



# **Australian Music Association**

**Submission to the House of Representatives  
Standing Committee on Education & Vocational  
Training**

## **Inquiry into Teacher Education**



Australian Music Association Inc.  
MBE148/45 Glenferrie Road  
Malvern VIC 3144  
Ph: 03 9527 6658  
Fax: 03 9507 2316  
Email: info@australianmusic.asn.au

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Mr Luke Hartsuyker MP  
Chair  
Inquiry into Teacher Education  
Standing Committee on Education and Vocational Training  
House of Representatives  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Mr Hartsuyker

Please find herewith the Australian Music Association's submission to your committee's Inquiry into Teacher Education.

Our submission to your committee has been developed in conjunction with our submission to the National Review of Music in Schools, which was jointly announced last year by Ministers Nelson and Kemp. Accordingly, our submission seeks only to comment within our area of expertise - the importance for all Australian children to have access to active music making as part of their education and the training which our teachers receive in order to deliver this critical outcome.

Learning to play a musical instrument is a rewarding experience for anyone at any age, but music is especially helpful to the development of our children. It develops mental skills, builds teamwork and is an activity that can bring joy for a lifetime. It can also help children be more successful in life.

Studying music strengthens school students' academic performance. Studies have indicated that sequential, skill-building instruction in music can greatly improve children's performance in reading and mathematics.

The tangible positive affects of arts in general were reiterated in the recent "Evaluation of School-based Arts Education Programmes in Australian Schools" which was funded by the Department of Education, Science and Training, the Australia Council and the Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts. The report stated that, "The outcomes from the study substantiate evidence that involvement in arts programmes has a positive impact on students' engagement with learning..."

Unfortunately, many generalist teachers have great difficulty in delivering music to our children. Potential teachers have limited, or in many cases, no background or experience in music, and

then are provided with, on average, only 23 hours of pre-service music education as part of their training.

Indeed, as few as 23% of government school students today have access to music at school. However, 87% of Australians believe that every child should have the opportunity to study music in school.

**About the Australian Music Association**

The Australian Music Association is the peak body representing the musical products industry, which includes wholesalers, manufacturers and retailers of music products and the associated services such as music educators, private music studios, music therapists, band directors and piano tuners.

Through the Australian Music Association, the Australian music products industry is banding together to fund initiatives to build a musical nation. Through our non-commercial arm, Music Makers, our industry is committed to providing opportunities for all Australians to be able to play music, for whatever reason they want, and regardless of age.

The Australian Music Association's community education and access programmes are made possible by the generous donations of thirty-three music products wholesalers, who donate 0.5% of their sales, amounting to over \$600,000 annually.

The Australian Music Association is a non-political organisation and we are committed to helping both Governments and alternative governments in their development of policies in this critical area. If at any stage we can be of further assistance to your Inquiry, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Active participation in music really does make a tremendous difference in our children. I hope that you find our submission of use when considering how best we can ensure the best trained teachers for our school students.

Yours sincerely



Ian Harvey  
Executive Officer  
Australian Music Association

## ***Initial teacher training in music education***

There has been a significant volume of research undertaken over the past three or four decades that highlights a number of deficiencies with respect to current teacher training practice and the consequent problems teachers face upon entering the classroom with respect to arts education and in particular music.

This research and commentary largely refers to the training of generalist primary teachers.

The three consistent outcomes from these studies indicate that generalist primary teachers suffer from a lack of training, lack of skills and suffer from low levels of confidence upon entering the classroom after the completion of their training. The issue of confidence, in particular, has been referred to in many studies including those of Mills 1989; Gifford 1991 and 1993; Bresler, 1993; Russell-Bowie 1993 and 2002 and Jeanneret 1995. It was again reiterated by Stevens in the 2003 *Trends in the Provision of School Music Education*.

Gifford's 1991 and 1993 studies of pre-service and newly graduated teachers in Queensland are most informative in this respect. This 1991 study showed that teachers reported feeling less confident and enthusiastic about teaching music and expressed less positive attitudes towards being involved with music at the completion of their studies. The subsequent 1993 study generalised that pre-service teacher training needed to shift its focus from being skill-based to become more experiential. Gifford recommended that 'personal experience with music, rather than extra time learning about it, was the key to a more successful music education for training teachers'. This view was in line with the earlier work of D'Ombra (1974) and Hoermann (1984) which suggested that teachers should 'learn to teach music the same way that they would expect to teach their own students; that is, through experience'.

We believe that a significant cause of the outcomes identified by Gifford and others stems not solely from issues regarding pre-service teacher training but from the combination of those issues, coupled with a lack of 'music experience' amongst undergraduate teachers prior to their entry into teacher training courses. The Australian Music Association's *Australian Attitudes to Music* (2001) research showed that significantly fewer people were experiencing music at school. Amongst the under 35 year olds, only 21% of the 2,400 respondents indicated that their music experience took place within school, while 43% the over 55 age group indicated their musical experience took place with as part of their school activities.

It is not hard to see the dilemma concerning teacher confidence, when on one hand, potential teachers have limited, or in many cases, no background or experience in music, and then are provided with on average, 23 hours of pre-service music education. (Stevens 2003). We believe that this level of tuition in music is grossly inadequate.

This leads, as Byo (2000) suggests to the situation where:

*A teacher's level of confidence would affect the way they teach as teachers lacking the experience would not give their students the same level of instruction as a more confident teacher*

This lack of teacher confidence and skills, we believe, are central to the highly variable quality and ad hoc delivery of music education in Australian schools.

Studies conducted by Jenneret in 1995 in New South Wales and in Arizona showed that pre-service training that is experiential, with some added music theory could provide pre-service trainee teachers with a greater level of confidence. This outcome was consistent with the earlier work of Bridges (1992) who suggested that 'knowing about music and knowing music are two different concepts, and that unless trainee teachers were given opportunities to experience and get to know music they would fear it unnecessarily', and Verastro and Leglar (1992) in Maryland found that 'teachers with musical experiences were more likely to incorporate it into their teaching programs'.

The consequence of this seems to be that improved music and arts education in schools will ultimately lead to an improved level of teaching. If all prospective trainee teachers were musically literate, could play an instrument and had had a range of musical experience before entering university then the education outcomes for their students would invariably be improved.

While the situation surrounding the issues of generalist primary teachers teaching music have attracted a significant amount of attention other areas of specialist music teaching both classroom and instrument do need to be considered.

Unlike so many of their generalist teaching colleagues specialist music teachers will have had a background and in music and a range of musical experiences. While this background and experience as musicians will serve them well they are not always as well equipped as teachers as they should be.

Secondary student teachers, who once completed a four year teacher-training course majoring in music over those four years, now firstly complete a Bachelor of Music. They then have thirty-six hours of tuition in music classroom teaching methodology and the same in instrumental music teaching. While their Bachelor of Music studies may have equipped them with significant instrumental or other musical skills serious consideration has to been given as to whether 72 hours of training, in addition to their in school placement, is sufficient for them to be trained as teachers. Further more, many classroom teachers not only take on the role of teaching, but they often enter the workplace as administrators of whole music departments.

Some issues concerning the training of specialist music teachers include:

- training does not provide them with a familiarity of the entire curriculum so as to limit their ability to integrate music as part of a holistic student-centred education
- insufficient training in school or departmental administration
- a narrow perception of what is it they will do as teachers, this is especially relevant for many instrumental teachers who have for many years concentrated to a large degree on the discipline of learning to play the piano, flute or trumpet
- an inability to context music with the curriculum. This can include too strong an orientation to the 'music for music's sake' argument while ignoring or being unaware of the non-musical benefits of music in education
- the perpetuating of notions of elitism, or genre preference based upon their own musical experience or preferences

Therefore, teachers who are in education courses should firstly have a range of musical experiences that they can call their own so as to develop confidence in music as an area of learning. Their education then should also provide them with the skills to integrate music into the broader curriculum using an approach that is sufficiently flexible so as to inspire all of the school community to be active in music making.

Music teachers also need to be able to show that music is an important aspect of all life experiences, so integrating music into the broader curriculum also means students develop a sense of the context of music - it has a place, a culture, a time, it explores life issues, ideas, discoveries - it is not just repertoire that students may or may not relate to - it is the life context of the music that students relate to as well.

Finally, the issue surrounding tertiary teaching in music is that on the whole, just as the calibre of music education ideology has developed as its presence has declined, so, too, by and large has the calibre of teaching in music education courses. There are some excellent tertiary music educators in Australia - amongst the best in the world. However, like music in primary and secondary education music the tertiary sector is in our opinion insufficiently resourced in regard to time, staff and music resources. This situation is largely a mirror of that of the primary and secondary systems, where there is a perceived lack of status for music education along with the attendant limited resources.

### ***In service training and professional development in music education***

While we have noted above many of the shortcomings of pre-service teacher training there is some recognition that the breadth of music as an area of learning requires additional skill development beyond initial teacher training. Therefore, post training professional development assumes a level of importance.

The March issue of the *'Music. Play for Life'* electronic newsletter contained a report from Kelly Parkes, an Australian who is currently pursuing her PhD in Music Education at the Frost School of Music, University of Miami, Florida, USA. She notes in her article the differences between teacher training for instrumental teachers in Australia and the United States.

*"My (PhD) research into Australia's instrumental music programs found that not all(Australian) states prepare teachers to teach instrumental music (in band programs). Comparatively, in the USA all teachers-in-training get several specific courses toward this end. They learn to play all brass instruments, all woodwind instruments, all percussion, all strings and some vocal techniques as well. They then learn the methods for teaching at the primary school and high school levels, both instrumental and general (appreciation) music. So students come out of their degrees ready to handle just about anything".*

While the Australian music education system is arguably not as one dimensional as the US, with their very strong focus on band and marching band programs, this theme will certainly have some resonance with organisations such as The Australian Band and Orchestra Directors Association (ABODA) and The Orchestra's Australia Network (TOAN). The ABODA executive are certainly heard to make regular comment that their ability to meet demand for band directors, most often for school music programs using a fee for service arrangement, "is severely limited by the number but in particular the skills of graduating instrumental teachers".

It would therefore seem to the Australian Music Association that there are significant further opportunities to develop the skills of teachers in the areas of:

- conducting and group instrumental teaching
- ensemble program management
- departmental administration

- music technology and computer skills
- integration of music into the broader curriculum
- improved integration of instrumental and classroom music programs
- increasing understanding and awareness of the role of music in education (the non-musical benefits of music education)
- the impact and affect of music as a tool to assist the development of disadvantaged and at risk students

Music teachers also need to be trained in how to manage curricular and co-curricular activities. Later in the same *Music.Play for Life* article Kelly Parkes refers to the difference in how music is integrated into the timetable of US and Australian schools:

*In Australia, the music curricula in primary and secondary schools are very different. High schools – band/ orchestra/ choir rehearsals generally take place at co-curricular or extra-curricular times, such as before or after school. In the USA, band /orchestra /choir is a class subject during the school day, just like math(s) or science.*

The reality in Australia is that a significant part of music activity will fall outside the normal school hours. Music teachers need to develop, or be helped to develop coping strategies that allow them to deliver their programs without the threat of burn-out and negative notions of lack of recognition rising to the fore.

From the perspective of the Australian Music Association, the training and use of music technology and computers within the music education context is an important one. While it is relevant for both pre-service and in service teachers we believe teachers who are currently in the system generally have less of an understanding when it comes to using music technology.

Australian Music Association member companies who provide software programs and training for schools have found a significant lack of computer skills amongst music teachers. Australian Music Association member involvement comes largely as a result of the requirement that computer-aided music composition (including notation printing) is an elective for many senior music students. Issues concerning the use of the technology have been recognised and current pre-service courses, professional development activities and *in situ* offer some exposure to the tools in this area. We are now seeing some skill development amongst classroom teachers in the area of technology; however, very few instrumental teachers have exposure to using music technology and to date prefer to use traditional techniques.

While this position amongst instrumental teachers is understandable, we believe their reluctance to embrace technology reduces their effectiveness. Areas in which music technology may ultimately assist instrumental teachers and ensemble directors includes:

- ensemble teachers being able to more easily produce their own arrangements;
- students being able to practice individual parts against other parts at times *other* than rehearsal times;
- potential to help teachers more effectively teach instruments outside their area of specialisation;
- provide specialist assistance to students such as ear training, rhythm training and so on; and
- students being able to record their own compositions, improvisations and performances and arrange them, or develop online portfolios of their work to be used for self and teacher assessment and review.

Many music teachers also need to develop management skills. These skills include aspects such as timetabling and human resources management. One particular area of concern is the management of what are still large numbers of untrained music instrumental teachers in schools. These are people who often teach instrumental music as they were taught. Many of these teachers are very good teachers, but many find they have a large turnover of students due to their inability to understand and respond to student needs, or even appreciate that this might be an issue. They also lack the knowledge to integrate their work of those of the other music teachers in a school and of the curriculum in general.

The view that generalist teachers often do not treat music as a subject about knowledge (Bresler 1993) is a further issue. In this case it was found that music was considered a 'frill' for entertainment, to bring together a school community in the 'inculcation of traditions, fitting with school productions for holidays.' While this lack of understanding of the importance of musical process needs to be addressed through teacher training before entry into service, the reality of this situation requires some re-education of many current teachers.

One further aspect of professional development for existing teachers is the need to maintain as up to date understanding of the available curriculum materials and resources as possible. This is currently provided by professional associations, such as ASME or aMuse in Victoria, together with their equivalent organisations in the other states. The music products industry also often offers professional development opportunities through workshops, reading days, clinics and so on. These activities plus the Australian Music Association quarterly magazine *Music in Action* help teachers learn about examples of best practice, innovation, international and interstate perspective and so on.

Clearly, we need to recognise that improving the status and quality of music education in Australian schools is not a short-term task. While much work is required in the area of teacher training we cannot ignore the needs of those teachers currently in service.

### ***Teachers and curriculum frameworks in music***

The most significant issue for music education other than the training of teachers is the lack of support for music in terms of curriculum, materials and policies. These elements are almost entirely absent from primary music education, though they do increase as education moves out of primary into secondary school.

Especially within primary school the usefulness of these materials to teachers is very limited, and results in the highly variable quality of music education found in Australian schools generally and the ad hoc nature in which many in the community access it. Further consequences include teacher burn out and disenchantment in music teaching, as well as, the very well documented issue of teachers lacking the training, skills and confidence for effective delivery of music in their classrooms (Mills, 1989, Besler 1993, Gifford 1993, Russell-Bowie 1993 and 2002, Jenneret 1994). This is especially the case with regard to beginning teachers

We can identify that, in general, there a lack of:

- syllabus documents
- work samples or sample lessons
- example of best practice
- assessment guidelines
- a clearly stated philosophical approach to the learning of music



- a clearly stated set of organizational principles for the learning of music, especially in primary education, and
- a clearly stated approach with regard to inclusiveness with respect to music learning

within the arts learning frameworks of most State systems. As a result of these policy and curriculum shortcomings many issues arise within education systems, individual schools and teachers. With regard to teaching and teachers these issues include:

- limited text and support materials
- the limited capacity of publishers to develop commercially viable resource materials
- the lack of effectiveness of and access to music technology in music education
- integration between classroom and instrumental music programs
- the need for teachers to develop their own resources

These issues impact heavily on teachers, by requiring them to develop their own materials. This has significant consequences for both the quality of the teaching and levels of satisfaction amongst teachers. However, some of these teacher-related issues can be ameliorated or minimised if the development and provision of further layers of curriculum material could be made available.

For instance, New South Wales overcomes some of these issues by providing teachers with a music education *syllabus*, rather than just a framework, and there are many fine features in those developed over the last two decades. However, there are some limitations in this approach as they can restrict the degree to which teachers can meet the specific needs of students within a state that has urban, rural and multi-cultural environments to name but a few variables in student cohorts.

Although there are similarities in the evolution of music curriculum nationwide, there are also distinctive differences. These differences also impact on the provision of resources for music education. In most disciplines, frameworks are supported by texts published by independent publishers. For music there is a range of texts for years seven and eight particularly. However, there are very few resources, especially at the primary level which model or exemplify curriculum frameworks.

This has some important consequences from an industry perspective as publishing houses struggle to publish texts for individual states in 'small' subject areas where the rules change every 5 years. By the time an author completes a text and it is published, it can have a three-year shelf life. It is simply not commercially viable. This, in turn, means that music teachers are often left to their own devices when in developing programs, which will explore curriculum framework outcomes comprehensively.

We also find the lack of a national curriculum problematic from the point of view of developing materials that can be used across each or even the majority of the states. Teachers in Victoria will comment that the materials are often not a perfect fit for their VCE programs, while their NSW colleagues will make the same comment about the fit of materials for their HSC and so on. With a relatively small number of participants divided amongst eight systems the commercial viability of these materials is severely challenged.

As noted above, many of the State and territory education departments do provide support materials such as work samples or lesson plans. Models rather than comprehensive resources do exist, however the development and distribution of these resources are usually given a much lower priority than the resources provided in many other subject areas.

While music may lack many of the core curriculum materials such as those noted above it does not lack for resource materials as there are a huge number of music resources available. That said, many of these materials are aimed at meeting specific aspects of the music program. There are many song books, musicals, ensemble pieces and tutors. There are also texts exploring specific music ideologies such as Kodaly and Orff Schulwerk, but at all primary levels and from years nine to twelve, texts devoted to exploring all aspects of the music program developmentally are extremely rare.

The ramifications of this are that music teachers either develop their own resources or they relinquish this responsibility and fall back into the much more expedient approach of singing songs, playing instrumental pieces and developing music skills on an ad hoc basis. It also means that instrumental teachers often have a quite different agenda in their teaching programs to classroom teachers and apart from administration, there is often little communication between the two. This is an important issue and one that will be further examined later in this submission.

Of course, the development of unique resources by individual teachers will in some cases result in exceptionally successful, rather than struggling music programs. We have already noted in this submission the importance to a program of a charismatic, effective or engaging teacher on the quality and status enjoyed by music in schools. The flexibility offered to some teachers through a lack of curriculum materials may in some cases actually be a key success factor in a school. This flexibility will often lead to the development of a program or programs that suits the specific needs of their students and the school.

The issue of teachers having to develop their own resources is also evident in the burgeoning area of music technology. Significant resources can be spent on setting up music computer labs, but there is little curriculum support to assist students to develop their creating and composing skills. As a result, students often tackle ad hoc tasks, which merely familiarise them with the capabilities of the software program. There is little assistance available for teachers by way of curriculum resources that can apply this capability knowledge of programs to the development of student musicality.

This situation is changing as the contemporary needs of music students are more readily appreciated. For instance, organisations such as Ausmusic have developed curriculum programs for both the secondary and tertiary levels, allowing some students to ultimately pursue careers in the music industry. However, if a developmental program with a breadth and depth of learning was more rigorously implemented, rather than relying solely on the opportunities provided to a few students through programs such as that offered by Ausmusic, the quality of student work, particularly in areas such as creativity and analytical skills would be greatly enhanced.

There are however, some issues associated with the teaching of creativity through the current music curriculum that often adheres to traditional ways and approaches. Therefore, in many ways, the output of students adheres to established and even clichéd musical formulae.

There are some issues we believe as to the ease in which teachers and other interested parties can gain access to these curriculum materials. Not all appear to be in print, many are on the websites but they are not often easy to find. The difficulty in accessing these materials further diminishes their value where they exist.

## ***Who should teach music in schools?***

The question of who should teach music in schools, especially primary schools, has been discussed for the best part of 40 years, possibly longer. In the opinion of the Australian Music Association, the conclusions of Bartle (1968) and Covell (1970) recommending ‘that specialist music teachers be deployed to teach music in primary schools’ represents the best possible outcome for music.

That said, we recognise that there are some issues associated with this approach that require a level of pragmatism and some re-thinking of music teacher pre-service education.

In pragmatic terms there are a number of issues that need to be face. These include:

- finding and developing sufficient potential primary music teachers to operate in at least the majority of Australia’s 7,000 plus primary schools
- recognition that despite our ‘best intentions’ not all small, isolated rural schools will be able to be serviced by a specialist music teacher
- that any policy position concerning the provision of specialist music teachers in all or almost all schools will have financial and resource implications for governments, universities and school administrators

At least the time taken to develop and train vast numbers of music teachers would ameliorate some of the issues concerning financial and resource issues over what in all likelihood would be many years.

The Australian Music Association recognises the arguments of Mills (1989 and 1993), Glover and Young (1992), and others that highlight some of the deficiencies in the specialist music teacher approach such as:

- a generalist teachers *could* include significantly more music lessons/content within a week than a specialist teacher
- generalist teachers know their students better than specialists, and
- the holistic nature of primary classrooms cannot be maintained in a specialist environment

In terms of pre-service teacher training significant work would be required to ensure that future specialist music teachers do not isolate music learning from the rest of the curriculum (Askew 1997). However, if teacher training is adequate and the Essential Learnings approach is employed in this training, and encouraged through both professional development and within resources for existing music teachers, this should not be the issue Mills, Glover and Young suggest. Specialist teachers, given adequate time with students know them just as well as classroom teachers.

This argument also extends to that of the issue of arts education as whole. The specialist approach could be seen as building barriers to the integration of arts into general education, impact on arts learning access and real life relevance.

On balance, the Australian Music Association finds itself supporting the recommendations of Bartle and Cowell. Not because the arguments regarding generalist teachers providing music education are not persuasive, but that the experience of the last 40 years, where generalist

teachers have had responsibility for primary music education as seen the status and quality of music weaken rather than advance.

The reasons for this lie partly with teachers, who without the experience of delivering music - or the associated benefits to their students - see music as a second rate, entertainment or 'frill' subject and therefore fail to treat the subject seriously. There are however other issues, all of which have been noted earlier in this submission including concerns regarding curriculum and pre- teacher and in-service teacher training.

Stevens et al (*Trends in the Provision of School Music Education in Australia*, Music Council of Australia 2003) of which the Australian Music Association was a commissioning partner summarises this view.

*One of these issues is a long-standing one—namely the unrealistic expectation, particularly of government primary schools, that classroom music will be properly taught by generalist primary school teachers. In reality this does not occur as it should....*

*The chief problems associated with this issue are:*

- *There is a mismatch between the extent—in terms of time allocation and therefore of curriculum content—of music curriculum studies undertaken by prospective teachers in their pre-service teacher education courses and the expectations of education authorities and/or the school in relation to classroom music teaching*
- *There is also a lack of teacher professional development opportunities particularly for primary school music teachers with many states adopting the policy of leaving in-service education to teacher professional associations to provide*
- *Related in part at least to the lack of teacher professional development is a decline in the availability of curriculum support staff; evidence was presented that Music Branch or similar curriculum support had been dispensed with and, although there have been some appointments of Arts Curriculum Officers (such as in Western Australia), these appointments are often non-music specific.*
- *While there is a policy in place that classroom music teaching at the primary level should be undertaken by generalist teachers, the argument for the provision of musically-qualified teachers to ensure that music teaching takes place loses creditability.*
- *The frequently referred to 'over-crowded curriculum' at the primary school level which has seen the introduction of new curriculum areas such as mandatory LOTE or Information Technology has resulted in less time being available for class music teaching; in addition, the inclusion of five art forms (or strands) instead of the traditional two (Music and Visual Art) has resulted not only in a further decline in the available time for teaching music but has had repercussions for teacher education where many institutions have felt compelled to introduce a wider range of arts areas to their arts curriculum studies.*

The key issue here is that the current policy position assumes that classroom music will be properly taught by generalist primary school teachers and that with a relatively small number of exceptions (in relation to the total number of schools) it isn't.

That said, there is a place and a role for the generalist primary teacher and music. It is, however, one that supports the programs of specialist music education and integrates musical activities and expression into other areas of the curriculum. In this sense generalist primary

teachers are engaged in the use of music *in* education, rather than being the providers *of* music education.

The roles of the specialist and classroom teacher should be complimentary. Our response to this question assumes that in primary schools, like secondary schools, both classroom and specialist teachers are in fact music teachers.

Because music performance is so much more visible and tangible to the community we believe that the balance between the performance aspects of music and the development of musician and musicianship have become unbalanced.

The core of music learning begins in the classroom, ideally a primary school classroom and will extend via a sequential series of activities that are age appropriate and developmental. This learning, while including performance elements from the beginning, focuses on music appreciation, the precepts of music, literacy, the ability to internalise music, experimentation and self expression. Classroom teachers are best able to provide and develop these building blocks of music learning.

Specialist instrumental teachers and ensemble directors having a strong base on which to build can then develop the discipline of instrumental performance, technical prowess and repertoire.

These two aspects of learning music should be more or less in tandem or parallel.

Within this context there is also the opportunity to use expertise and experience from within the community. There are for instance a number of individuals and organisations who offer a wide range of extension services. Some of these were noted earlier in this submission when discussing the role of extra-curricular activities. In addition to those individuals and group musicians, appropriately managed by the school, can provide a range of skills and experiences that further extend the notion of classroom and specialist teacher roles. This includes the concept of music mentoring, especially when musical activity falls outside the skills of a given teacher. Mentoring opportunities may include composition, improvisation, songwriting, creativity, music technology, working with disadvantaged or at risk students as a role model and developing skills in specific musical styles or genres.

## ***Music teaching and Arts education***

Since 1994 music has been bundled with the other arts areas of drama, dance, visual arts and multi-media. While there have been some benefits by and large this combination of arts learning areas has been a negative one for music, and in particular for the development of teachers and for staffing.

With less emphasis on music as a separate discipline, creative arts departments of education faculties often comprised of five or six disciplines, staff these departments as they once staffed just music education. This is then reflected in the timetable. For example there has always been an expectation that primary classroom teachers will take on the responsibility of teaching music. A specialist music teacher is a bonus in many schools and a choice schools make. ('Will we go for the specialist PE teacher, the art teacher, the music teacher, the LOTE teacher or the IT teacher? Which will be the most cost efficient? Which delivers the most benefits?'). However with a policy that allows students to move through their schooling with limited and, in some

cases, no access to a developmental music program, many teacher trainees enter university utterly terrified by the prospect of having to 'do' music.

Many teacher education music courses are inadequate. For example in some universities, within a four year degree course, students are provided with twenty-four hours of music education tuition - two hours per week over a twelve week semester. (Stevens 2003)

The situation is similar for secondary teachers where what was previously a four years music education degree has been superseded by a Bachelor of Music degree and 72 hours of teaching study plus school placements.

While the coming together of the arts promised much, the reality is that the bundling of the arts curriculum appears to have resulted in a diminishing of the unique qualities related to each of the art forms. This has resulted in a less complex arts language and content for music (Stevens 1993, McPherson 1995, Jenneret and Watson, both 1999) and presumably for the other arts disciplines. Significantly it has not achieved what it set out to do, making arts teaching more accessible to generalist teachers. In fact according to McPherson (1997) the planning for generalists teachers in a bundled arts curriculum environment had become more difficult.

There are a number of further issues in our opinion with regard to the bundling of the five arts disciplines and its effect on music. These include:

- School report issues regarding the allocation of time within the curriculum
- Music requires sequential learning rather than learning through an activity based curriculum
- Students can (and do) complete a full thirteen years of education without any access to a developmental music program
- Music/Arts experiences can be readily substituted for developmental learning (such as the *Rock Eisteddfod Challenge* and others)

In addition to teaching and support resources, infrastructure such as performances, rehearsal or practices spaces become shared and compromised.

In the view of the Australian Music Association, music needs be given the status of a core or discrete area of learning and not be bundled in with the other arts as is the current situation.

In this environment all students, especially those of primary school age would more likely receive a more complete music education, with all its attendant benefits, than they currently are.

The issue then is to integrate music and the other art forms through a range of music/arts or music/multimedia performance and creativity experiences such as *The Rock Eisteddfod Challenge*, *Kools Skools*, *Join the Chorus* and so on.

## ***Teachers, Technology and Music Education***

The comparative study, *Music Education in International Perspective* (Lepherd 1994) noted that there were issues of distance and isolation within music education and that there were issues regarding the use of music technology. More than 10 years later the issues regarding music technology as noted by Lepherd are, we believe, largely unresolved. While it is true that a number of schools use music technology to a high level, the majority do not. The principle reasons for the low levels of music technology usage are related to:

- the skills, training and understanding of the technology itself;
- there is no single piece of software that caters for all the musical activities. Just as in other areas of activity where there are discrete programs for word processing, spreadsheets and so on, each area of musical activity such as score writing or ear training have their single-use programs. This has implications in terms of cost and teacher familiarity;
- a lack of understanding or awareness of e-learning and its opportunities,
- a lack of coordination between IT and Music departments to leverage current and future investments so as to ensure school PCs can be utilised as part of the music programme; and
- a lack of access to the current technology due to budgetary constraints.

Music technology, therefore, can be considered equally as an opportunity and a threat depending on your point of view. To date music technology has not been widely adopted in Australian schools despite the fact that technology is now mandatory in all subject curricular in most Australian States and that music is no exception. The musical activities that music technology can provide are:

- Composition, Arranging and Mixing
- Notation
- Digital Audio
- Film Scoring
- Ear Training
- Music Theory

A greater use and acceptance of music technology may help ameliorate some of the issues concerning primary music education. Researchers such as Gifford (1993), Russell-Bowie (1993) and Jeanneret (1994) amongst others have found that the quality of the music teaching within Australian primary schools to be wanting and that many students as a result would not receive a quality music education. The vast majority of primary schools in most Australian states still do not have dedicated music specialists so, unless the teacher is musical (at least to some degree) the likelihood of students receiving a quality, developmental music education are somewhat limited. Stevens et al recently substantiated this view via the 2003 *Trends in the Provision of School Music Education Australia* study.

Perhaps uniquely for Australia there is the additional issue of small, isolated, single and dual teacher primary schools where it is highly unlikely that the provision of specialist music teachers would ever be viable. There are now some examples of the use of technology, including music technology in isolated rural and regional locations.

Some schools embrace the use of music technology at a very high level, but taken, across the board, schools generally do not. To be fair there are some industry related issues that impact on the use of technology by teachers in schools. These include:

- Teachers are being exposed to “industry tools” rather than dedicated ‘education’ tools in many cases. These “Industry tools” are productivity focused, not learning focused. This means there is a steep learning curve for both teachers and students in achieving musical outcomes. The tools are normally focused in particular areas e.g. notation, and this necessitates the use of several “industry” tools to achieve a balanced musical outcome. This requirement often multiplies an already steep learning curve.

- The technology sector of the music industry has been expanding at a rapid rate. This is especially the case for music software products. This has led to a great deal of volatility with products emerging and disappearing on a regular basis, as well as, products changing ownership frequently with the resulting changes in distribution and support. This can have serious implications for teachers that have either had little or no exposure to music technology. It is also a problem for teachers that have learned to use products which they now find out-of-date or no longer available.

Unfortunately, these trends are likely to continue for some time.

To some extent at least, these limitations and the issues of isolation and size also can be solved by the introduction of e-learning music software. Properly constructed e-learning software will lead students through a series of exercises, step by step, and then automatically assess each student's results.

The use of e-learning music tools can reduce a number for teachers and schools. Issues related to connections and compatibility, IT support and product redundancy can help provide a more flexible, arguably cost-effective learning environment. E-learning software programs can also make greater use of the standard computer lab, which is available in most schools. The other benefits of e-learning tools are:

- assists the music teacher by providing lesson material in a time pressed environment;
- provides self-paced lessons that cater for a range of student abilities in one class; and
- provides lesson content that cover all areas of the music curriculum – performing, composing and listening (issue 3 above).

Despite music technology being not widely used in schools and education there are however several examples of the most up to date non-music technologies being used for improved musical outcomes.

### ***Music teaching and meeting the needs of Students***

In the opinion of the Australian Music Association, a significant failure of the current system of music education and teaching is the teacher's inability to teach music using contemporary idioms. Dr Chi Cheung Leung of the Hong Kong Institute of Education sums this shortcoming up in the online music education journal *Action, Criticism and Theory for Music Education* (MayDay Group Online Journal 2004):

*Teachers continue to be trained at universities and conservatoriums mostly in classical music and thus keep on teaching a limited range of all the music that is available. Although world musics have been widely discussed by music educators, their restricted expertise and resources have limited their educational effect. As a result, traditional curriculum and thus music education have not reacted sensitively to the musics of popular, traditional and contemporary cultures existing in the real world.*

As a result, even in schools where the contemporary needs of students are recognised, the output of students working in contemporary music genres, can still adhere to established and even clichéd musical formulae.



The key issue here for teachers is that students who study music at school have two vastly different relationships with music – their personal relationship and their school relationship. Without some relevance being established between the two there is a disconnection and school music becomes unattractive, as the studies by O'Neill (2001) and Stalhammer (2004) have shown. This leads to a significant withdrawal from music learning by youth at a time when arguably they are most connected with music in terms of its shaping their sense of self and social connection.

This situation, while linked to the issues regarding curriculum shortcomings is unfortunately strongly focused on teaching practice. The concerns in this regard are:

- Teachers, especially instrumental teachers tending to teach in the manner that they were taught. This preserves traditional approaches, styles and genres and presents barriers to the introduction of contemporary music styles
- More established teachers do not recognise or value new musical styles such as rap or hip-hop, because they do not understand the genre and it is foreign to their musical experience, taste or preference. The reverse is true for students who have yet to have sufficient experience with art music styles and therefore find those styles equally foreign to their taste
- Continuing notions of elitism. Some teachers (along with some administrators and parents) see contemporary music activities as a diminished option compared to western art music. For some teachers, musical achievement lies solely in an ability to play a piece by Bach, Mozart or Beethoven
- Established music programs featuring concert bands and orchestras are well supported through teaching methods and repertoire. This is not necessarily the case with contemporary programs which potentially places more pressure on teachers to customize their activities
- In many instances teachers and schools consider that teaching band music is in fact contemporary music, in that they play arrangements of current or near current music.
- Traditional music programs featuring school bands and orchestras have established economic models. The large scale, group teaching approach of these programs is financially efficient.

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