



## YOUR SCHOOL MUSIC PROGRAM



Parents and teachers can help to ensure that there is a comprehensive music program at their local school. Currently in Australian schools New South Wales is the only state with compulsory music education in the primary and secondary school. This falls a long way short of what music educators consider a good music education program.

### What should you expect of the school music program?

Music educators agree that a good music education program provides a regular classroom music and performance program for every child.

A good music program:

- Is inclusive and meets the needs of the diversity of children;
- Is supported and valued by the school principal;
- Has suitable time allocation on the timetable which does not conflict with other subjects;
- Has strong links between classroom and instrumental programs;
- Has active support from the whole school-including resources, appropriate timetabling, recognition and support of the music staff and parental support;
- Is provided continuously from the first year of school until at least year 8, with the option of continuing through to year 12 - tertiary entrance level;
- Covers a range of activities including composing, performance, listening and responding;
- Integrates the elements of the program within the school to form a cohesive whole;
- Includes music performance activities such as: school bands; rock groups; choirs; ensembles; orchestra; music theatre performance; school musicals etc.; and
- Provides or facilitates instrumental tuition to support these music performance activities.

Important considerations for a successful school music program

- “ Every child should have the opportunity for instrumental or vocal instruction to help them reach a playing standard that is satisfying. In the earlier stages, it may be possible to provide this instruction in small groups. If a school is unable or unwilling to provide instruction, it can be sought outside school hours in the community.
- “ Time allocations for music programs depend on the grade level and curriculum requirements, but a program that is regular and consistently run throughout the school year is the preferred model.

See Link: [Resources](#) for information on advocating for an instrumental program.

- “ Children should have the opportunity to experience the excitement of live performances by skilled professional musicians. Organisations such as Musica Viva can supply specially prepared performers for school performances. Children see what magic is possible, and begin to absorb some of the special ethos around music making.
- “ Extra significance is added to a program if it has links into its community. School performing ensembles might perform in the community. Musicians from the community might play sometimes with school performing groups. There could be transition programs for school leavers that take them into community performing groups. The community could take some "ownership" and pride by giving financial support.

More 





## YOUR SCHOOL MUSIC PROGRAM



### Links:

#### 1 Musica Viva education programs

<http://www.mva.org.au/>

go to Schools section for information on tours by professional musicians to schools around Australia.

#### 2 Australian orchestra education programs

<http://www.mso.com.au/education/index.asp>

<http://www.aso.com.au> go to education

<http://www.qso.com.au>-go to education

<http://www.tso.com.au>-go to education

<http://www.symphony.org.au>-go to education

<http://www.waso.com.au>-go to education

#### 3 Australian opera education programs

<http://www.opera-australia.org.au/> Click on the Oz Opera link for education services

<http://www.waopera.asn.au/> Click on the Education link

<http://www.saopera.sa.gov.au/> Click on the Schools Company link

### How can I ensure my school is providing a suitable music education program?

Check out what the school currently offers. The following questions might help.

- .. Does your child's school have a classroom music program and a performance program?
- .. Do the children enjoy being involved in the music program?
- .. Is music well taught? Are the children inspired by the music program?
- .. Does the school have sufficient music equipment: eg: a good range and number of instruments for classroom use and for instrumental programs; facilities for ; music technology experience; appropriate sound equipment etc?
- .. Is the equipment used regularly, well maintained and in sufficient quantity to suit class sizes or instrumental programs?
- .. Are there opportunities for varied and stimulating music experiences such as:
  - instrumental or vocal lessons
  - performances by music groups
  - experiences such as a composer in residence to teach and work with students on creative music making
  - possibilities such as tours for music groups-locally, regionally or even overseas, for competitions, performances etc
  - music camps for intensive music activities
  - music technology equipment
  - visits to the school by professional performers, including short residencies to develop special projects?





## YOUR SCHOOL MUSIC PROGRAM



### What can you do to support music in your school?

Once you have identified the strengths and weaknesses of your school's program you are ready to take the next step.

Go to Link: [Being an advocate for music education](#)

### Some examples of music programs in Australian schools

There are excellent music programs already in place in some Australian schools.

#### 1. A Cool Place to be



PDF from MIA

This article describes a successful music program in a secondary school in New South Wales. Students had been dropping out of music so the school set up a new program that has been very successful in recapturing students' interest and involvement in music.

2. Link: <http://www.mca.org.au/mpfl/examples.htm>

#### 3. Music programs in Australian schools

Music educators note music programs currently operating in Australian schools.

#### Tasmania

A high percentage of Tasmanian schools include a music specialist as a component of their staffing profile (around 95% of government schools, K-12). These teachers work with whole classes in general music programs using a range of activities to develop skills in creating, listening to and performing music. Additionally, it is common for them to offer elective performing groups (bands, choirs, guitar, recorder, percussion). In urban areas, their work is supported by instrumental teachers who visit the school to supply group tuition in wind, brass, percussion, guitar and orchestral strings (not necessarily all in all regions). They are funded by schools participating in the program, which operates in both primary and secondary schools. Senior secondary colleges (years 11 and 12) are generally able to supply 1:1 tuition, although there is a lot of parent involvement in this and certainly in earlier years group tuition is the norm. The Department of Education offers secondary music scholarships to assist families provide 1:1 tuition in years 8-10; these are highly competitive, with a success ratio of around 1:6. There is some system input to the 3 primary band programs which operate regionally.

Biggest problems: provision of instrumental tuition in regional and rural areas, and collaboration time for primary specialists to plan with classroom teachers.

*Information from other states is to come.*

*This section is under development. More examples of music programs in Australian schools will be added in early 2004.*

