

Submission
No 82

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

Organisation: Amplify Music Education

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Amplify Music Education

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Introduction

We are Natalie Kradolfer & Ricky Kradolfer, Co-Founders of Amplify Music Education. Firstly, we would like to thank the Joint Select Committee for their leadership in appointing a Parliamentary Inquiry into Arts and Music Education and Training in New South Wales. Amplify Music Education is a NSW based company and we deliver solutions for schools looking for quality music education within the curriculum.

Amplify Music Education is at the forefront of supporting primary schools with the delivery of the **compulsory music curriculum**, by reimagining how music is being taught in the classroom.

Amplify is a software platform that teachers use to deliver high-quality, sequential music lessons that meet the compulsory curriculum outcomes. It enhances existing school systems, upsills and supports non-specialist teachers to deliver engaging and contemporary lessons, is accessible to all schools regardless of location and can be tailored for all types of learners.

We welcome the opportunity to make a public submission on behalf of Amplify Music Education and are happy to share a deeper discussion at any time.

The Terms of Reference are extensive, so we have chosen to highlight those that we believe are most relevant to the delivery of the current, compulsory music curriculum in primary schools in New South Wales. These are:

1. (b) (i) progress towards a long-term goal of quality music education, including actions to address identified barriers
- (b) (ii) the present level and status of formal music education across all levels including primary, secondary and tertiary levels
- (b) (v) the efficacy of the current primary and secondary school curriculum in delivering learning outcomes in music related subjects
- (b) (vi) the availability of support for teachers and principals in delivery quality music education and ensuring that an inclusive approach is taken towards resource allocation for regional schools across New South Wales
- (b) (vii) the most effective approach for the music and creative industries to coordinate with the education system to support the development of creative skills

Amplify Music Education would like to put forward the following recommendations detailed further in our submission.

1. **Primary schools need flexibility to deliver curriculum content** in a way that works for their individual contexts. Any recommendations made following this inquiry, should not

reference curriculum or curriculum delivery without the support of the Department of Education and the NSW Education Standards Authority

2. We recommend that **upskilling and supporting classroom teachers is the best and most sustainable way to make music a priority in every classroom**. Teacher development and training must be delivered in a way that fits with the current teaching paradigm
3. **All recommendations made by the committee should deeply consider school complexities** and context and provide ways that music education can fit in with the school, not the other way around

Background of Amplify Music Education and Evidence to Support Submission

Amplify Music Education is here to help teachers and schools deliver quality music education.

Teachers require no specialist music knowledge to deliver a lesson with Amplify. Our unique pedagogical method means that all of the explicit teaching components are provided and the teacher can focus on what they do best - the art of teaching.

441 primary schools in New South Wales (21%) are already using Amplify Music Education to upskill and empower their teachers to deliver high quality, sequential music lessons that meet the outcomes of the compulsory music curriculum. This number will grow to over 40% of primary schools in New South Wales by 2025.

To ensure every student has access to music education at primary school, harnessing technology is the only way to make it accessible, equitable, and sustainable, and future-proof it for years to come.

Amplify Music Education by Numbers

Number of NSW primary schools subscribed to Amplify	Number of NSW teachers actively using the platform	Number of NSW students being taught music in the classroom with Amplify
441	5,733	~77,000

Smallest NSW school using Amplify (student numbers)	Biggest NSW school using Amplify (student numbers)	Number of additional NSW primary schools using free content on Amplify in 2024 (e.g. NAIDOC Week)
2	1,350	278

A Quality Music Education

Our definition of a “Quality Music Education” delivered in **primary school classroom setting** is:

1. High quality, sequential music lessons, delivered by a classroom teacher or music specialist to fulfill the needs of the compulsory music curriculum.
2. Lesson content should include listening, singing, moving, playing classroom-style instruments, notation, composing, and performing, and should be appropriately scaffolded to continuously build on the knowledge and understanding of key musical concepts.
3. Lessons should cover all genres of music, as well as music from different social and cultural backgrounds and be contextualised so that students can identify with the content to ensure ultimate engagement and deep learning (age, background, cultural relevance etc.)

What a “Quality Music Education” delivered in a **primary school classroom setting** is **NOT**:

1. Extra-curricular instrument tuition that students and parents have opted in to and pay for
2. School, school community or philanthropically funded compulsory tuition on a prescribed instrument or group of instruments (not of their choice)
3. Ensembles or groups, including choirs, that are not inclusive of every student in the school
4. An experience that alienates students by forcing them to participate in something that doesn't bring them joy and increases disengagement in the classroom
5. Music lessons taught by a specialist educator that don't involve their classroom teacher as this is a missed opportunity for teacher and student connection which is a key element of creating a sense of belonging at school

The New South Wales primary school curriculum mandates that 6-10% of learning time is dedicated to Creative Arts which equates to approximately 1.5 to 2.5 hours per week. The Creative Arts syllabus comprises Music, Visual Art, Dance, and Drama, however they are not all considered equal. Music and Visual Art should be taught in every year level, however Dance and Drama can be taught per stage.

We believe that the mandates above are sufficient and that schools should be entitled to flexibility around their curriculum delivery as they know what works best for their students and community.

Prioritising Music in Curriculum Delivery

We speak to hundreds of Principals every week and rarely do we find Principals that ardently don't want to have music at their school. As per the above, **the barrier is not the prescribed or allocated time for schools to teach music, it is the ability of the school to be able to implement a programme appropriate for their school setting.**

With the teacher shortage being pointedly felt across every school in New South Wales, substantial cuts to school budgets, along with a myriad of other challenges being faced across different schools, **having a specialist music teacher come to the school to deliver music lessons is an out-dated concept.** And when the responsibility falls to the classroom teacher, a new set of variables come into play.

The key reasons why classroom teachers lack confidence with teaching music:

1. Minimal pre-service study dedicated to Creative Arts
2. Reliance on knowledge gained through personal interest and experience
3. They might like music and want to teach it, but don't have the deep understanding to craft lesson plans that meet curriculum outcomes
4. Their time is precious and are constantly juggling many complex competing priorities

We believe that to upskill teachers en masse, with varying levels of interest in music as a subject, professional development needs to be delivered in a way that fits in with the current teaching paradigm. Ongoing, on-the-job training that aligns with their day-to-day teaching triggers widespread results.

<p><i>“For over 10 years I have been trying to incorporate music into my classroom but it always felt one step too far... until now. Everything about Amplify is FANTASTIC” - Classroom Teacher</i></p>	<p><i>“Engaging, intuitive, clear and concise. Amazing program that we’re looking forward to implementing at our regional school!” - Principal</i></p>
<p><i>“I like how our teacher tells us everything in different ways and explains it uniquely. Ricky doesn’t keep talking, he also shows us examples. Last year we just clapped our hands to songs, now we are actually being taught about music” - Student</i></p>	<p><i>“Our teachers are really excited about teaching music now which is new for them. The age appropriate, dignified and meaningful learning opportunities are outstanding for our school context” - Principal, School for Specific Purpose</i></p>

Coordinating with the Education System

For any music education policy to have state-wide success, deep consideration must be given to the nuances of schools and school contexts and the challenges associated with implementation.

We believe that for music education to be achievable and sustainable for all students at every primary school, working within the structures of schools and school systems is pertinent. This has been key to the rapid adoption of Amplify Music Education in New South Wales primary schools.

<p>Natalie Kradolfer Co-Founder & CEO</p>	<p>Ricky Kradolfer Co-Founder & Head Educator</p>
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