

Submission
No 36

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

Organisation: Musica Viva Australia

Date Received: 25 July 2024

Submission to the Joint Select Committee on Arts and Music Education and Training in New South Wales

Executive Summary

Musica Viva Australia's position is that access for children and young people to creativity and arts education is the most significant priority for government investment. As one of the leading providers of music education to NSW students, MVA is uniquely positioned to address the Joint Committee's Terms of Reference in relation to the **quality and effectiveness of music education and training**.

This submission addresses the following points:

- **The role of creative professionals in music education:** MVA is one of the largest employers of professional musicians in NSW. Professional musicians are vital to music education in schools, sparking the creativity of teachers and students alike through their distinctive talents and expertise. In turn, working in the Education sector provides professional musicians with stable and reliable employment, which supports their portfolio careers in the Creative Industries.
- **The availability of support for teachers and principals in delivering quality music education:** Generalist classroom teachers are responsible for delivering music education in NSW primary schools and the majority are significantly underprepared for this task. Professional development opportunities such as those provided by MVA provide vital skills-building to scaffold teachers' teaching activities and build their confidence in delivering music education.
- **The most effective approach for the music and the creative industries to co-ordinate with the education system:** MVA strongly encourages collaboration between the Department of Education and Create NSW so that music education is embedded as a cross-portfolio priority, expertise is shared and efficiencies are delivered.
- **Notable approaches to music education in other jurisdictions:** As a national organisation, MVA is well-placed to provide examples of effective government investment in music education in other states and territories which the NSW Government could consider implementing. These are outlined in the body of this submission.

Recommendations to strengthen Music Education in NSW:

- **Access to [quality music education](#) for all NSW students** (as defined by the Music Education: Right from the Start initiative) should be the goal of the NSW Government.
- **Investing in professional performing arts organisations** will enable existing successful programs to be scaled up for increased reach and impact across NSW and the leveraging of additional private sector income.
- **Consider it a cross-portfolio priority to fund music education**, to ensure that best-practice is shared between the Creative Industries and Education sectors, to support professional artists and arts organisations, and so that harmonisation of funding and service delivery is achieved.
- **Increased funding for pre-service music training for generalist teachers** is vital to ensure the future of music education in Australia.
- **Investment in ongoing professional development for classroom teachers** is essential to ensure that all NSW students receive quality music education at school.
- Additional funding is needed for **training programs to support secondary school musicians**.
- **Schools in regional NSW and schools for students with disability** require additional funding to ensure equitable access to music education for all.

About Musica Viva Australia

Musica Viva Australia (MVA) is the world's largest platform for chamber music, presenting tours featuring the greatest works and artists of our age. We are also one of Australia's leading providers of music education in schools and a champion for Australian composers and emerging talent. With our Head Office on Gadigal land in Sydney, MVA is a national touring and producing organisation with 60 staff based around the country. MVA receives core funding through the National Performing Arts Partnership Framework (Create NSW and Creative Australia).

MVA program delivery in NSW in 2023:

- Over 90,000 students and 4,000 teachers from over 350 schools participated in MVA programs.
- Over 1100 students and teachers from four low ICSEA NSW schools participated in our comprehensive three-year Music Education Residency Program.
- MVA delivered 60 events by 55 artists in regional NSW. In 2024 MVA will increase delivery to 101 events in 24 regional centres.
- MVA delivered 14 mainstage concerts and 5 morning concerts in Sydney.

Musica Viva Australia's Education Program

As Australia's largest and most trusted provider of music education in schools, MVA brings the social and educational benefits of music education to students and teachers across NSW, regardless of geographic or financial circumstances.

The Musica Viva Australia In Schools (MVAIS) program provides *breadth* of access to over 200,000 students and teachers per year in metro, regional and remote areas around the country. Using music as the primary tool to teach creativity and engage students in learning, MVAIS develops culturally and musically diverse performance programs that link music to other curriculum learning areas including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures, Science, Drama, Languages, Asian Studies, and Literacy. By 2028 MVA aims to reach more than 250,000 students annually.

Access and equity are a priority for the program. MVA's Equal Music Fund applies government and philanthropically funded subsidies each year to support students who would otherwise not be able to experience music education or live performance. This provides free or heavily subsidised performances to schools rated low on the Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) and supports touring to regional and remote areas where the travel costs would otherwise be prohibitive. MVA also offers tailored performances and resources to support students with disability and their teachers.

MVA's **Music Education Residency Program** offers *depth* of access for the students who will benefit most from the opportunity, through quality sequential music lessons as part of a three-year evidence-based model delivered in disadvantaged schools. In these residencies, MVA works in partnership with school leadership to co-design programs that include weekly classroom and instrumental lessons for students, professional development for all teachers and access to the MVAIS performance program and resources. When the residency ends, the school will have become self-sufficient in music instruction, ensuring that generations of children receive the educational and intrinsic benefits of music.

A significant element of Musica Viva Australia's service delivery is the support of teachers through **Professional Development**, including online and face-to-face workshops. Additionally, our unique online resource platform provides a whole term's worth of curriculum-aligned activities to enhance the live performance experience and deepen educational learning outcomes for students. These resources are tailored to generalist teachers who may have had little or no music teaching training and may lack confidence in delivering music education to their classes if not for such accessible and rich material.

Musica Viva Australia's Emerging Artist Programs

MVA's suite of Emerging Artist Programs builds a pathway of interconnected opportunities for students, teachers and training institutions that illuminate different ways to be a musician and build a healthier and more vibrant professional music sector. Emerging Artist Programs focus support for students at critical junctures in their development to deliver a seamless pathway from *seeing* to *being*.

As students enter secondary education, the focus on access and equity continues, but the need

shifts from broad provision of music education for all, to the identified need for an accessible vocational training pathway which will nourish a sustainable cultural sector into the future. MVA's **Strike A Chord program** is a chamber music coaching program and competition that creates a clear training pathway for high school musicians nationally. It is designed to be highly accessible, providing equitable access to all young artists, recognising that a sustainable cultural sector is built on a breadth of engagement between young people, professional artists and audiences, regardless of geographic, cultural or financial circumstances.

MVA extends this training pathway through to tertiary students through our partnerships with universities such as the Orange Conservatorium and Sydney University, through which we connect world-class musicians with aspiring early career musicians for coaching, workshops, masterclasses and mentorships. Other Emerging Artist activities include the quadrennial Melbourne International Chamber Music Competition, and FutureMakers, an intensive two-year program for exceptional emerging artistic leaders.

Quality Music Education – Impact and Gaps

MVA's position is that access for children and young people to creativity and arts education is the most significant priority for government investment. The evidence is compelling and comprehensive that quality music education supports engagement at school, social cohesion and inclusion, teamwork, wellbeing, confidence and self-esteem; as well as language and literacy skills, spatial reasoning, verbal and memory skills and academic achievement (Music Education, A Sound Investment report, Collins, Dwyer & Date, 2019). The same report however, found that a large proportion of Australian primary school students have little or no access to music education.

Musica Viva Australia supports the definition of [quality music education](#) developed by Music Education: Right from the Start, a collaborative initiative led by Alberts I The Tony foundation. This work outlines the need for quality music education to be an ongoing, sequential learning experience in order for both permanent positive cognitive development and deep musical learning and appreciation to occur.

In New South Wales, general classroom teachers in government primary schools are responsible for teaching all key learning areas of the curriculum, including music. However, successive reviews and reports, most recently the Fading Notes report (Collins & Hocking, 2023) have highlighted the nationwide deficiencies in pre-service teacher training in music. In NSW, the same report found that generalist classroom teachers receive only nine hours of music teaching during their pre-service training, which results in a large proportion of primary school teachers lacking confidence to deliver music education.

Response to the Joint Select Committee on Arts and Music Education and Training in New South Wales

As one of the leading providers of music education to NSW students, and with the perspective that comes from delivering music education in every Australian State and Territory, Musica Viva Australia is well-placed to address the following points from the Joint Committee's Terms of Reference in relation to the **quality and effectiveness of music education and training**.

- **The role of creative professionals in music education**

MVA is one of Australia's largest employers of freelance classical musicians. In 2023 MVA employed over 250 musicians, the majority working on MVA's Education and Emerging Artist programs. Through our extensive program delivery in schools, emerging artists programs, masterclasses, workshops and relationships with tertiary institutions, we observe firsthand the benefits that students and young people receive when they have access to professional teaching artists and creative mentors. These teaching artists and mentors underpin and extend the work of qualified teachers in schools, creating enriched opportunities for permanent positive cognitive development and deep musical learning. They are central

to providing teachers with the tools to spark the creativity of their students and to nurturing the creative potential of students and school communities.

In turn, musicians receive steady and ongoing employment for a minimum of five years within a richly creative context. This engagement includes a year of creative development on all Musica Viva Australia In Schools (MVAIS) shows, during which we work in the studio with musicians and education consultants to complete a three-phase creative development process, including workshops, resource development and trial performances. During this intensive process, we support musicians to build their capacity as confident and effective teaching artists. MVAIS shows then tour to a broad range of metro and regional centres across all States and Territories over a minimum four-year touring period. MVA aims to develop two to four new MVAIS programs per year to support program renewal that addresses artistic vibrancy, sustainable delivery and multi-year employment opportunities for musicians nationally. In 2023 MVAIS employed 48 musicians in 15 musically and culturally diverse ensembles across the country. These ensembles presented 88% Australian repertoire including works by First Nations composers.

Case Study: Wyniss and Musica Viva Australia In Schools

One of the most in-demand Musica Viva Australia In Schools ensembles, Wyniss, has reached over 100,000 students since 2018. The creative leads of the work are Torres Strait Islander Elder, educator and artist Dujon Niue and First Nations choreographer and educator Jeanette Fabila, and the performance was developed on Country in partnership with NAISDA Dance College. Using Torres Strait Islander songs, dance and childhood games to explore how culture and history are passed on through generations, Wyniss has performed over 560 schools shows in all states and territories over seven years of engagement with MVA. The ensemble's prolonged engagement with MVA has provided its artists with ongoing employment, the opportunity to tour nationally, including to some of the most remote communities in Australia, and the resources to create enriching artistic work. In turn, school and community audiences share in important cultural learning experiences made accessible through music, guided by the MVAIS cultural protocols developed with experienced cultural practitioners and respected elders.

- **The availability of support for teachers and principals in delivering quality music education**

Professional Development for generalist and specialist teachers

A recent study undertaken for the Fading Notes report (Collins & Hocking, 2023) surveyed 49 Australian Universities offering teaching accreditations. The study concluded that diminishing levels of music education within generalist primary teaching degrees leave most teachers underprepared to meet the realities of the classroom. 71% of surveyed universities stated that their primary teaching students did not expect to be teaching music in the classroom. In addition, 67% of surveyed universities do not offer an elective in music and 72% do not offer a primary music specialism. However, surveyed universities reported receiving feedback that primary teaching students would like to spend more time on Arts and Music education.

Professional Development programs, including those offered by MVA, were highlighted as a key component in a national approach to resolving the issue.

MVA's Professional Development programs:

- build teachers' practical skills and confidence in teaching classroom music
- are targeted towards Primary and Middle School Teachers K-8
- provide both face-to-face and online workshops around NSW and nationally
- are curriculum aligned to the NSW Creative Arts Syllabus (Music strand) and aligned to AITSL Professional Standards for Teachers
- increased the skills of over 180 NSW teachers in 2024
- have the capacity to be scaled up for increased reach and impact.

MVA's flagship offering is the 12-week **Music Education Skills for the Primary Classroom** course, which is aimed at generalist classroom teachers with minimal music teaching experience who wish to build their skills and confidence in teaching music in the primary classroom. This online course was developed in partnership with the Centre for Professional Learning and is facilitated by a music education specialist who provides ongoing and direct feedback throughout the course. Completing the course provides NSW teachers with eight hours of NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) Accredited Professional Development.

MVA's intensive **Music Education Residencies** are another mechanism for increasing the skills and confidence of Primary School principals and teachers to embed music education in their schools. MVA's Music Education Residencies invest in the students who will benefit most from music education and who have the least access to it, by embedding three years of quality sequential music education in disadvantaged schools. After the three-year Residency ends, the aim is for each school to have become self-sufficient in music instruction, ensuring that generations of children receive the educational and intrinsic benefits of music.

In these Residencies MVA works in partnership with school leadership to co-design three-year evidence-based programs that include the provision of teaching artists to deliver weekly classroom and instrumental lessons for students, professional development for all teachers and access to the Musica Viva Australia In Schools performance program and resources. Health and wellbeing is central to all activities, which focus on confidence in teachers and students alike. Creativity is fostered through exposure to exceptional live music performances and quality music education informed by best-practice and evidence-based research.

MVA currently delivers Music Education Residency Programs in four NSW schools - three in Western Sydney and one in inner-city Woolloomooloo. Currently these are all philanthropically funded. With further investment there is considerable scope to scale-up this program for greater impact in NSW.

- **The most effective approach for the music and the creative industries to co-ordinate with the education system to support the development of creative skills**

Musica Viva Australia encourages the NSW Government to build connections between the Department of Education and other NSW agencies, embedding music education as a cross-portfolio priority for all to reflect the positive impact of the music in settings such as education, health, community cohesion, mental health and wellbeing. MVA particularly encourages collaboration between the Department of Education, Create NSW and the not-for-profit arts sector. MVA has received no investment from the NSW Department of Education for the last decade, and there are currently no government funding programs that support the delivery of arts education or live performances in schools in NSW.

Conversely, MVA is strongly supported by other State and Territory Governments around the country to deliver a range of programs, including touring to remote and regional schools, providing professional development for teachers (including upskilling teachers to teach music to children with disability), and the delivery of multi-year Music Education Residencies in disadvantaged schools. This funding allows MVA to enrich and support the delivery of music education in schools that need it most, through engaging live performances and curriculum aligned resource materials.

Importantly, MVA is adept at leveraging government investment to secure substantial amounts of philanthropic support for Education programs, from trusts and foundations and individual donors. A key example is a recent significant multi-year gift to MVA's Music Residency Program in Western Australia, secured on the proviso that it be leveraged with government investment, which was achieved by securing a multi-year grant from the State Government of WA. The combination of these two funding sources is supporting the establishment of Music Education Residency programs in five new schools and will be transformative for many students and teachers in the coming decade. There is strong potential to grow further government/philanthropic partnerships of this type to increase the reach of music education programs.

- **Notable approaches to music education in other jurisdictions**

As a truly national organisation with over 40 years working in Australian schools, Musica Viva Australia has in-depth knowledge of effective state-based approaches to music education within primary and secondary settings.

Examples of current programs that support music education delivery in schools nationally:

- In the Northern Territory, MVA has a five-year agreement with the **NT Department of Education** through its **Community-based Education Organisation Grant program** to deliver live and digital concerts to schools around the Territory, including in remote areas. Performances offer musically and culturally diverse content including programs led by First Nations artists, and professional development for teachers focusses on building confidence to deliver classroom music lessons. The five-year timeframe allows MVA to plan programs with certainty and to respond to teachers' and schools' needs effectively.
- In South Australia, a three-year agreement with the **SA Department for Education** supports the delivery of performances to government schools around the state, with a minimum of 20% required to be regional or isolated schools. MVA also contributes towards policy development in SA by participating in the Music Education Roundtable.
- In Western Australia, the **Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries** manages the **Creative Learning Partnerships Program**, which increases access for students to arts experiences through a two-year funding program. This funding, supported by matched philanthropic funds, enables MVA to deliver multi-year Music Education Residencies in five low ICSEA schools.
- The **Department of Education in Queensland** established the Instrumental Music Program in state schools in 1971. This comprehensive tuition program, in which students learn orchestral or band instruments, provides an extra dimension to a school music program. The ongoing legacy of this program is reflected in the disproportionate representation of Queenslanders in MVA's Strike A Chord Competition and among rank-and-file musicians in orchestras and tertiary music programs nationally. **Arts Queensland** currently supports Musica Viva Australia In Schools tours to regional QLD locations in 2024.
- **The Victorian Department of Education's Strategic Partnerships Program** provides annual funding to not-for-profit organisations to deliver curriculum enrichment programs that improve student achievement and improve teacher capability. Previous funding has supported MVA to deliver an annual program of school touring in Victoria focused on low ICSEA schools, the development of Victorian-based teaching artists, and the provision of professional development in music education to teachers.
- **Strike A Chord** is modelled on a highly successful New Zealand program that has driven high levels of participation in school music-making and successful entry points into tertiary training for the past five decades.

Recommendations to the Joint Select Committee

Musica Viva Australia makes the following recommendations to strengthen the delivery of Music Education in NSW:

- Access to [quality music education](#) for all NSW students (as defined by the Music Education: Right from the Start initiative) should be the goal of the NSW Government.
- Investing in professional performing arts organisations will enable existing successful programs to be scaled up for increased reach and impact across NSW and the leveraging of additional private sector income.

- Consider it a cross-portfolio priority to fund music education, to ensure that best-practice is shared between the Creative Industries and Education sectors, to support professional artists and arts organisations, and so that harmonisation of funding and service delivery is achieved.
- Increased funding for pre-service music training for generalist teachers is vital to ensure the future of music education in Australia.
- Investment in ongoing professional development for classroom teachers is essential to ensure that all NSW students receive quality music education at school.
- Additional funding is needed for training programs to support secondary school musicians.
- Schools in regional NSW and schools for students with disability require additional funding and resources to ensure equitable access to music education for all.

Additional Information

Representatives from Musica Viva Australia would welcome the opportunity to appear before the Joint Committee to provide additional insights about music education in NSW and further context about MVA's work in this area.

For additional information about any of the information outlined in this submission, please contact:

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