in the city but also in regional New South Wales?

**ANNETTE PITMAN:** Absolutely. The work that we're doing is looking at providing more venues that are available for and suitable for performance, and incentivising, in some ways, organisations—proprietors of those venues—to hire artists to perform in their spaces. There are a number of ways, through the 24-hour commissioner, that that is being encouraged. The Vibrancy Reforms that are on foot currently are seeking to do that, so that is absolutely the case. The idea is that providing education and providing pathways for young musicians, in particular, to perform and get that experience and build their audience and become exposed to the business side of being an artist is really critical. Having those venues that are suited and that are encouraged and that understand the value of providing those performances is key to that.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** What we've heard through the Committee is that young people coming through don't really see where that next level is. Through the contemporary music strategy and through the board and the representation on that—it would be great to hear back on that. Also, some detail on that contemporary music strategy would be greatly appreciated.

**ANNETTE PITMAN:** Yes, and we're really excited about launching that later on this year. The work that Sound NSW has done and that Emily Collins, the head of Sound NSW, has done in terms of engagement with the sector broadly and feeding that into the drafting of the document, which is underway now, as I mentioned—we're really excited about having that clear pathway forward for the work that group will do for the next 10 years.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you very much, Ms Pitman, for your time this afternoon. It has been really useful. If there are any follow-up questions, the secretariat will be in touch.

**(The witness withdrew.)**

**Ms JANET SCHORER, PSM**, Chief Delivery Officer, TAFE NSW, sworn and examined

**Dr RAFFAELE MARCELLINO**, Executive Director, Education and Skills – Sydney, TAFE NSW, sworn and examined

**The CHAIR:** Welcome, and thanks for your time this afternoon. Would you like to start by making a short statement?

**JANET SCHORER:** Yes, I would. Firstly, I'd like to acknowledge the Gadigal people as the traditional custodians of the land on which we're appearing today, acknowledge and pay my respect to Elders past and present, and acknowledge Aboriginal people who might be in the room today. I'd also very much like to thank the Committee for the invitation to appear today. TAFE NSW works closely with the Department of Education, which provides the overall strategic policy direction within the broader education portfolio, as well as funding TAFE NSW via Smart and Skilled. I hope that the evidence we give you this afternoon will provide an understanding of TAFE NSW's role in providing opportunities for people all across New South Wales to engage in industry-relevant arts and music education and training.

TAFE NSW is the biggest provider of vocational education and training in Australia, with programs informed by industry and community consultation. TAFE NSW's primary role in the arts sector is to train people for employment in the creative industries, making sure they are equipped with a combination of industry-relevant skills, knowledge and attributes to gain and keep work. TAFE NSW supports arts and creative skills development through programs in specialist areas such as sound production; live production in music; film, TV, screen and media; 3D animation and games development; production design; fashion; interior design; jewellery; ceramics; visual arts; and graphic design.

Equipping our learners with the skills needed to thrive in these dynamic fields, TAFE NSW recognises the crucial role that the creative economy plays in invigorating industries, connecting culturally diverse and local communities, and enhancing liveability and wellbeing. In terms of numbers, TAFE NSW had over 400,000 enrolments in 2023. Over the years the creative arts field of education has accounted for about 3 per cent of our total New South Wales enrolments. Between 2021 and 2023 TAFE NSW government-funded enrolments in the creative arts field of education increased by 16 per cent to 10,500. TAFE NSW saw a spike in government-funded enrolments in 2023 in the creative arts field associated with the Government's fee-free program, with increases in certificate III in design fundamentals, certificates III and IV in screen and media, certificate III in floristry and the certificate III in music.

TAFE NSW has a solid reputation in the creative industries and in the community for providing industry-relevant training in the creative arts field with a focus on industry collaboration and developing job-ready graduates. TAFE NSW aims to deliver flexible delivery models and wraparound support for our learners, which helps learners from all backgrounds to access quality arts and music education and training. Through our commitment to enhancing the skills of artists and practitioners from diverse backgrounds, ethnicities, genders and abilities, TAFE NSW is well placed to help embed diversity and inclusion in the creative arts industries. This is evidenced by the demographic profile of TAFE NSW students in the creative arts field of education. In 2023 females accounted for 62 per cent of our enrolments, 25 per cent of enrolments were students with disability, 19 per cent of enrolments were students from a language other than English, 7 per cent of enrolments were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, 36 per cent of enrolments were students from low socio-economic backgrounds, and 19 per cent of enrolments were students from regional or remote communities.

I am pleased to share that the latest data indicates TAFE NSW students in the creative arts field of education in our 2018 cohort had a higher course completion rate than the average for New South Wales. The data indicates that 49.1 per cent of students who commenced full qualifications in the creative arts field in 2018 with TAFE NSW completed their course, compared to 47 per cent for New South Wales overall. I reiterate that TAFE NSW is deeply committed to ensuring that arts and music education and training opportunities are available to students from all backgrounds. I look forward to speaking with the Committee further about how we collaborate with creative industries and provide innovative opportunities for students to engage in industry-relevant arts and music education.

**The CHAIR:** We had some feedback, particularly from the National Art School, from students and teachers there, that the courses that aren't supported by Smart and Skilled have become prohibitively expensive and a lot of them are feeder courses, like in visual arts. I was wondering if you could give us an indication of what courses are affordable and what courses aren't being subsidised and so, therefore, have become \$10,000 courses.

**JANET SCHORER:** It's a great question and we're very mindful about the affordability, particularly as the fee-free Smart and Skilled arrangements change. In general terms for us at TAFE NSW, obviously fee-free and other subsidies that are provided by governments, State and Federal, enable us to provide that training at no or low fee. Once that subsidy is not available, we're in a position where we need to charge fees. There is obviously help to be able to accrue a loan and pay that off to assist with the affordability, but it is the case that we do have a pricing schedule and a need to charge for those particular courses once they are no longer subsidised in either form by the Government. I don't know if Dr Marcellino wants to add anything, because what has been available on fee-free lists, or what has been available through Smart and Skilled, has changed over time. That would be a great question to ask the Department of Education as well later on because they set the framework for that. We can give a little bit more detail about what might have changed and how we're approaching that, certainly acknowledging that we want learners to be able to access education and not have cost as an inhibitor. Do you want to add anything, Dr Marcellino?

**RAFFAELE MARCELLINO:** Only to give you, say, an example in terms of ceramics, which is a full-fee course and the demand for ceramics is strong. In fact, we have waiting lists. It varies in different art forms. In that case, while it's full fee, the interest in the community is such that we have waiting lists for that course.

**Dr JOE MCGIRR:** What are the fees if they're not subsidised, and then what percentage of your students are fee free and not in the creative industries?

**RAFFAELE MARCELLINO:** I would have to take that question on notice, and we can come back to you with that balance. It is a combination and because we're a higher education provider as well as a VET provider in TAFE, we have quite a varied schedule of fees where some courses have access to Smart and Skilled and some students can access FEE-HELP to move into higher education qualifications.

**The CHAIR:** Can you provide a list of what's in and what is out—what it costs to do each of the courses in the creative arts?

**JANET SCHORER:** We can provide that from our perspective. I suggest there is a component of that that is also the Department of Education through Smart and Skilled and they set the courses and the price for that side. We can certainly provide fees for the courses you are interested in, on notice.

**Dr JOE MCGIRR:** Ms Schorer, you mentioned earlier a growth post-COVID of enrolments that may have been related to fee-free courses. I guess we're trying to look at barriers to people entering, and clearly one of them is employment prospects afterwards. I will come back to that in a moment. I'm just interested in the growth, the mix and if the growth is really just fee-free places or if there is a growth in people prepared to pay. Mr Marcellino, you mentioned a demand for ceramics. Is that from people who are going to pursue a career in ceramics or is it people who are interested in pursuing it who have other jobs? How would that be for other creative industry courses at TAFE? Is there a career at the end of them?

**RAFFAELE MARCELLINO:** Ceramics is a case where there isn't an industry of ceramics; it is related to artisan interests. A lot of the people that complete the course do it out of interest, but also then go forward and become sole traders and work in an artisan output. Noting that in the visitor economy the whole arts and crafts artisan is being seen as an area of growth, there is just a desire. It's an interest and an abiding desire to be involved in ceramics and be amongst people making those crafts. Like I said, the demand has been strong.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** Thank you very much for coming along today. I'm inquiring about—and I'm keen to get your thoughts—how many TAFEs across New South Wales have the facilities to deliver event production, music production, technical lighting, and sound mixing, engineering and so on? How many TAFEs have that capability? How many are in use and what are the student numbers? That will then maybe give us an indication of who is coming through the system, if possible.

**JANET SCHORER:** Certainly the detail of that I'm very happy to provide on notice. That is in the memory bank for today. Some of those courses, or some of those particular subject areas, might not need a bespoke classroom or a set of equipment to do that. That makes it much easier to deliver in a broader range of locations than where you need specialist infrastructure. We can provide information about where we have particular infrastructure. Dr Marcellino might be able to speak to that in more detail. What we try to work to around delivery is best utilising the infrastructure where we've got it, particularly in regional locations where we understand we can't do everything everywhere. We can't have a full set of everything we need that we currently deliver the equipment to do everything everywhere, but how do we get best use out of that without students having to travel long distances to be able to access that. Did you want to add anything to that?

**RAFFAELE MARCELLINO:** Yes. Where we have specialist centres, they're in use. We'll provide the numbers. There's been a shift in this industry. Once upon a time, in the '80s, it was driven by large studios with

large investment in infrastructure and technology. Now the technology has shifted to be more software driven and smaller devices that are modular. You may be aware that it's now possible to mix an album on a laptop, so the old days of being dominated by the large recording studios are starting to ebb away.

Where we are looking to use specialist technologies is in the spaces. Hunter Street, Newcastle; Nirimba; Ultimo; St Leonards and Wollongong all have specialist spaces with the technology we need, but the technology is getting smaller and shifting more to software. It actually means that we have the prospect of being able to teach more broadly without the need for massive investment in the way it would have done, once upon a time. Where we do need the access and the investment is in the digital technology, rather than the large, old-style infrastructure. Other specialisms, like events, can almost be taught anywhere because we don't need specialist infrastructure. It's more where we look to link with industry and with activities, and that can happen across the board and across other skills areas. We look at events in hospitality, in culinary and in trades, as well as in entertainment.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** It would be really interesting to see which facilities still have—I think there's a mix. You can, as you rightly say, do an album online. You can have all of these apps on your iPad or laptop. But I still think that there is a need for that mix, for hands-on digital desks and sound coming out of a real studio, and then having the ability to mix a live band—Pro Tools, or those sorts of apps. I'm aware that across New South Wales some TAFEs still have some of that equipment. It would be really helpful, because I think that's the next step. I'd be keen to get your thoughts. Not everybody has the ability to go to university, and that's the beauty of having TAFE providing that step. It plays a vital role, I think, particularly around production, to be able to get that next generation and provide that pathway and aspirations.

**RAFFAELE MARCELLINO:** Most certainly. Again, we're seeing a younger generation of artists needing to move between live sound production to studio production and digital workstations. It's the reality of Australia. You need to have a whole range of skills; TAFE is able provide that. Even staying within your swim lane in music, a live sound person might need to have networking knowledge, be able to work lighting, be able to operate in the workflows for game design, which is very different, and may then turn around and be involved with film.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** That's right, and that opportunity to transfer across into film and screen is really important.

**RAFFAELE MARCELLINO:** Most certainly.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** I have a question about the unit currency audit that is currently being undertaken. It's referred to in the submission. It has to do with the diplomas and certificates II to IV. The submission states:

... Unit Currency Audit project to identify and remove superseded and deleted units of competency in the training package and better align the training package to the needs of the sector.

I'm wondering what kind of information is provided to Service and Creative Skills Australia and the department to undertake that review? What would you be providing to help them understand what the needs of the sector are and what training packages are most relevant to the sector?

**RAFFAELE MARCELLINO:** It's in dialogue with industry, and this is an industry which is constantly disrupted by technology. One piece of technology will force a change in practice immediately. That's why we are in regular dialogue with industry, and our role with the JSCs is advisory. We are not formally members of the JSCs. We are informal members, so we're not voting members. But we have a productive relationship in being able to feed that into the way skills are included in updating the qualifications, and it does hinge a lot around both the intersection of technology and artistic practice and the way the industry shifts. We have the broad church of music—everything from orchestral music across to popular music, to electronic dance music. It's not about style. It's about the types of skills and abilities that people need to plug into whatever part of the industry they're interested in.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Is there a formal piece of work that has been provided from TAFE to inform that?

**RAFFAELE MARCELLINO:** Not a formal piece of work. Our membership and our dialogue is with the JSCs. We have formal consultation with industry, which does not so much change the content of courses, because they're nationally accredited courses. It's the way we would teach. It's being mindful of the combination of skills that graduates need to have to enter the workforce and how that changes by way of either emphasis or combination. That's where we're finding the biggest shift, when people are needing to move across so many different types of ways of working in the industry—providing that skill set to enable them to do so.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Some of the primary feedback from industry has been that they want graduates who are technologically capable and up to date with the latest software, and that they're also able to work across lots of different parts of the industry, whether it's sound or lighting or stage production.

**RAFFAELE MARCELLINO:** Indeed. As a bit of a guide, you need to be able to talk to people on your side of the glass and be understood, and then be able to talk to other people on the other side of the glass and be understood, and to be able to interact. It is a collaborative form. Music, film, games—these are all reliant on collaborative efforts. You need to be able to learn how to interact.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Is it flexible enough? This review is happening at the moment, but it says the package was last updated between 2018 and 2020. A lot can change in that time.

**RAFFAELE MARCELLINO:** That's where we have the lag because of the impact of technology on the arts. By the time they have that cycle of updating, there can be that lag. That's the challenge for us as educators. How do we bridge that gap? It's getting those skills identified so that they're looking at a learning outcome rather than a very specific technological outcome.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Is that being reflected appropriately? Is it flexible enough or not?

**RAFFAELE MARCELLINO:** I think it is getting there.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** Following up on my colleague's questions, particularly around the Creative Arts and Culture Training Package and the lag with technology, do you have an advisory panel specifically in that space which says, "This is where we're going"? They would generally keep up to speed with where you're at and that technology is available and the equipment would be available. Is there that sort of advisory panel which would allow you to allow those people to come through?

**RAFFAELE MARCELLINO:** Yes. We run a series of industry advisories according to the different parts of the arts that we're talking about. There would be film. There would be game development and music. They're managed through a role; we call them industry innovation specialists. They actively liaise with the industry leaders and garner that advice, and that's fed back into our skills teams.

**Dr JOE MCGIRR:** It must be quite challenging to acquire new technology that's changing so often, given the processes of government—limited budgets and a process of requesting budget funding every year for specific materials and machines and so on. That has been a significant challenge, particularly in this area, given what you've indicated, which is a rapid turnover—Mr Anderson emphasised this—in the technology. How do you manage it? Can you lease stuff or borrow stuff?

**RAFFAELE MARCELLINO:** It's probably a combination of all of the above. For instance, we have an agreement with Adobe where we have the Creative Suite. We now have that suite of creative tools available to all students and staff in TAFE. Adobe tells us we are the largest creative campus that they have. Then with other hardware—so it's a combination of hardware and software and trying to find the best balance. In some instances, in live sound, we would work with industry venues. Our students would get an opportunity to have a look at the live sound of different venues. Our staff would work with the venue so our students become familiar. It's to their advantage; it increases their employability if they're familiar with different venues that are in their proximity. Looking to work with industry in that way helps them because then they've got potentially a workforce that is familiar with their systems. It's a combination of all of the above. When we can purchase, we do; when we lease, we do; and when we can work with industry, we do.

**JANET SCHORER:** An important connection there as well that Dr Marcellino mentioned is the relationship between industry and our teachers. We want our teachers to have industry-relevant teaching skills as well. They're teachers but they are also experts in their industry. Having that partnership, from a teaching perspective, so that they're able to know what industry is using, how do they stay on top of that pace of change to be able to teach currency to the learners as well—so that part of it. We would never be able to keep up with technology across the board in TAFE. Think about the progress in manufacturing or in renewables—that industry partnership and connection is really critical to give all of our students and our teachers currency for today.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you very much. If there any further inquiries or any follow-up questions, the secretariat will be in touch.

**(The witnesses withdrew.)**

**(Short adjournment)**

**Dr PAUL CAHILL**, Executive Director, Curriculum, NSW Education Standards Authority, affirmed and examined

**Mr MARTIN GRAHAM**, Deputy Secretary, Teaching, Learning and Student Wellbeing, NSW Department of Education, affirmed and examined

**Dr SYLVIA CORISH**, Executive Director, Student Support and Specialist Programs, NSW Department of Education, affirmed and examined

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

**MARTIN GRAHAM:** We're happy just to go straight to questions, if you like.

**Dr JOE MCGIRR:** Could you start by outlining for us the current status with music education in primary schools and then go on to the proposed curriculum for 7-10 and then any curriculum changes for phase six? We've heard evidence from a number of stakeholders that there's a large variation in what constitutes music and arts education from school to school. There are standards. Most meet standards but the reality is that there seems to be quite a large variation. We've also had evidence that in many instances educational offerings in this area are supplemented by funding from the P&C and other sources. I'm sure you've heard that evidence before. I'm just interested in a response to that.

**MARTIN GRAHAM:** Certainly. I might let Dr Cahill talk about the actual syllabus. Maybe if we talk about the syllabus and the curriculum offering and then I can talk about, particularly, implementation in government schools.

**PAUL CAHILL:** In terms of where we're at with syllabuses at the moment, you would be aware that we are going through a reform process. We have just recently released the suite of K-6 creative arts syllabuses. There is an existing syllabus. One of the parts of our work in terms of curriculum reform has been to streamline the syllabuses. It doesn't surprise me that you'd be hearing testimony that in the current syllabuses the way in which they're being taught differs from school to school. That's purely because of the volume. Roughly, in the current syllabus there are between three to four outcomes per stage, which is a significant amount of work and time. In our newly reformed syllabuses, the ones that have just been released, we've ended up with one outcome per stage with very, very tight content. We've identified through the reform process and our evaluation of work the problems that have been identified and we have tried to address them with the new syllabuses recently released.

**The CHAIR:** Is there going to be an enforcement of, a measurement of, or a capacity to implement sequential, consistent music education in particular, because that is what we're having the most feedback about—being inconsistent in its provision across New South Wales schools?

**PAUL CAHILL:** Our intention is to make sure there is consistency across all syllabuses and that they're taught. One of my colleagues describes our work, and both the intent and the outcome of our work is to ensure that the student in Bourke receives the same education as the student in Bourke Street. We've made sure that the outcomes are streamlined so they are doable, and we've been very explicit in both K-6 and 7-10, the content that needs to be taught. So that will allow for greater consistency across schools. Up until this point in time, K-6 schools or teachers have only had to address outcomes, rather than outcomes and content.

**Dr JOE MCGIRR:** You say that the situation presently is there are three to four outcomes per stage. I think by implication you're saying that's too much. There will now be one outcome per stage. Does that mean there'll be less content taught? It sounds like a reduction in what's being taught. That's my first question. Could you also describe the system now—how you measure that outcomes are being taught or not taught? Who measures them? How do you account for them and so on?

**PAUL CAHILL:** I'll go with the last part first. In terms of our school registration process, when our school inspectors go into schools, what they would like to see is evidence that the outcomes are being taught because that's what is required. They will particularly look now at music and visual arts in K-6 particularly, and that's because one of the requirements of the legislation is that we do offer them a curriculum that does provide music and visual arts education. That's how we ensure that it's done. Going to the first part of the question—

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** That's only in the private sector, isn't it?

**PAUL CAHILL:** That's in the primaries.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** There's no inspection regime for the public school system, is there?

**PAUL CAHILL:** I understand, but I'll let Mr Graham respond to this.

**MARTIN GRAHAM:** The public system is regulated by NESA as a system. They do actually have random inspections of schools, but it is mainly the public system itself that has to assure us that all outcomes of all syllabuses are being taught in the schools. We do that and the schools have systems and processes in place. The mandatory curriculum—so the mandatory four areas in creative arts from K-6, and we have music and visual arts in stage four, they are all compulsory in New South Wales. When we're talking about this, particularly looking through the other submissions, with music and with art in particular there is the mandatory syllabus.

We absolutely focus on and our support is for teachers, to help them meet the mandatory syllabus. Particularly in these areas, the co-curricular opportunities—the music programs, the bands, the instrumental tuition, all of those things—are the things you feel when you go into a school and say, "Are students receiving the opportunities they need in music?" I think that's important. We can talk about that, as well, because that is definitely something where we know that there is a massive equity gap in the provision of that. In students' experiences around music, in particular, we're certainly aware and a lot of our efforts as a department—what Dr Corish and her people in the Arts Unit do is to try to increase opportunity.

But, in terms of the syllabus, we do support our teachers. As we roll out the new syllabus, one of the things we're keen to do, in this question of support that's the same as in Bourke as it is in Bourke Street, is to make sure that we provide sufficient materials, advice and professional learning so that they can achieve those outcomes. In the past few years we have probably, as a department, left it a bit more to schools and said, "You go and do that." But the department is really looking to increase the support we provide, not just in these creative arts but in all of the syllabuses, so that if you're a new teacher starting out in Bourke and perhaps you don't have a large school, you don't have experienced teachers around you—what's the department support? What support are we providing in that?

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** The department doesn't actually know, does it, whether it's delivering the curriculum outcomes to every student in every school? It doesn't know that, does it?

**MARTIN GRAHAM:** Principals and teachers in their teaching program are very focused on the syllabus outcomes. In New South Wales, compared to the national curriculum, for example, we have more detail in our curriculum. One of the findings of the Masters report was that we probably had too much, so we're really focusing around key content. But there is more prescription and more detail than you would get in the Australian curriculum as a teacher. We know that teachers very much focus on delivering that. Dr Corish is an experienced principal, so I might let her talk about how schools do that. It is one of the main things they focus on.

**SYLVIA CORISH:** In terms of my background, I'm a primary teacher. I was a primary principal before I came into a range of different positions. From a school's perspective, it's the principal's responsibility to ensure that we are measuring those outcomes for all of our students and making determinations about whether they are achieving that. In terms of program setting and line management, Mr Graham has already talked about the additional resources that the curriculum area of the department is going to provide for staff in terms of units of work, to give them greater guidance. From a school's perspective, it's up to the principal, working with their leadership team, to make sure their school reporting is focusing on all of the mandatory parts of the syllabus and that they measure each student and provide opportunities so students can be measured in terms of those outcomes.

**The CHAIR:** Are you measuring creative arts holistically and together? Or are you breaking it down into subject areas to make sure all subject areas are being met? We've had a lot of feedback, about music in particular, that generalist primary school teachers don't feel very comfortable teaching music after only doing nine hours at university. There are all these philanthropic organisations spending a lot of money and resources teaching music in our most disadvantaged schools because they think there's a void. Are they wrong? Are they wasting their time?

**MARTIN GRAHAM:** They're certainly not wrong, and I'm certainly not going to tell you that everything is rosy. That's why we're spending so much effort on it. In the syllabus, in particular, we know that many teachers report that they're not confident in teaching music. As a primary school teacher, you're responsible for teaching the whole syllabus. We don't have specialist English teachers. We don't have specialist history or geography teachers. It's quite a job to be a primary school teacher and get across that. We do know that, as you pointed out, in the initial teacher education it is perhaps not as lengthy a time that they spend looking at the creative arts subjects and how to teach them. We know that confidence can be an issue in that. That's certainly an issue that we recognise.

The question of specialisation comes up. We're quite happy to work with ITE providers in a number of areas around providing teachers with that passion and that commitment to provide them with a micro-credential so that they can have that specialisation. But some of the other evidence you've had was that if you just have

specialist teachers, then you're not skilling up all the primary teachers. You end up with a secondary model where you only have one person who understands it, and that limits how much you can include the creative arts across the curriculum.

We know there are issues. We know we need to increase the confidence of teachers, and there are two steps to that. The first is ITE. When they come into us, how well prepared are they for it? But the second part is what experience they're getting. What's the department doing to help improve the professional learning? Where's the mentoring in schools? How can we have them confident to deliver the outcomes? The new syllabus is a good opportunity to do that. We have a new syllabus. The department in general is organising around that new syllabus. As a teacher, you're going to have to get across this new content. Why don't we use that as an opportunity to refresh what support the department is giving? You get that consistency across the State so that every principal can be assured we're delivering the outcomes.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Is it your contention, then, that it's a skills gap issue? It's not a question, which we've received evidence about, of the crowded curriculum, and priorities on literacy and numeracy crowding it out? Is it your contention that that's not true?

**MARTIN GRAHAM:** I certainly wouldn't deny that there's always a balance about timing. How much time is allocated in the curriculum is a really important thing, so we certainly understand that. That's why the syllabus itself and how much time we have to deliver it doesn't look very big. But it's also why we acknowledge the co-curricular aspect and all the other school activities that include music and art, and why, as a department, our plan for public education says not just that we want to deliver the syllabus to everybody. That's your entitlement under the Act. We actually do want them to have rich co-curricular opportunities. We're stepping into this space because we accept that it is beyond those numbers of hours delivered, because they're not enormous. The creative arts are in this relatively small part of the curriculum. We need to deliver that properly, but we also need to stretch beyond that and provide these opportunities.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** There are no mandated hours, are there? It's not actually a mandate. It's a guidance.

**MARTIN GRAHAM:** It's a guidance, yes.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** What is the guidance? We've heard a lot of evidence that suggests that stakeholders are very keen to have 60 minutes per week of dedicated music education. Is the new curriculum that's being rolled out commensurate to that?

**PAUL CAHILL:** Roughly, it's about two hours a week in terms of the creative arts—that's the four art forms. At different times, the way in which it's delivered is different. Can I go back to that question of the crowded curriculum? I would say that the current syllabuses, not the new syllabuses, are very crowded and they're very busy. To give you the background as to why that was the case, it's probably the first time in more than 30 years—probably closer to 50 years—that the K-6 syllabuses have been done as a job lot. What's happened is that they've been done piecemeal over time and, as a result of that, there has been an accretion of materials that have crept in.

One of the reasons why, up until now, the expectation has only been to teach outcomes is because they have been far too crowded. Teachers could cherry-pick from the quite extensive content that's in the current syllabus, because there wouldn't be adequate time. We have tried to address that with the approach that we've taken to the new syllabuses. We have refined the outcomes, but we've been much clearer in terms of the content that we expect to be taught. If you like, one of the things that I think will occur with the new syllabuses is that there will be the opportunity to have greater consistency across schools and greater depth of learning than there currently is.

Some of the challenges in terms of skilling teachers, particularly in relation to ITE programs—once a syllabus is established, it takes ITE providers about two years to incorporate the new material. What we've done really emerged from our early work with K-2 English, particularly when we started introducing phonics education. We had a situation where we were aware that many teachers would struggle with the teaching of phonics because they were not familiar with it. There was a gap. There were sometimes arguments put to me to say, "It's a chicken and egg thing. Because teachers will be challenged, you shouldn't use this evidence-based material of what works best for reading."

We thought the best way to overcome this—and it has been very well received—was the provision of teaching advice accompanying the syllabus, to give teachers a steer and to give them some direction in the work that they do. As I say, that has been very well received, and it continues on in all the syllabuses we do. That teaching advice is present in the creative arts. That's to try to bridge that gap and build the confidence of teachers because, once teachers have the confidence to teach, what we've seen is that confidence begets confidence.

**The CHAIR:** What feedback have you provided to the university sector about generalist primary teachers not feeling confident to teach music on the basis of their nine hours of education?

**MARTIN GRAHAM:** In terms of the department, that's certainly the work that's underway at the moment to get that survey of teachers in New South Wales so that we can have the data to be able to provide something more than an anecdotal thing that is raised with us by teachers.

**Dr JOE MCGIRR:** The current system seems to be that you rely on your principals to tick off that these standards have been met, and that feeds into NESA via your system. The evidence we've had is that there's enormous variation. You've spoken, Dr Cahill, about reasons for that—a crowded curriculum and so on. We've heard evidence that it's more to do with the focus on literacy and numeracy and those issues, and perhaps also issues around funding. Going forward, how are you going to be assured that what you expect to be delivered will be delivered? My sense is that right now you have a system that seems to rely on a principal saying, "Yes, we meet this criteria", and yet we have this enormous variation. That would, to me, undercut the fact that it is actually the case that those standards are being met.

**MARTIN GRAHAM:** That is why I point out that there is the mandatory syllabus, and the processes are even more extensive. We've just talked about the School Excellence Framework that schools have to be independently assured against, and curriculum is the heart of how we assess them. You will find variation, particularly in music—and visual arts, to some degree—because you're not just seeing the delivery of the core and mandatory syllabus. You're also seeing all that other richness: the co-curricular programs, the music, the instrumentation and so on. The things you would have seen from the Amadeus program—if you walked into a school and saw that, you'd go, "This is variation. This school is doing it much more deeply than this other school. How are they not meeting the standards?" The answer is that they're going above and beyond and melding that syllabus delivery with co-curricular, which they don't have to tick off. It's above the outcomes of the syllabus, and they're important.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** We're hearing schools aren't delivering it at all and that students aren't getting any teaching.

**MARTIN GRAHAM:** If you had examples of schools where that was happening, we'd be absolutely happy to look into that.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** It's your job to know where that is and where that's happening. It's not our job. It is the department's job to be able to say, "This is happening here and it's not happening here."

**MARTIN GRAHAM:** If we had an example of where they weren't, I wouldn't be coming to you here today to say, "I have a list of schools that aren't." They would now be delivering that outcome. We haven't seen any named schools. We're happy to see if there are schools where that isn't happening. Even in very difficult circumstances—we have 500 small schools with teaching principals and sometimes single-teacher schools. We spent a bit of time with them recently. They deliver across this incredible breadth. This one person delivers the entire syllabus, including all these mandatory parts. People put enormous effort in to make sure that the kids get the breadth of opportunity, but we're certainly interested if people are not getting that. We're not denying that you're seeing variability in schools. We're passionate about the teaching of music and arts as well. We try to provide these opportunities to kids because we know you're seeing variability in what's in schools, and some of that is above the syllabus or is perhaps a bigger delivery of the syllabus. We're not at all saying that this is something we don't want to improve on or see more of.

**The CHAIR:** We had confidential submissions to that effect. But also, we all know parents who think that their kids don't do music at school.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** I guess it's a question of do principals perhaps feel they can't report that back, that they're not going to get enough support, that there's a situation where they're incentivised to hide parts of areas where they're not meeting the requirements for the department?

**SYLVIA CORISH:** In a primary setting, primary teaching is generalist. We teach every area. We do a lot of integration. For example, when I was a primary school teacher, I would teach a lot of visual arts, a lot of craft and a lot of music, but it would be done through integrated means. Because of the amount of time I've got in a day, I would try to link it all together so that I was linking into their literacy and numeracy work at the same time. Music is quite a diverse area. Music can include singing, playing a musical instrument, dancing to music and understanding different types of music. I'm wondering whether some of the discussion is about learning how to play a musical instrument, for example. That's one part of music, but that's not what all students get an opportunity to do. We know that we all start with recorders, and I can take you to some great recorder sessions. We still do recorder choral concerts with masses of recorders that are just incredible.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** I played recorder at the Sydney Opera House, to the horror of my parents.

**SYLVIA CORISH:** Well, there you go. I was at a school the other day and the recorder group was quite incredible because of the different sizes. I don't know the names. Some of them are descants, whatever they are. We do start with those sorts of things. But, in music, teaching a musical instrument is a very skilled piece of work. Yes, there is a lack of confidence from teachers to be able to do that part of it, and that's where schools would bring in someone who has the expertise if they want to do that part of the musical tuition.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** Yes, there was variation in access and there was discussion of the Amadeus program. But we were talking about just singing and the absence of that.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Clapping.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** I thought that was quite extraordinary, actually. Maybe that's not part of the mandatory—

**MARTIN GRAHAM:** I would agree that it would be quite extraordinary to see a primary school where there wasn't singing.

**SYLVIA CORISH:** That is surprising.

**MARTIN GRAHAM:** Yes. We would be equally shocked with you about that. Partly it could be, as Dr Corish pointed out, kids coming home saying, "I don't have music lessons", when it might have been incorporated in other things. Whether we can support that practice better so that the kid feels more like they had musical tuition—I think that's a very important point. Or there could be an example where someone is not meeting outcomes, in which case we need to know about that.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** We say that maths and English needs to be taught explicitly, but we have a different standard for music. We're saying that has to be integrated, but maths and English needs to be explicit.

**MARTIN GRAHAM:** No, not at all. The materials we'll be providing are absolutely explicit, standalone materials for music, drama, dance and visual arts lessons.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** What does the department say about the recommendation that we mandate the 30 minutes?

**MARTIN GRAHAM:** It's for the Committee to consider that. We don't mandate any exact time for schools for any delivery.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Maths and English don't have that? Maths has mandatory hours, doesn't it?

**MARTIN GRAHAM:** Much like the NESAs suggestion, we have an allocation to say that it should be 50 per cent maths and English, and it should be 40 per cent here, 10 per cent here. But we don't tell you, "And it must be delivered in this way." We don't say, "It has to be one hour every day. It has to be half an hour every day." If we did that for every subject, with the range of schools we have—schools for a specific purpose, 500 schools with teaching principals—it does get to be a kind of practicality. We provide guidance around that based on "This is how much syllabus you have, so we think you should spend 50 per cent of your time on maths and English, this time on this and this time on this syllabus." But it's not something we've traditionally done, to provide that mandate of "You have to do half an hour a day."

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** Mr Graham, in your submission you said that the Arts Unit is a specialist directorate.

**MARTIN GRAHAM:** Yes.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** How many staff in that directorate?

**MARTIN GRAHAM:** Dr Corish is the executive director that looks after that directorate. I did see some reference that there are only two people in the Arts Unit, which is very surprising. It's well and truly more than two people, given the extensive range of things that we do.

**SYLVIA CORISH:** In the SSP directorate, the arts and sports unit is one part of that. We have an arts arm and sports arm. In the Arts Unit there would be 70 or 80 officers, but we employ a lot of other people to help us with our bigger-term projects. We have conductors, instrumentalists and a whole range of different people who come in and help us with all of the different programs. Many of them are schoolteachers that come from their schools. Their principals release them to come and work with us.

We have a lot of different positions in terms of organising different areas, like choral and instrumental music, the Schools Spectacular and a range of other things called Pulse Alive. We've been quite deliberate in trying to get out to more of our regional areas and encourage our students from regional parts of New South Wales to get involved with activities. Over the past few years, we've been quite deliberate in going to places like Moree and Broken Hill so that we can share that enjoyment and that confidence, not only for the children but also for the teachers, in learning that there are things they can be engaged with.

The Arts Unit has a huge range or variety of different activities. They do things online, they provide professional learning, they can provide scripts for musical pieces that schools can present. I think part of the challenge is for schools to know what is there, what they can access and how they can tap into what the Arts Unit is able to provide for them. We have specialists, we have generalists, but we also employ a large range of other people to assist us with our programs as well.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** In terms of your core staff, you're saying there are 70 in the Arts Unit?

**SYLVIA CORISH:** About that, yes.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** And they're dedicated to that work? They're not people who are brought around from different parts of the department to enhance a core team?

**MARTIN GRAHAM:** No, it's an absolutely dedicated set-up. They've got their own home at Lewisham Public School as well. That is absolutely a core team and, as Dr Corish said, we also bring in lots of other professionals from the industry; a lot of them work with us as well.

**SYLVIA CORISH:** We employ quite a lot of musicians—they work with us and they work in schools. That team, that's their five-day-a-week job. They coordinate activities, they coordinate drama, public speaking, music, ensembles. We have rehearsals at Lewisham, so we bring students in who practise at Lewisham. We have online activities that students can be involved with. Again, with Schools Spectacular, for example—if you know Schools Spectacular—that's a whole year of work that culminates in November, but we bring in students from other parts of the State. This year our team has gone out to the regions. Rather than bringing all the children who want to try out for it into Sydney, we've gone out to them. That's proved to be really valuable. We've worked with the conservatoriums. They've been very generous in allowing us to use their space. My team of about four visited different parts of the State. Students were more confident to rehearse in a space that they knew; they didn't have to travel to Sydney.

We are trying to expand the number of students that we have across the State who are involved in some of our bigger activities as well, but we're also taking our activities to the regions. I was telling Mr Graham today about some of the fantastic stories where we've had concerts at Moree, for example—the first time in many, many years—and parents and students were very engaged with what were the possibilities, what they could do in a few days. They do the preliminary work before the team comes, but then they put a concert on within about two days. We're seeing the real benefit of being able to do that. But, as Mr Graham said, that's on top of what they're doing in the classroom in terms of being confident about learning the repertoire, learning what to do. Last week we had 4,000 students who came and performed at the Opera House, and they came from right across New South Wales. There's a lot of variety in what is provided.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** That's very helpful. Hopefully the 70 will push back on the numbers that we've received evidence on. All of the 70 staff that you've got and the great work that they do—why does there still seem to be a lack of support for principals and teachers in the creative space? It still seems like it's undervalued as opposed to—and to use your words, Mr Graham—focusing on key content. We're still getting this feeling and we are hearing evidence that it's just not as valued as others. I mean, you've got the 70.

**MARTIN GRAHAM:** I can understand that. You obviously have evidence on the gaps, not people coming forward to tell you all the wonderful things that are happening.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** No. With all due respect, sir, we are getting some good things.

**MARTIN GRAHAM:** We understand that there are gaps, and we are passionate. Those 70 people, their job is to go and give it to kids who don't currently have it. We completely understand there are gaps. One of the issues is probably not knowing what the offering is. In a big department like ours, we really struggle because sometimes we have so many offerings. If you're a school principal, you're overwhelmed by the offerings. What we need to do is be really clear about what it is we can do to help you. That's basic stuff like the fact that our website is not always the most helpful thing in the world to you. So how can we make it easier for you to understand, "Okay, this is the support the department can provide to me", particularly if you've got a small country school with three teachers. That's on us; we have to fix that.

The second thing is probably breaking that cycle of the people—we talk to people who've been involved and they know about it, so how do we get to the people who have not yet been involved in our programs? We've got the people who think it's great, but you've got the people who, understandably, are going, "Look, I'm out here by myself. What's the department doing for me?" I think that's a fair criticism. It's not on them to wade through our mysterious website; it is on us to try to—I know, particularly Dr Corish's team, they have a look at, at Schools Spectacular, who's participating, who's even putting their hands up and map it out. "It's this whole black area here. Here's the whole New England area that's perhaps really under-represented", and they use that data to go up there and say, "Actually, we're going to give these kids an opportunity because they're currently missing out." It's not perfect. We're on the way and we understand we need to get better.

**SYLVIA CORISH:** When I talk about the staff, some of those don't work five days a week because of their own personal circumstances. Some of them retired, many times, and they want to come back and continue to contribute. The whole Pulse Alive experience, that started out of a desire to go to certain parts of the State. We've done that mapping. We noticed that there were certain parts of the State that didn't have the same interactions with the unit as other parts of the State, so we made sure that we were starting to bring—the plan is that, after a few years, we'll go back to Moree. We'll do that for a few years. Hopefully we can build the confidence of the team that are there and they'll start to be confident that they can do that with their own children, using our scripts, using our expertise, and then we can move on to another part of the State. That's the way that we've been delivering additional information and resources.

**MARTIN GRAHAM:** It's certainly a strength of the public system. We have sent them out—2,200 schools—but we are definitely coming back, and often regionally they organise it. So Monday night in the Opera House—Cantabile. That was organised by regional—it was organised by passionate primary school teachers. Six hundred kids singing in the Opera House. It's self-sustained; it doesn't require the department to provide as much input to that. There's also that layer of statewide, regional and then the school, and we certainly want to do better at all three of those layers.

**The CHAIR:** One of the things you've mentioned in your submission, and we hear a lot about everywhere, is the ACO pilot program at St Marys North. It's been evaluated. It's seen as being very effective, not just in terms of music education but in school attendance, NAPLAN results—all these things. It's been running for six years as a pilot program. Why hasn't it been expanded or embedded? Why are you running a pilot program for six years? It's a very long pilot program.

**MARTIN GRAHAM:** It is. Obviously the entire department is incredibly proud of Lisa Parrello and the team and ACO Foundations who have worked with them. It is a stunning school. It is a joy to go there. It is absolutely beautiful, and it is something you would want for every single child in the State. We absolutely agree. The real question for us is: How do we take the lessons from there and scale them? I think you've probably found, from a lot of things you've heard, that is the really hard part. We don't have ACO Foundations to bring in expert violin teachers to every school and to provide instruments to every school.

**The CHAIR:** You've got regional conservatoriums across the State that—

**MARTIN GRAHAM:** Can provide free tuition.

**The CHAIR:** —sometimes do, and can do, very similar things.

**MARTIN GRAHAM:** I think you've seen that their resourcing is also limited. They don't have unlimited resources. For us, it's always—

**Dr JOE MCGIRR:** They're resourced through you.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** That's right. That was my next question. Funding for regional cons comes from you guys.

**MARTIN GRAHAM:** We do things. We have 60 schools that we loan instruments to, to try to produce that same kind of magic that's happening there. We do try to take the lessons from that; it's not a simple thing to replicate. We often find from pilot programs—it's a pilot that they started; it wasn't the department who started that pilot.

**SYLVIA CORISH:** It's certainly been very successful. When you see the children play, and I've been there a number of times, and to see the development of what happens—Lisa, the principal, has done an amazing job—there are certainly some lessons to be learnt there. But in terms of the conservatoriums, we actually administer government funding. There is a process that the conservatoriums go through. There's a three-year funding cycle and each three years they go through and they apply to be part of that funding cycle. We have a budget that we administer through the State Government. That's been going on for a long time.

Not all conservatoriums reach the level that they are receiving funding through the State Government. There are other conservatoriums that don't. There are about 17 that receive funding via us. They use those resources for a whole range of different things. We want to ensure that they are going out to the communities and making sure that our students are getting some support in the sorts of things that those conservatoriums can provide for our students as well. But that's not our program. We support conservatoriums through government funding, but we don't dictate what they do. We ask them to report in terms of their KPIs, so we ask them to demonstrate what they use that funding for, but that's not our particular program. We support conservatoriums.

**Dr JOE MCGIRR:** Let me be clear about this, because this is quite important. The regional conservatoriums receive funding from the Department of Education. I think they're under what may be a delusion that they're being supported by the Department of Education. The way you phrased that was really that the Department of Education is an administration arm of government for these funds, and you check their KPIs at some level but, beyond that, it's not linked to your educational offerings. It's more a task you perform on behalf of the Government.

**MARTIN GRAHAM:** It is that. The Government did ask. It said, "We're going to set up this program. We're going to commit a certain amount of funding, Treasury is going to give you the money, but we want them to do things that are beneficial to education." As public administrators, we absolutely have to make sure that anyone we give a grant has to meet all the criteria that you would need to meet to be a recipient of government funding, and the public would expect us to do that. But we didn't establish them. We didn't say, "Who would like to establish a conservatorium?" We are providing government funding to them because the Government made a commitment, at the time, to fund them.

**SYLVIA CORISH:** We have worked really hard in the last year to make sure that we have a closer relationship with them, and that's beneficial for all of us. The director of the sport and initiatives team meets with the head of conservatoriums regularly. It was great that we reached out to them when doing our Schools Spectacular selection processes. They were very willing to let us use their conservatoriums because that also meant that the town, for example, knew what it had in terms of its own resources and the benefit of them being available to provide support to our students. We provide them with funding, and we tell them the parameters of what the funding can be used for, but we don't dictate what they actually do with it. It has to be for programs for students. They've got to reach out to the community. There's a whole range of different things, but we don't tell them precisely what they have to do.

**Dr JOE MCGIRR:** But, from the point of view of the Department of Education, you're functioning as a means of allocating funds from the Government. It doesn't sound as though it's really part of your business or linked particularly to your programs.

**MARTIN GRAHAM:** It's certainly with an educational purpose. Government would like us to link the funding they're providing to an educational purpose, absolutely. We provide that public administration purpose, but we are also a partner as well. Then there's the local partnerships, which are another layer to it.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** We've heard evidence that they're KPIs set by the Department of Education, and then the funding allocated is based on student numbers. Would that be right?

**MARTIN GRAHAM:** There are funding tiers based on the student numbers, but I'd like to reassure the Committee that we haven't taken money off anybody because they had three kids fewer or four kids more. We're happy to talk to them about the KPIs when we get to the next funding. It's not something that drives our relationship with them. It is part of general government. We have targets for everything we do—it's accepted in government funding—but it's certainly not something where we've been making someone have an issue because of the KPIs that might be set.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** Following on from that, ultimately this is all about arts in education. If you have students coming through the public school system, or whichever school system, and then going through to the conservatorium, which would perhaps—as you say, you're stepping into that co-curricular activity. Would conservatoriums be part of that co-curricular activity?

**MARTIN GRAHAM:** Absolutely, particularly in regional areas. I think we all respect the work they do in that. It's absolutely bringing opportunity to kids who wouldn't otherwise have that opportunity in that co-curricular space.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** We've heard evidence from conservatoriums that the funding is quite tight and they have to go over and above to meet their KPIs. They go for grants and for philanthropic, and P&Cs are a huge provider of some of that funding stream. Is there not an opportunity there to go, "How do we better connect those schools, from the Department of Education's perspective, to regional conservatoriums?"

**MARTIN GRAHAM:** We're absolutely happy to connect schools to that, but the issue underpinning it all is, of course, we all have a fixed budget. It's that question of where you direct the resources and how you do it. If there's more funding, we're happy to provide more funding and have more kids have opportunities.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** One of the narratives that we're hearing is that the arts are less valued. We heard some evidence around the stage six art curriculum and the absence of an advanced or extension unit in stage six for arts. I wonder if you could explain why, if arts is of an equal standing, it's not suitable for having an advanced and an extension course available in the same way that you can do advanced or extension in music or English or history? Why is arts treated as a second-class subject area?

**PAUL CAHILL:** I wouldn't agree that the arts is treated as a second-class subject area, in the first instance. The establishment of extension courses goes right back to the time of the new HSC in around 2000, if my memory serves. At that time a decision was made to remove the plethora of three-unit courses that existed and to tighten the delivery of extension courses to a very limited number of courses. Not all courses, not all syllabuses go on with an extension course. As you pointed out, for music there is an extension course that operates.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** History, English, maths.

**PAUL CAHILL:** But there are many others—economics doesn't have those types of things. One of the things we need to do with the extension courses is to make sure that the learning of a student can actually be extended by that course. We have ARTEXPRESS. The quality of students is very, very high in the existing syllabus. If a case could be made—as was made several years ago for an extension course in science—to say that we could genuinely extend students beyond what the syllabus is asking them to do now, certainly that would be something we would consider. But it's certainly not because the arts are considered in any way second class. The priority that we've given in terms of making sure that there has been a K-6 creative arts syllabus being developed along the same timeline as the 7-10 art syllabuses shows the priority that we've given to it. We've started with the K-6 and 7-10 work because that lays the foundation of learning in those art disciplines so that students can develop their learning and then pursue their interest in arts, in whichever of the four art forms is best suited for them.

**The CHAIR:** I did three-unit art back in the olden days, before the internet. I found myself far more extended in the three-unit part. I find it very strange that you would think you can't extend students further in visual arts. We had the option of doing art history or a second major work. I don't know if it was my school or if all schools had a rule that everyone had to do a different medium for their second major work. I did the art history option, which was far more intellectually rigorous than what you did in the two-unit subject. Why has that thinking changed?

**PAUL CAHILL:** I don't think the thinking has changed. I think it's the reality of the syllabus. Across the visual arts community—this is the feedback that I've received—the 11-12 syllabus is very highly regarded. The direction that the 11-12 visual arts syllabus was given—again, I'm saying around 2000, when the new HSC work came about—did do that lift and that enrichment. The syllabuses that I was teaching prior to the new HSC are different to the syllabuses post and their content. But if there was a strong case made that there would be extension in any particular course, we would certainly consider that.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** I want to ask about enrolments. One of the other things that we're hearing is that enrolments are in decline. I don't know whether it's possible to get a data set provided to the Committee, on notice, for the arts, music 1, 2 and extension and VET entertainment in terms of maybe the last five years on a school-by-school basis. How many candidates for each of those courses were there, just to give us an indication of whether there has been—I suppose there are two issues that we are looking at. One is that there has been a decline in enrolments in those areas in the public system as opposed to the private system where there has been capacity to attract skilled teachers. What we are hearing is that the private system is having a much stronger delivery of those learning areas to the public system and that's resulting in an issue around enrolments. Is that data held?

**PAUL CAHILL:** Yes.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Do you have similar data for the stage five electives for art and music? Are we seeing a similar phenomenon at stage five? It is stage five electives who then go on to do the HSC courses. We are hearing a narrative around a narrowing pipeline of people going into the arts. It may start with a weakness in the stage four experience leading to lower enrolments in the elective stream, leading to lower enrolments in the HSC courses. Could that data be provided on notice?

**PAUL CAHILL:** The data we can provide really reflects more on year 10 rather than years 9 and 10 because it relates to the record of school achievement because that's the credential part, and that's why we collect and keep that data. But certainly we can provide that as well.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** We've heard evidence around the importance of ensemble events, particularly high school musicals. We were at Bowral High and we asked them about the support that is provided centrally by the department to enable every high school to potentially put on a musical once a year. Is that support available? What does it look like? What's involved in terms of the provision of that support?

**SYLVIA CORISH:** Again, it's about reaching out. We know that you went to Bowral High School. We noticed that Bowral High School is coming down for SpecFest. Running alongside Schools Spectacular is SpecFest, so they have a band that obviously has been selected to be one of the bands that's going to compete at SpecFest. They are engaging with the Arts Unit programs. They may not necessarily know that that's what they're engaging in, but they are. In terms of school-based productions, yes, we can provide support in terms of, as I said, music scripts that we can provide them with and give them that level of support. But, again, we provide at more of a regional area, a geographic area, rather than the individual school. Not every school wants to put on performances, but if they want to put it on there are ways that they can get some support and reach out. We're happy to talk to Bowral High School and any other high school that wants to.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** The evidence seems to suggest that those events actually engender interest in the arts and music and feed into subject selection in 9, 10, 11 and 12.

**MARTIN GRAHAM:** Yes.

**SYLVIA CORISH:** And we've noticed that they've been quite deliberate in wanting to do that to build up students' confidence, knowledge and enthusiasm for what they can do. We don't invite many schools down for the band competition. For them to be one of those schools is really amazing that they've done that.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** They also said that they ran at a loss. Obviously there are other less tangible benefits, but there is a financial impost on a school to run an event. That might act as a disincentive. There's no financial support for those kinds of activities at a school level.

**MARTIN GRAHAM:** There is. They've chosen to do that, which is quite legitimate as part of their overall school budget.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Within their own budget, though.

**MARTIN GRAHAM:** Yes, which is absolutely legitimate. Many schools do that. Some schools might subsidise students. Often musical productions will give a cheap rate for schools and the school might subsidise for some or all students to add onto that so that they can have that experience, and that's a legitimate use of school funds. We value it, and schools value it. The department should never be saying that they can't spend their money on that.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** But nothing centrally. There are no central supports—

**MARTIN GRAHAM:** There is in the school budget—the tens of billions of dollars in school budgets. South Australia came across this. I think there is a question of a school feeling, "Maybe the department doesn't value it or doesn't think we should spend money on it. Maybe my principal thinks that it's not the most important thing." I think there probably is something for us to reflect on as a department about the messaging we give that it is a valued part of the provision, that it is something that you should be doing and it isn't something you should ever get in trouble for. It's something we've reflected on about. What kind of cultural message are we sending about it? Is it over there on the side, or do we say, "No, this is actually a really central part of what it means to be a school." We certainly know that the secretary, by putting co-curricular at the heart of the plan for public education, knows that schools are way more than literacy and numeracy. It's an incredibly valuable part of it.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** It is contingent on school leadership if it's just about a budgetary decision that is made at the school level as opposed to something that you want to guarantee as an experience for all students in public education.

**MARTIN GRAHAM:** This gets to the guarantee is definitely the syllabus. But the question is what is the other guarantee and what's possible to give as a system as a guarantee? It does come to "Can you make a system guarantee over St Marys North?" Sydney Catholics have made a system guarantee about a certain level of provision that they've funded in a particular way. For us it is a question of how much of a school permission is given, its value and that kind of cultural message versus "You will all have this thing or do this thing."

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** We heard some evidence this morning about CAPA faculties facilitating those kinds of events. Is that a discretionary thing that is a principal's decision about how you structure the faculties?

**MARTIN GRAHAM:** It's not mandatory.

**SYLVIA CORISH:** The principal will decide where they want to put their resources in terms of the school. Some of them will have CAPA faculties; some will have their music teachers' funding out of a different area. That really is up to the principal to decide where they're going to use those resources.

**MARTIN GRAHAM:** It often depends on the size of the school. A bigger school, absolutely they will always have a CAPA faculty, no question. It's just when you get smaller there's the question of how they're combined. You might have a country high school with a head teacher of maths and CAPA because they're a music teacher as well.

**Dr JOE McGIRR:** We heard that a survey is being conducted of about 100 primary schools. Is that correct?

**MARTIN GRAHAM:** That's right.

**Dr JOE McGIRR:** I presume that won't be de-identified in any way. I presume the people responding to that survey will be clearly identified by you.

**MARTIN GRAHAM:** They will not be identified by us. The survey is being undertaken independently by ACER, a long-established academic institution, with all the normal survey protocols. We will not be identifying individuals; absolutely not.

**Dr JOE McGIRR:** When will we know the results of that? Are we able to see the results of that survey?

**MARTIN GRAHAM:** The department's not conducting the survey; we are facilitating the conduct of the survey. We are working with other partners who have been driving that survey. There's a government commitment that the survey should take place. I understand their interest in getting the results as quickly as possible. It's the same survey that's taken place in South Australia, and South Australia are using it as a benchmark over time to see how they improve.

**Dr JOE McGIRR:** The other question I have relates to the development of the K-10 syllabus. We heard evidence this morning about the openness or transparency of that process. People had made submissions to it; they didn't get feedback on the submission; they didn't know if their submission was included in the new design of it; and it wasn't clear who was doing the writing, and the panel involved in that. Would you like to make any comment on that, Dr Cahill? That was the evidence we heard this morning.

**PAUL CAHILL:** That surprises me. One of the things in terms of developing the process was that we wanted to make sure that we engaged with the community and with stakeholders very directly and deliberately. On our site we outline the syllabus development process. I will give you a potted overview of how that operates. Previously it was a very much in-house process with relatively limited consultation. Now we have a situation where, for the vast majority of syllabuses, we go out for two rounds of public consultation. The reason for that is we address the feedback we receive from the first round and then we have a second round so the community can see how we have responded to the feedback.

We do provide an engagement report, and that engagement report lists the submissions that we've received. We acknowledge receipt of submissions. We do publish when it's a submission from either one of the school sectors or one of the unions; we identify that a submission has come from that. We don't do that for individuals. We made that as a deliberate choice because, in the time of social media, people can be very unkind, so we would protect people. We acknowledge receipt of submissions. The reality of our work is that we have 111 syllabuses to deliver before the end of '27. We do consider all submissions that are received. We're not in a position to give an individual response to each of the submissions. We hope that's evident through what we do in terms of amendments to the syllabus.

In terms of the process, we engage very broadly with our stakeholders and, for the first time, we asked the three school sectors, both the education unions and the relevant associations to provide us recommendations for members of our technical advisory group. The technical advisory group is our expert body. They're the group to keep us honest. They become aware of the submissions that we receive. They give us advice in terms of the various iterations of the syllabus. In terms of the other recommendations we receive, we receive recommendations for writers from those groups as well. For both the technical advisory group and the writers, we invite those recommended to provide an expression of interest to participate in the process and then, from those expressions

of interest, we ask people to submit a CV. Then we have a panel that reviews those for the selection of relevant TAG members and writers. There is more detail of the process on our website, but I am surprised that someone would have the view that it's not open and transparent. Again, we do have those two rounds of consultation.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Quickly following on from that, is the technical advisory group designed to be an academic pedagogical expert group? The other organisations that you've referred to are involved in the school system directly. I'm just interested in whether and how that more academic style of feedback is provided.

**PAUL CAHILL:** We have a combination and we have a ratio, but I can't remember it off the top of my head. We must have representation from the academic world, but we also must have representation from the teaching profession. One of the things that we really have tried to make sure that we do is reach out to teachers directly. Within that process I was just outlining, we have a range of targeted consultations.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** My question is more to some evidence that we heard earlier today, which was essentially that there's a process of—it's getting teachers involved and it's creating a syllabus, created by teachers for teachers. But the concern was that there isn't enough pedagogical expertise that's incorporated into the syllabus development or valued as part of that feedback process.

**PAUL CAHILL:** That could be some confusion as to the purpose of the syllabus. The syllabus is not a pedagogical document. I, working in an office in Clarence Street, shouldn't be telling a teacher what they need to do pedagogically to address the needs of the students in front of them. One of the things that we really do is trust teacher judgement. They know their kids and they know how to teach them. Our syllabuses look at what the learning entitlement is for students and what content should be consistently taught across all schools in New South Wales.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** But, I suppose, there's an admission that perhaps that pedagogical arm isn't robust enough amongst the teaching profession if you have this teaching advice that's being provided alongside the syllabus to guide teachers.

**PAUL CAHILL:** I may not have been clear enough earlier. The teaching advice relates to content. It doesn't relate to what a teacher would do in the classroom. Again, I have sufficient respect for teachers and their judgement to know that they know what their students need.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** In terms of the stage six review, what is the timing of that being finalised and rolled out?

**PAUL CAHILL:** I will take this on notice and confirm the timing because my memory is not as good as it once was. We are in the process of recruiting, which would typically mean we would be starting a development process that would likely run into '25, probably '26. All things being equal, it's generally an 18-month process. I always keep my fingers crossed that it is a smooth process and that we meet the 18 months, but sometimes it can run into two years. That's pretty much where we're at with that. We deliberately placed that there for a couple of reasons. One is that we wanted to get the foundations right in K-6 and 7-10. The other thing—and this is a very practical thing—is that we wanted to be very mindful of the demands on teachers. Often you would have teachers in 7-10 implementing a syllabus. You don't want them to have to do 11 and 12 at the same time because it's a big job of work.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Finally, we have heard a lot of people—this is on the primary side—suggesting that there be a code developed that is specific to music education. I'm wondering what the view of the department is around that and what makes something like languages and mathematics separate, with their own code, rather than something like music?

**MARTIN GRAHAM:** The thing that makes them separate with their own code is the ITE arrangements and the national agreement around what particular specialisations are. We do have codes in primary school, but they are for skills and experience. They're not a code that attaches to a position. There's a code that attaches to a person. We have band, choir, dance, drama, ICT, music, public speaking and debating, sport, visual arts, and gifted and talented, but they're codes that are attached to the person. We acknowledge they're not the same as having a specialist music position with a code.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** In terms of the teaching that gets done, would a code allow a better understanding of how much music is being taught in schools?

**MARTIN GRAHAM:** It would tell you something about the teacher. It wouldn't tell you something about the experience of the children, necessarily. It would tell you, perhaps, that staff had greater depth of it because there was a specialist there. It would do some things, but it relates to the teacher, not to the program. We would expect all schools and all teachers to be delivering the syllabus.

**SYLVIA CORISH:** There is a code for secondary music but that doesn't stop those teachers from applying to a primary school either. It doesn't stop a primary principal from accepting someone with a music code, for example. I had that circumstance myself when I was a principal. I had a teacher transfer in secondary music. She was amazing and is still amazing, but she also taught the others in what—I had a huge range of different musical opportunities for the students and that particular teacher ran one stream of it and provided the confidence, but my other teachers who were passionate and wanted to do other things did it as well. That person did not become the music specialist, and that person taught every child music. That's not how it worked in my school. It was a very large school.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Would it have been valuable for those other teachers to have had the opportunity to have a code associated with them?

**SYLVIA CORISH:** They were generalist primary teachers and, like teachers do in schools, they learnt skills from that particular person. She would do things and they would follow, but she also learnt from them about how to teach in a primary setting because teaching in a primary setting is quite different to teaching in your specialised area in a secondary school.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Just to clarify, the language and maths codes are there because of a national framework.

**MARTIN GRAHAM:** I think there are only two specialisations, and this is NESA's role as the ITE accreditor, but there are only two and that is maths—

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** We also had languages.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** And librarians.

**MARTIN GRAHAM:** They're different codes.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** What is the difference in the codes? Languages has its own code.

**MARTIN GRAHAM:** The difference between a code for employment—there are specialisations in university courses, and that obviously gives them additional teaching. Then there are codes for your subject area, which are secondary subjects, so you have to have a particular amount in your degree to be able to have those codes. Then there are skills and experience codes, which are just "Look, I'm very good at sports coaching." Principals can say, "I'm looking for someone with this kind of experience." But that is different to "You must have a maths teaching code to teach this content."

**The CHAIR:** What happens, say, with a language teacher? In a couple of my schools we have Arabic and Chinese taught within the classroom setting. What arrangements are made to accredit or recognise the specialist skills of an Arabic teacher? There isn't one, or it's for all languages?

**MARTIN GRAHAM:** In your secondary school they probably—

**The CHAIR:** No, primary school.

**MARTIN GRAHAM:** Then it might be a skill that they have. They may or may not have a university qualification in that.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** I'm sorry if I'm just not understanding how this framework works, but at a primary level you have a teacher and they have different codes, according to different skills that they might have developed on top of their generalist training that they've achieved. Is that correct?

**MARTIN GRAHAM:** That's right.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Then what kinds of skills can those codes refer to?

**MARTIN GRAHAM:** They might, for example, have a lot of experience as a choirmaster, and a principal will sign off saying, "Yes, they do all the regional choirs. They've definitely got that skill." If you're another principal looking for someone with choir experience, I can assure you, this is your person. But they won't have two years university choir, which is where in secondary school, to get a music code, you have to have a university degree which has a certain amount of music in it, not just a generalist ITE qualification.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Are there any primary school codes that relate to that specialisation level?

**MARTIN GRAHAM:** No. There are generally not. Teacher-librarians, for example—there is a position of teacher-librarian, we have a particular code, but in general they are generalists.

**SYLVIA CORISH:** You can become a teacher-librarian without having qualifications in being a teacher-librarian.

**MARTIN GRAHAM:** It does get complicated. We can provide more information on that because it is quite a complex area.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** We have got a lot of evidence on that.

**Dr JOE MCGIRR:** We need some clarification on that.

**MARTIN GRAHAM:** We often have to refresh our memory on this because it is quite a complex deal. The Department of Education has its own language and complexity. We can provide some additional evidence on that.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** Following on from my colleague's question in relation to workforce, having a music professional wanting to transfer across into education getting a Master of Education to help fill a gap—Mr Graham, you talked earlier about the equity provision gap. It might help some of those areas fulfill those requirements. What support does the education department offer for anyone who would like to take on that Master of Education?

**MARTIN GRAHAM:** We have support particularly in areas of shortage. We've always had support in STEM areas. We've had support in special education, disability and so on. We haven't had music as an identified area of shortage because it hasn't been. There are a lot of passionate people who want to do it, but that's not to say we would welcome—artists and musicians are often highly qualified. They are teaching students almost inevitably. There are already people who are focused on that. We welcome them doing university courses, but we don't necessarily have scholarships for everybody to undertake an ITE course.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** When you say you have support, what would that support look like for someone other than an artist?

**MARTIN GRAHAM:** A good example is a program that's being funded with La Trobe at the moment. We might employ someone who can work in a school as an SLSO—like a teacher's aide—for three days a week and be doing their university. We support them as well when they're doing their prac. They come in, they're doing a course through La Trobe, they're becoming a teacher, but they're also working. They don't put their life on hold for two years while they become a teacher, because it is quite a difficult thing. That's the kind of support that it provides to scholarships and so on.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you very much for your time this afternoon. If we do have any follow-up questions, the secretariat will be in touch with you.

**MARTIN GRAHAM:** Thank you for your time and interest. We know there are many passionate teachers, parents and students out there who are practising their arts every day. We appreciate the Committee's interest.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** Thank you for your efforts. It's a very difficult role.

**(The witnesses withdrew.)**

**The Committee adjourned at 16:30.**