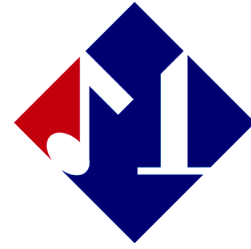


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**Music Council of Australia**

Music Council of Australia  
**Response to the ACARA Shape Paper for the Arts**  
 December 9, 2010

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Shape Paper for the Arts.

The Music Council of Australia is the national peak music organisation. It embraces the entire music sector including the various levels and modes of music education. Its council of 50 persons is chosen to be broadly representative, including people and organisations from education, community, performance, industry, infrastructure and so on.

This response was generated by the Council in broad consultation with the field. The Music Council supports the ACARA process of writing and consultation, and the idea of the Shape Paper as an overview of and guide to writing the curriculum in music and the other arts. Although what follows suggests copious alterations to the Shape Paper, there is much in it that is fine and it generally has the Music Council's support.

The response follows the ACARA questionnaire. The online questionnaire seems not to accommodate pasting comments and in any case our comments probably exceed the capacity of the spaces provided. The questions are shown here in bold type at the beginning of each section.

Sincerely

Dr Richard Letts AM  
 Executive Director

**6. The Rationale for the *Australian Curriculum: The Arts* clearly expresses the important contribution of the Arts curriculum to students' education.**

**Melbourne Declaration.** MCA proposes that the Rationale includes a brief acknowledgement of the Melbourne Declaration, which commits Ministers for Education to providing an arts education and therefore makes it rational to develop arts curricula. Since it is not the absence of a curriculum that is primarily responsible for the current lack of provision of arts education but rather, inadequate commitment to providing the teaching resources, the Melbourne Declaration is of key importance. Here is a possible form of words:

*Australia's Ministers for Education have made a commitment to the provision of an arts education for all school students.*

## **We write now about music as one of the arts, since it is our area of expertise**

**National Review of School Music Education.** The Shape Paper must acknowledge the existence of the report from National Review of School Music Education and draw upon it. The NRSME has inexplicably been omitted from the Bibliography; it must be added. It includes curricular benchmarks but in a comprehensive report that covers how the curriculum should be delivered and the obstacles to be overcome. That document has very wide approval and support in the music education sector and although five years old, remains the most important guiding document for music development.

A core statement from the NRSME:

Ensure that every Australian child has opportunities to participate and engage in continuous, sequential, developmental music education programs regardless of geography, location, social and economic circumstances, culture and ability.

**Arts competence is different.** Here is a teacher trainee with good competence in teaching literacy. The authorities decide to add, say, history to the curriculum. That makes extra work but the essential skills are the same: they are literacy skills applied to historical method and content.

Imagine instead that this same trainee is faced with the addition of music to the curriculum. Verbal literacy skills are peripherally useful but they are not central to the task. Musical meaning is bound up in the use of pitch, pulse, rhythm, harmony, pattern, structure (structure itself has meaning), and more. It is intrinsic much more than it is referential. All of this can be taught without words (although that would be unnecessarily onerous).

The task of listening is substantially different. The physical skills needed to perform the music are more subtle than in probably any other activity. The meaning conveyed cannot be expressed in words but it is as rich as meaning can be. The collaboration with other musicians is from moment to moment, at an advanced level, amazingly precise; remember that music is calibrated in its use of time, pitch. One could go on.

Music, dance, visual arts, some forms of media, live in different realms to the curriculum that depends upon literacy. They do not simply apply literacy and numeracy abilities to the learning of yet more content. They engage other parts of the brain. This is a reason that they are so important in education. What use is a physical education that exercises only the biceps? A cricket team that can bowl but can't bat? A whole education exercises and develops the whole brain, the whole person.

**Music is not just another subject.** Music has the power to transform at every level of a person's being. Musical performance can be casual, momentary, without consciousness or it can require the highest level of coordination of every form of human ability in the communication of the subtle flow of emotion, physicality, intellectual fascination or the profound truths of existence. Musical performance can require people to collaborate in extraordinarily precise and complex expression; perfection is glimpsed and there can be a flow of deep exhilaration. The achievement of musical skill requires serious and prolonged commitment and self-discipline; its rewards can extend beyond the art form to a sense of competence, social efficacy and earned self-confidence.

The immersed listener can experience these effects of music but its full impact is reserved for the music-makers. Music-making has been abandoned by most Australians; we have become music consumers. It is the schools that could offer the universal opportunity for our children to *make* music.

**The community values the arts.** This is apparent in the high level of arts consumption as demonstrated by, for instance, Australia Council data, ABS and industry statistics. Australian Music Association surveys show that 88% of adults believe that music education should be offered to all school children – even though it is offered in only 23% of government schools (MCA study). The value of the arts in education is suggested by statements in the Shape Paper about the arts and general capabilities and the relationship between arts in the schools, the community and the industry.

**Time orientation.** The stated Rationale is in a sense timeless: it is a statement that could have been made a century ago. That has its own power. But to repeat the cliché, we are in a time of extremely rapid change and the arts participate in that in a number of ways:

- Appropriately taught, they build creative ability which can be applied to finding new responses to new circumstances
- The arts are at the forefront of using new technologies, even inventing new technologies, and being disrupted by them
- Artists continually characterise and interpret the changing world for the wider community

We leave it to your writer to compress this statement but surely this situation must be included in the rationale.

**Integration of abilities.** Sentence 2 lists an array of abilities. The “contribution” the arts make is the *development* of these abilities and the very special contribution the arts make is that the development is, or can be, *highly integrated*. They can all be involved simultaneously. A skilled improvising musician is using all of those abilities, all at once. That probably accounts for a lot of the research showing the effects of the arts on brain development and non-arts academic outcomes.

**Effect of arts education on non-arts outcomes.** The second paragraph refers to the explicit use of the arts in teaching other subjects. But research has confirmed the effect of arts education in enhancing outcomes in other subjects without such use. The study seems to avoid reference to such research and we wonder the reason.

When the arts are used as a tool specifically to assist learning in non-arts subjects, they then are pedagogical tools for *those* subjects. It is possible that no arts learning takes place.

**Language of the Shape Paper.** Some responses to the paper complain of the difficult or ‘academic’ language. While the language does not appear to be especially academic – i.e. almost all of the words are used in everyday life, the density of meaning, nowhere greater than in this section, can make for difficult reading and may discourage responses or lead to negativity. The task of offering guidance in 24 pages for the writing of curricula for 13 years for five arts subjects requires highly compressed expression.

We suggest three actions:

- 1) Since the negative response to the compression of meaning seems to be widespread and possibly colours opinion about the contents generally, the final version of the Shape Paper should be longer in order to allow for easier comprehension. The decision for the present length could only have been arbitrary and it is having avoidable negative consequences.
- 2) The curricula must be written with their users at front of mind. Difficulties stated by, for instance, school teachers in comprehending the Shape Paper must not be encountered in the curricula – and lacking the need for compressed expression, there is no reason they should be.
- 3) The physical presentation on the page could be reconsidered. The density of content is exacerbated by the density of appearance.

Whether it is for a somewhat misguided objective of imposing coherence across five artform curricula or in order to compress the contents of the Shape Paper into 24

pages, some words are used in ways that do not apply in the larger world. The common understanding of the word 'art' is that it means visual art. An 'art work' is a painting, drawing, perhaps a sculpture. The phrase 'art work', or the noun 'artwork', do not in normal parlance bring to mind 'musical work', even less 'dancework' or 'film' or 'play'. MCA occasionally follows the ACARA usage in the interests of brevity but does not believe that it should flow through into the actual curricula. Also see #11 below.

## **7. All students should experience and study each of the five art forms from Kindergarten to Year 8.**

**Five art forms.** Each art form should be a discrete area of study. MCA acknowledges the opportunities for the art forms to support each other and to support learning in non-arts areas, but the primary arts learning must be in each of the five art forms separately experienced.

Paragraph 4 could add a few words to confirm that each art form will have a separate curriculum.

**Art-making.** The emphasis in the curricula must be on informed art-making.

**Nature of curriculum.** The curriculum in each art form must be *sequential* and *developmental* and in music it must be presented *continuously* in recognition of the nature of music learning. By 'continuously' we mean as often as possible, preferably daily. But given the realities, we mean at least weekly.

**Time allocation.** The proposed instructional time is simply inadequate. See further comment under Question 12.

**Teacher competence.** Music Council research shows that pre-service music instruction in the undergraduate degree for primary school generalist classroom teachers is on average 17 hours. This is supposed to equip them to teach music for seven or eight grade levels. For those whose teacher training is only at the post-graduate level, music training is less. A workforce with only this training is not capable, except by random individual abilities, of teaching any credible music curriculum.

The hours of training in other art forms are the same or less. The problem extends across the arts.

While this may argue for the construction of curricula that are as undemanding as possible, there is no credible arts curriculum that can be written for teachers who know virtually nothing of the art form nor the pedagogy.

It is acknowledged that the problem of teacher competence must be solved separately from the ACARA process. *However, the credibility of the ACARA arts curricula depends upon an assumption that they are written for teachers who are capable of competent delivery of an effective curriculum for each subject for at least 36 minutes per week throughout the year.* In the case of music, delivery would be weekly. In the case of other subjects, there may be a different distribution of the time.

It must be noted that in Queensland and Tasmanian, primary school music is delivered by music specialists and any problems of competence have a different basis.

## **8. The Arts are appropriately framed by the three realms of experience:**

- **personal experience,**
- **our relation to others and the society we experience,**
- **people, places and objects which lie beyond our direct experience.**

Accept the statement.

**10. The definitions of the Art forms provide the basis for curriculum development in:**

**Dance**

**Drama**

**Media arts**

**Music**

**Visual Arts**

**Music-making is central.** The definition for music notes its ubiquity. Music has enormous power in the community. It is accessible through live performance, conventional broadcasts, recordings and now through a range of digital services including phones, computers, iPads, YouTube and more. Music is not in short supply and, as evidenced by the scale of the music industry, it is consumed by most citizens. What then is the justification for music education?

It is needed firstly, because the greatest rewards from music come from music-making and secondly, because most people no longer in the normal course of life, make music even at the most informal level. They are consumers. Further, many valuable non-music outcomes result from an effective music education.

**Additions/substitutions in the 'definition'.** The Music Council agrees with the statements made in the ACARA definition. This paragraph is more description than definition. We are not sure of its role in guiding the curriculum design as it stands. However, MCA enters into the spirit of the paragraph and suggests other statements that seem equally or more important that could be added or substituted:

- *Music uses time and exists only as process.* See Shape Paper para 9
- *Music-making involves the direct and simultaneous engagement of cognitive, affective, kinaesthetic, social and other abilities.* Please see our comments on the definition of the arts. We note also the similar statement in the definition of dance. This is a strong factor in the power of music in education.
- *Music is an important source of personal and community identity and self-confidence.*
- *Musical performance is the pre-eminent means of fine small muscle development.*
- *Musical performance above all other activities enables very precise expressive collaboration among people, and thus an experience of excellence.*
- *Musical performance brings to life, and gives direct access to, all cultures, even cultures of other times, and is a vivid source of multicultural learning.* The music is not just description, it is experience.
- *These cultures include Australian Indigenous culture.*
- *Musical creation continually incorporates and gives expression to new technologies.*
- *Creativity learned through music is transferable to other subjects.*
- *Continuous musical learning accelerates learning in other areas even when not specifically included in the students' experience of them.*
- *Music is a means by which Australians participate internationally since most genres practised in Australia have international origins. This is newly facilitated by the internet.*
- *The music sector is a significant contributor to the economy, with an estimated value of \$7 billion per year.*

11 iii) states "Sometimes, *culture* refers to socially high-status apprehension of arts in their relationship with their society, e.g. 'cultured' and 'high culture'." While this is true, it is a perspective that is very damaging to the arts, marking them off for some people as a preserve of the "elite" and not, therefore, for them. While the statement is factual, we would prefer not to give it oxygen. If it is included, please point out that all the arts are for everyone. It is suggested that the sentences that follow carry a much more pertinent and valuable message: "Arts are valued as a

cultural product even as culture itself. The most sophisticated of these cultural products evoke the character and the complexity of the society. This is why they are highly valued.”

**11. The three organising strands (3.2): generating, realising, responding, provide a robust organisational structure for teaching of the art forms K-8.**

The response to the imposition of the organising strands is mixed. They do offer an apparently consistent entry conceptually into the five art forms. But their actual manifestation in the art forms is different in many ways and trying to find consistency could be confusing or laborious.

Most importantly, the Australian education system is not hermetically sealed off from the rest of the world. The English-speaking musical world has a commonly used terminology and that is the world in which we want students to be successful, ultimately. That is the terminology they should learn.

It's a little like asking that henceforth we call snow 'frozen water'. That would be an accurate term, unlike 'realising' etc not needing special definition, linking snow to other forms of frozen water, but the whole world calls it 'snow' and the word 'snow' is more informative. It also comes, in snowy countries, with an accompanying vocabulary for types of snow, developed from need. (See also 'design' at the end of the submission.)

It is good that ACARA acknowledged that the three may but do not necessarily form a sequence. Certainly, in musical performance, they occur simultaneously or in any order.

The table on page 9 manages to raise more questions about these terms than it answers. In the cell describing 'Generating in general': which of those activities could not be placed equally as well under Realizing?

Comments on the music column:

Arranging, composing: if one has composed or arranged a work and committed it to paper, has one not realised it? It could then be performed, but for the composer/arranger, it was realised by writing it down.

“Developing generative skills, techniques and processes.” Well, yes, but isn't that actually the title for this cell. What are the processes?

Extemporising, improvising. According to the Macquarie Dictionary, to extemporise is to improvise and to improvise is to extemporise. One would be enough. But why aren't they 'realizing' skills, since they are about performance? To plan an improvisation is almost a contradiction in terms.

Any of the skills in this cell could be in the realizing cell. This is in a way not surprising since generating is supposed in a sense to be a precursor to realising. So: composing, but before the work is written down, or 'silent practice', but before actual practice or performance, are 'generating' skills.

If these terms cannot be simply and clearly translated into the language normally used in the art forms, they surely have failed a basic test of relevance and demonstrated a power to confuse.

There are concerns that ACARA will assess performance against these strands and there is strong opposition to that.

**12. The development of the Arts curriculum from an integrated approach at K-2, to the study of individual art forms in Years 7 and 8, is logical (4.1).**

**Bias to the cognitive and analytical.** There is a strong bias in this paper towards language in the cognitive/analytic realm. This has a strong relevance to some 'responding' activities but the act of art-making is more about synthesis than analysis and in music, is usually at a distance from verbal processes. So in the Overview para 23, we build upon "students' understanding, knowledge and skills". All of those things can take in more than the cognitive but in the education culture, it is the cognitive that comes first to mind.

**Flexibility.** The Music Council supports the idea of a basic entitlement in every art form and especially the flexibility for schools to focus on one or more art forms in greater depth.

**Time allocation.** The proposed instructional time is simply inadequate.

ACARA is giving equal treatment to all five art forms. An equal division of the proposed 160 hours for five art forms over two years is 24 minutes a week. ACARA seems to recognise *but should state forthrightly* that music instruction must be delivered regularly throughout the year. The 24 minutes in that case is the form of the actual provision.

ACARA is saying that some subjects may be delivered in short intense periods. So, for instance, a school could present one play per year, produced in a single term. But who ever saw a play produced and rehearsed in 16 hours? (Or 32? Maybe 64.)

It should be noted that the K-2 provision is, according to the ACARA formula, allocated 160 hours over three, not two, years. So the average instructional time per week is *16 minutes* per week. That's out of 1500 minutes of instructional time.

It is understood that the actual teaching time will not be determined by ACARA and that the proposal for teaching hours is here conceptual. Nevertheless, there is a basis for using such a concept. If music could be taught for an hour a day five days a week, as it is in some places, we could expect a curriculum that envisages proportionate outcomes. It is difficult to envisage any satisfactory outcome from an allocation of 24, or 16, minutes teaching time per week.

This exercise has to deal with the real world. In the real world there are pressures from the total available teaching time, and from the crowded curriculum. But in the real world, 24 minutes of music instruction per week is not enough to produce a satisfactory outcome.

The MCA has joined the NAAE in arguing for ACARA to write the curriculum based upon the concept of an allocation of 3 hours per week to the arts – i.e. 180 minutes for the five arts subjects out of a total of 1500 minutes total classroom time. This, equally divided, allows an average 36 minutes per week to each subject.

It is conceivable that a coherent, competent music lesson could be offered in that amount of time in the early and middle primary school years. By years 7 and 8, it is not sufficient to prepare students to elect music in year 9. The curriculum must be capable of achieving that outcome otherwise it is not, in effect, a K-12 curriculum.

**Balance of the three organising strands.** How, given that they are interwoven, could a balance be discerned? Alternatively, in 24 minutes a week, what could meaningfully be delivered in 8 minutes each for generating, realising, (apprehending/comprehending)? At minute 8, the class is still tuning its instruments. Soon it will have to put them away.

**Interconnectivity.** In music, it has been normal for centuries for children to take music lessons beginning from around five years old, even earlier. This captures the period of relevant rapid brain growth and skills development before it passes. Learning is much slower if it begins later than the sixth year. While the Music Council accepts that there are benefits to a holistic approach in the early years, it is reluctant to see the opportunity for early development of music

skills foregone. It is preferable to work from the concept of the *interconnectivity* of the art forms rather than their integration. Children learn core skills in the various art forms and put them together in creative ways.

**13. From Year 9 through to Year 12 it is important that students have the opportunity to specialise in one or more art forms (4.1).**

The description here is very cursory. The statement in para 30: 'the Arts will be taught distinctly', tends to suggest that this is what is new about the curriculum when it deals with these grade levels. Let us be clear that it should apply from year K.

**14. The description and sequence of Arts learning (section 4.2-4.6) is clear and appropriate in Kindergarten to Year 2.**

**Learning in Music Years K-12.**

- The important word 'sequential' nowhere appears – neither here nor in the age-specific paragraphs. This is surprising given the near-unanimous agreement that it must be a central element of the arts curricula
- The bias towards the cognitive is repeated, possibly ameliorated by use of the word 'understanding'. What is understood by this word? Usually, it means something like comprehending a logical argument, or causality. It might mean apprehending and comprehending, emotionally or in a more holistic way; the intention is not clear. Other words that suggest the cognitive are 'thoughtful', 'consider' – 'consider the meanings and purposes of music-making', 'knowledge'. The spirit of the paragraph is more about 'responding' than generating and realising.
- The important word 'emotion' nowhere appears.
- The development of a personal musical identity is not mentioned here, although it is included in the statement for Years 11-12. Does it wait for that long?
- The important word 'intuition' or equivalent words nowhere appear, words that recognise that both learning and performance in an art form can and should be encouraged to move by intuitive leaps, even though the basic concept is that instruction and learning are sequential.
- While it is several times mentioned that students will perform music, there is not a strong sense of the disciplined cumulative development of *physical* skills that dominates much of the time in learning music making
- There is no suggestion that students should benefit from direct and preferably frequent and systematic contact with professional musical artists
- The paragraph mentions cultural diversity but not Australian Indigenous music; this needs specific and systematic inclusion
- Nor is there mention of the study of the work of Australian composers
- There is no mention of music making using digital tools. It is important that students learn acoustic instruments in order to experience the connection between personal effort and sounds produced, among other things. But in the 21C, the digital realm cannot simply be ignored.

It might be argued that in music there can be an unusually tight connection between pedagogy and the musical process itself, between the nature of the pedagogy and the nature of the outcomes. There has been considerable experimentation with pedagogy in recent years, much of it overseas where the ethos is more encouraging and the resources more enabling. Some of these experiments are being replicated in Australia – for instance, Musical Futures, Sing Out, and Wider Opportunities including whole-of-class instrumental learning from England and shortly, El Sistema from Venezuela. In Australia, there have been important innovations in the digital area (e.g. Brown, Dillon et al at QUT). The objectives/outcomes might be the same as those defined by the new Australian curriculum, they might differ. What is especially interesting is whether the teaching is more effective and whether they afford increased access. Is there a place in the Shape Paper to recognise and encourage, make room for, new pedagogies?

A music teacher contributor to this paper states: "Music learning in the arts cannot be prescribed. The curriculum is ultimately developed by teachers in the classroom and shaped by the students themselves. This is influenced by locality, the background and culture of the students, community influence, and especially the place of IT in student's lives."

That said, there is a fantasy abroad that a curriculum must afford all teachers this freedom and therefore should not be detailed. This simply abandons musically unskilled teachers with an average of 17 hours undergraduate training in music and little capacity to create their own music lesson plans. A very experienced person made a contribution to this paper which we include for your consideration:

"The documents that will guide teachers, and they will do their planning from, need to be quite explicit - that is blunt, clear language. It is no use writing generalisations about what is expected. While many general primary teachers do have some experience of music they are not usually versed in how to prepare a learning program that builds on child development and has detailed planning. Not that the child would ever be aware of this detailed sequencing, or the cumulative nature of what is planned, as always the learning experiences need to be playful and light-hearted alternating with thoughtfulness as needed. Even specialist teachers do not know how to sequence learning experiences and materials unless they have been guided carefully with model programs as a starting point."

A teacher writes: "It is absolutely the task of ACARA and the National Curriculum to provide statements and 'achievement standards', at the very least, at each year level. Otherwise, the standards are so broad as to be utterly meaningless (as they currently are in the VELS document) and impossible to use in accurately assessing pupils. Ultimately these standards need to be tested for their efficacy, as language and maths standards have been. We may not want national testing in the arts (really don't want it in any subject!) but there MUST be consistency in methods of assessment and reporting in all subject areas if we are to be taken seriously. Otherwise it's hard to understand what the point of a curriculum is..."

"It also undermines music (and all the arts). In English, Maths, History and Science there are 'descriptions and elaborations', plus 'achievement standards' at every year level. Is there a smaller body of knowledge in the arts? Absolutely not! Are the skills required any less demanding? No. Are we providing a resource which we are hoping might be used by untrained teachers in the arts? Do teachers with little experience not need MORE guidance, rather than less?"

"...The Arts document must be consistent in structure and content with all other documents."

These statements take a firm position. The Music Council does not know whether they are representative of views across the profession but they make a clear case for consideration.

**Music Learning in Years K-2.** Here is a quote from sentence 2: '(Students)... create, experiment, explore, trial, and organise musical ideas and materials...' There could hardly be a larger disjunction between the lived experience of music-making for tiny children in K-2 and the language used in this paragraph. It may convey the concepts to be included in the curriculum but it surely does not evoke the spirit we might hope for in the music classroom.

There is no mention of 'play', in the definition as shown in the Glossary.

There should be an explicit link to the general early childhood pedagogy.

**15. The description and sequence of Arts learning (section 4.2-4.6) is clear and appropriate in Years 3-8.**

Grades 3-8 is a long span covering three 2-year periods. Is the coverage of outcomes and processes over these years adequate?

This description repeats elements from the K-2 paragraph. Given that the premise of the curriculum is that 'students re-visit skills, knowledge and understanding at levels of increasing depth and complexity', it would assist our comprehension of what is being proposed if the description for each successive period were written in such a way as to identify what changes, what is added. That would also more adequately guide the curriculum writers.

Outcomes are stated in only the most general terms. It is not clear what skills, knowledge and understanding each child is expected to achieve, in each art form, and at what year levels. There is some argument about whether outcomes should be stated for each year or for two-year bands. If things are not going well in the first year of a two year band, it would be helpful to know at that time.

The K-12 paragraph's important omissions continue here and in some cases, through all year levels. For instance, there is only one very passing reference to the digital world and no mention of the development of digital skills.

A Music Council member with a distinguished career in school music education writes:

Para 24. I have a serious problem with extending the entitlement of engaging in all the five major art forms in a 'foundation' mode for 8 years. How restricting and boring. Many students are gifted and talented in the arts, and all students progress at different rates and need a stimulating and challenging curriculum (not a foundation curriculum). Music skills need serious development in a continuous, sequential and developmental setting (see NRSME). Parents and schools need to have the freedom to choose and provide specialist programs from 3 – 6...

Para 25. Again more flexibility is required. Year 7 & 8 arts instruction must be skill-based, performance-based, creative-based, engaging and challenging or students will not take it seriously. (Certainly cannot be a foundation course). The cohorts of students at this level have diverse musical preferences, experiences and competencies. Without special focus and a specialist teacher to deliver a quality curriculum that accommodates the needs of all students, it is unlikely that many students will elect (music) in years 9 & 10 with the consequence that senior level music will diminish and possibly die in many schools. Breadth and diversity is paramount... If you do not teach music distinctly in years 7 & 8 with a time allocation that allows for the teaching of the three organising strands, it is unlikely there will be an elective music class in year 9.

**16. The description and sequence of Arts learning (section 4.2-4.6) is clear and appropriate in Years 9-10.**

**17. The description and sequence of Arts learning (section 4.2-4.6) is clear and appropriate in Years 11-12.**

There is a shift towards the academic in this description. Is there a reason for that? Perhaps it is in response to the need to be prepared for examination, assessment and university entrance procedures. That might be a cause for reflection about the appropriateness of the procedures.

Across each section there needs to be a holistic sense of all aspects of the curriculum and the music experience working together.

Leaving inclusion of Australian composers to this year level band is inappropriate. In SA, for instance, Australian works are sung from early years and feature in the Public Schools Music Festival repertoire.

**18. The broad outline of cross curriculum priorities in the Arts is appropriate.**

It is very important that the curriculum should ensure exposure to both the popular music and the art music of the mainstream culture.

Australian Indigenous culture has a special place in Australia's cultural identity and the music should be integrated into the curriculum at least from Year 3.

MCA supports the inclusion of music from other cultures in the curriculum. The prioritisation of Asian culture is understandable but this should not be read as justifying the omission of music of other cultures, of which there are many represented in the Australian population.

We note that musical diversity is not prescribed for the 3-8 curriculum and not a clearly stated inclusion in the 9-10 curriculum. There is no reason to omit the multicultural from the primary school music curriculum.

Diversity should not displace depth. A deep experience takes students to the essence of music and themselves. It requires concentration in a musical genre or narrow band of related genres.

A number of contributors to this paper would like to see these priorities and the general capabilities of the next section more integrated throughout the curriculum. The separate identity of the music curriculum should not be compromised in the process.

**19. The broad outline of general capabilities in the Arts is appropriate.**

The Music Council's priority is for a sequential, developmental, continuous curriculum in music. Such a curriculum can interconnect with non-music subjects and can foster general capabilities.

There is some feeling among respondents that the specified general capabilities should be integrated into the curricula. There is only so much that can be taught in the time available, even were it expanded. Some general capabilities will be achieved as by-products of music instruction. Others need specific attention. This needs to be considered against the priorities of the music curriculum and the teaching time available.

**20. The Arts industry and community can augment the provision of Arts education provided by schools.**

**Participation and the community.** From observation of a number of situations, MCA has the impression that by and large, the schools do not engage well with the community. The community is more than the professional artists and organisations that are the main focus of this paragraph. It includes the parents, the small businesses, the community arts organisations and so on with whom schools could form mutually beneficial relationships. The role of the students is potentially wider than as audience members. Many high school graduates who have had a fruitful experience in music performance in school stop playing when they leave school, often for want of knowledge of the community bands, choirs, orchestras etc that would value their participation. If the community organisations had had some involvement in the life of the school, the transition would be simple. Schools can gain support from, and give support to, the community in many ways.

**Careers in the arts.** The document states that the curriculum is unable to provide all the specialised training needed by career-bound students in those art forms for which long and sustained immersion is necessary such as music and dance

performance, and passes the task to the 'arts industry' which it implies has already taken responsibility.

In the preparation of young people for their vocations, we should take in the whole span of relevant education. For some job categories, high school graduation is sufficient, for others an apprenticeship, a bachelor's degree, one or more post-graduate degrees, others still also an internship. With regard to any particular career path, the transition from one level of institution is somewhat arbitrary. How could it be otherwise when, for instance, all high school curricula are designed to complete 13 years of school education.

The school systems are recognising that for many students, an academically orientated course to the end of secondary school years is not a good fit and alternative vocational paths are offered in the late secondary years. Special courses, even institutions, have been created. In a sense, tertiary education has begun earlier even where it is taking place in a secondary school.

A student bound for a career as a musical performer, especially a classical performer, has begun the relevant education early, even in infancy, and by the time of high school graduation needs a high level of performance skills in order to be admitted to tertiary study. The Shape Paper acknowledges this.

We would argue that it is the responsibility of the education system to educate students widely, but also to conceive the narrower task of vocational education across its entire span, *fitting the institutions to the task rather than the task to the institutions.*

It is appropriate that many of the students bound for a career in music should meet the academic requirements of a high school graduation exam. At the same time, they need high achievement in musical skills just as someone bound for a career in mathematics must demonstrate high achievement in maths, or in journalism or law a high achievement in the use of language. The fact that the student headed for a medical career has no need to demonstrate medical skills at the end of high school simply demonstrates the random placement of high school graduation among all these vocational trajectories.

Consequently, we believe that it is entirely inappropriate for this paper to endorse an abdication of this responsibility in the case of the Arts, and hand it to the 'industry'. Who is the industry? Who in the industry is to be judged as capable of taking the responsibility and what are their circumstances? Were they consulted? Who pays for those services? Of course, students do seek instruction from private studio teachers, for instance, but if the government takes no financial responsibility, this opportunity is restricted to the middle class. How do talented but impecunious students access education offered by the 'industry'?

The fact is that most state systems have long recognised the need and have set up special selective schools or programs in music, and some in other art forms. These schools do have art form curricula, and if they do, so also could the National Curriculum.

There is a downside to these specialists schools, inasmuch as they suck talent from the rest of the system. Better that all students can serve talented students. The Music Council does acknowledge that there would be practical difficulties in offering the necessary level of instruction or immersion in every high school. Solutions to that problem are needed.

One possibility is adoption of the European model of the 'municipal music school'. These schools are high subsidised, and for school children offer instruction by musically expert teachers after school hours and at weekends. In Australia, only NSW has such schools – 17 of them, *lightly* subsidised from the Education budget. They are located in the regions. They are sending young people from this local

music education direct to tertiary music institutions. The model could be extended to any of the art forms.

**The arts industry and schools.** This paragraph is a good description of the positive relationships, possible or actual, between schools and professional artists.

## 21. Glossary

**Connectivity.** MCA shares ACARA's preference for 'connectivity' over 'integration'. This paragraph emphasises 'the constant organic interplay between art forms'. The document, with its 'organising strands' and so on, is at pains to find the commonalities and foreground them. But in their daily professional lives, most musicians, for instance, think only of the music. They are not wondering how they can invent music that supports a play, or illuminates a painting, much less create a play or painting. And if by chance they find themselves playing a supporting role to a play or dance, they are still just playing the music, not inventing the on-stage action. In real life, the connectivity results commonly from connections between art form specialists rather than as an expression of a combination of art form skills within the one person. And that probably is related to how artistic ability manifests itself in individuals.

Here is a chart from Do you really expect to get paid? – a statistical survey from the Australia Council. There are more singers who can act than actors who can sing – but most people have core literacy skills that are required in acting. Hardly anyone but dancers dances. Hardly anyone but visual arts and crafts people is involved in crafts. And so on.

[http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0007/79108/Do\\_you\\_really\\_expect\\_to\\_get\\_paid.pdf](http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/79108/Do_you_really_expect_to_get_paid.pdf)

**Table 19: Artistic involvement in various arts occupations at any point during artists' career (a) (percent of artists within each PAO)**

	Writers	Visual artists	Craft practitioners	Actors	Dancers	Musicians	Composers	Community cultural develop. workers	All artists (b)
Writing	100	9	5	28	11	11	17	17	29
Craft	3	22	100	3	-	2	2	14	15
Visual arts	14	100	45	15	10	10	11	36	33
Composing or arranging	5	2	1	9	7	41	100	8	18
Directing	8	3	5	34	20	8	9	33	13
Acting	12	6	6	98	21	17	8	3	25
Choreographing	*	*	-	4	67	2	-	11	4
Dancing	*	2	1	8	93	4	1	8	6
Musical instrument playing	4	2	1	5	3	80	38	8	26
Singing	4	*	1	13	14	42	22	3	16
Community cultural development work	5	3	7	7	11	4	6	100	9

(a) multiple responses allowed.

(b) numbers for all artists are weighted to represent Australia's artist population.

- indicates nil response in this sample. \* indicates less than 1 %.

**Design.** While design exists in music, the term is not commonly used. Others, such as 'form', 'structure', are common and there is an accompanying vocabulary: A-B-A, sonata form, rondo, suite, chorus, bridge, head, etc etc. Again, we are preparing students for the larger world, not a special world of the ACARA curriculum.

**Meaning.** It may be helpful to note that artistic works have meaning within their own terms and that external references may be absent or of secondary importance.

**Realize vs realise.** Really?!! Is there an expectation that the world will conform to this rather esoteric private distinction?