

Submission
No 101

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

Organisation: Tamworth Regional Conservatorium of Music

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The Director
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Re Inquiry Arts and Music Education and Training

I am writing as Director/CEO of Tamworth Regional Conservatorium of Music. The Tamworth Regional Conservatorium of Music is one of 17 Regional Conservatoriums in NSW. The Tamworth Regional Conservatorium of Music mission is to provide leadership, resources, and expertise in order to support lifelong learning and the pursuit of excellence in music education and performance in the Tamworth region. Our role is to provide quality music education, accessible to all, enriching lives, and the community.

The Tamworth Conservatorium has been housed in the old Dominican sister's convent for the last 40 years. During these 40 years we have seen the decline in support for music education and the de-valuing of music education in the education system and the community. This is despite extensive studies and science of the benefits of music not only on young brains but also the older generation. We don't need more studies only to show the same and consistent outcomes. We need to put music at heart of the curriculum STEAM not STEM. Music education has evolved to something only higher income earners and the privileged can access. Any Government Strategy for Art and Music Education requires proper resourcing including time in the curriculum.

The Tamworth Regional Conservatorium of Music is a significant employer of music teachers/educators in the greater Tamworth region employing between 25-30 teacher's and administration staff each year. The Tamworth Conservatorium has support from the local community and over the years many private businesses have invested in the Conservatorium, enabling it to continue to supply music at community events as well as music education. The NSW Regional Conservatorium structure is unique in Australia, arguably overseas, and should be an exemplar of which NSW is proud. We change lives and deliver social/economic benefit.

The decline of Music Education is evident from primary to tertiary. Music has been relegated to extracurricular activity and/or is a subset of creative arts. Graduates from tertiary Music courses are not being equipped for the industry that they are entering into. There is a clear disjoint between training and real world. The training should deliver people with a broad range of skills. This is resulting in a lack of skilled music teachers, therefore not entering into the profession, particularly





in rural/regional NSW. The remuneration in regional/rural NSW doesn't incentivise, compounding the challenges of recruiting.

Apart from NSW Regional Conservatoriums, music education beyond the formal education sector is unregulated and unpoliced. Training and accreditation for studio music teaching (individual or small group tuition in a private studio), is not supported in tertiary institutions.

Challenges our Conservatorium faces include the recruitment of skilled music leaders, funding that has not been reviewed for over 10 years, the disparity between salaries for NSW school teachers and freelance music educators that our regional Conservatorium cannot match. Cuts within the Education sector has left less funds for schools to access Regional Conservatorium services. The biggest risk to our Conservatorium being able to continue to serve our community is our aging building. The building is not fit for purpose, there is no disability access beyond the ground floor, studio's are not sound proofed, the walls are crumbling and the roof is leaking, termites and their damage are an increasing issue and technology is inconsistent.

I conclude with the importance of music is not only our culture but our local community. The Tamworth Conservatorium would like to be able to continue to provide quality music education, accessible to all, enriching lives, and the community well into the future. All children have the right to access music education from an early age and throughout their lives. The studies are proven that music is crucial to the development of young brains and aid in all areas of their ability to learn. A change is needed in Government strategy and in the curriculum to add STEAM to STEM. Training of music educators needs improvement and incentives provided for people to enter into the music education industry, ensuring stability and security. Regional Conservatoriums need to be equipped with resources and investment so that they can be part of the solution to ensuring the future of music education in regional NSW.

Your sincerely

Director