

**Submission
No 389**

**INQUIRY INTO THE MUSIC AND ARTS ECONOMY IN
NEW SOUTH WALES**

Organisation: Goulburn Regional Conservatorium

Date received: 27 February 2018

I have been the CEO / Artistic Director of the Goulburn Regional Conservatorium for the past seven years. Prior to this I worked in the music and education sectors for over 25 years. I have chosen music and education as my career because I have always believed the music education is crucial and fundamental to the whole development of every person, intellectually, emotionally, socially and psychologically. I believe that music and well-being are inextricably linked and that music affects people in ways that no other art form does. In the 21st century there are now significant studies and irrefutable data that shows this to be true. This can be found in the particularly revolutionary work of Dr. Anita Collins (Bigger, Better Brains and The Lullaby Effect).

In my local community I have seen first hand how music can change lives and transform children, families and entire towns! We deliver in school music education to more than 600 children in outlying villages on a weekly basis. In some schools every single child is learning an instrument! This has had a transformative impact on the schools and the communities that surround them. There is simply no argument that can be mounted to refute the fundamental importance and impact of music and music education on children, families and communities - especially those from lower socio - economic demographics.

Linked to our delivery of music education programs is a multi-leveled performance program which incorporates student performance opportunities, community performances and visiting artist performances. All regional conservatoriums in NSW are dedicated to and focused on providing comprehensive and stimulating music performance events for our regional communities. The educational and cultural connectivity and cohesion between music education and music activity / performance is crucial in the full development and understanding of music in society and individuals. Similarly, creating new music that speaks to and of the people in all communities is important. Creating an Australian voice and particularly a regional voice is critical.

I am mostly concerned that federal and state governments continue to ignore the comprehensive research which demonstrates the effectiveness of music in education. At a time when Australia's educational standards are slipping alarmingly it is hard to understand why successive education ministers continue to be so myopic when an immediate solution stands right in front of them. The implementation of compulsory music education for ALL school children would have an immediate impact on educational achievement, enhancing literacy and numeracy scores, improving comprehension, focus, self-discipline, collaborative and creative skills. Within five years Australia would see a marked upswing in educational standards across the board.

Instead of wasting public money on the clearly ineffective and outdated NAPLAN testing system, put that money towards the music education of all children and the proper training of all primary school teachers in music education.

Lay the proper foundations for meaningful music education before simply putting more demand (without the necessary funding) on musicians and music industry representatives to achieve the outcomes you have articulated in your discussion paper.

Provide instruments to schools.

Link directly with Regional Conservatoriums.

Create more Regional Conservatoriums - in fact, expand this highly successful NSW initiative to encompass all states and territories!

Increase funding to all Regional Conservatoriums to support expansion and quality delivery of services into all regional areas.

Establish whole-of-government initiatives that link music education to programs targeting well-being, disadvantage, disability and social isolation.

By adopting the initiatives detailed above, this would create a new and significant impetus across the music industry, bringing new weight, depth and legitimacy to music and music education in our society as a study, a pastime or a career.

As a result there would be an increase in musical creativity and diversity, greater support for new festivals, activities and initiatives and justifiable reasons and means to improve and increase facilities for the learning, creating, sharing and enjoying of music for all sectors of society.

I encourage visionary, big-picture thinking.

I am willing to support, assist, advise and collaborate in any way I can.