



**MUSIC COUNCIL  
of  
AUSTRALIA**

Productivity Commission

Inquiry into the

**Education and Training**

**Workforce: Early Childhood  
Development**

Submission by the

**Music Council of Australia**

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## SUBMISSION

Thank you for the opportunity to make this submission from the Music Council of Australia to the Productivity Commission's inquiry into the Early Childhood Development Workforce.

The Music Council of Australia is the national peak music organisation. The Council itself has 50 members drawn from across and representing the very diverse music sector. Each of the 50 positions is assigned to a particular aspect of music education, creation, production, distribution and others. The Council is Australia's representative to the International Music Council, with offices at UNESCO in Paris.

This submission addresses aspects of the terms of reference that clearly lie within the Council's brief, in particular the workforce of early childhood teachers and their competence to teach music.

We note especially these terms of reference:

*1c. the availability and quality of pre-service education programs, including through undergraduate and postgraduate education and VET, and consideration of training pathways*

*1e. the quality and skills of the workforce, job design and workplace practices and arrangements and their contribution to achieving COAG outcomes and setting future direction.*

The ambit of the inquiry is broad. The terms of reference do not specifically mention music education or other subject areas. This submission begins by noting new commitments by governments that will elevate the status of school music education and reinforce the need for new provisions for music education in early childhood.

## CONTEXT

### **National Declaration on the Educational Goals for Young Australians**

The National Declaration (the 'Melbourne Declaration') is a statement of commitment by Education Ministers of Commonwealth, State and Territory governments. In the section entitled 'Promoting world-class curriculum and assessment', the Declaration states:

*The curriculum will enable students to develop knowledge in the disciplines of English, mathematics, science, languages, humanities and **the arts**; to understand the spiritual, moral and aesthetic dimensions of life; and open up new ways of thinking. It will also support the development of deep knowledge within a discipline, which provides the foundation for inter-disciplinary approaches to innovation and complex problem-solving. (Page 12)*

### **National Review of School Music Education**

The review was initiated by the Minister for Education of the previous government and its recommendations were accepted by the Coalition government, Labor in opposition, then Labor in the 2007 election campaign and subsequently. However, direct action by Labor in implementing its recommendations was pre-empted by initiation of the project to develop a national curriculum. The *National Review*

received strong approval and support from the professional music education sector and remains the key guiding document for the sector in its policy and advocacy.

The review covered only the years of schooling, thus omitting the birth to five years age group.

### **The National Curriculum**

The arts are included in Phase 2 of the development of a national curriculum, currently underway. Each of five art forms has its separate curriculum: dance, drama, media arts, music and visual arts. The music curriculum is for school music education, levels K – 12. Therefore, like the *National Review of School Music Education*, the *National Curriculum* omits the important 0 – 5 age group.

The body charged with formulating the *National Curriculum*, the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, does not have the responsibility for implementation.

### **National Education Agreement**

This COAG agreement between the Commonwealth, State and Territory governments sets out the broad objectives and outcomes of school education and *inter alia*, the roles and responsibilities of each level of government. It states that 'The new *National Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians ...* and the shared National Goals are mutually reinforcing.'

The roles and responsibilities are categorised as those shared among all governments, and those that fall separately to either the Commonwealth or the States and Territories. All share responsibility 'for the development and maintenance of a National Curriculum and for participating in the work of the national education authority that manages national curriculum, assessment and data management, analysis and reporting.' (Para 17(h))

Among the Commonwealth's responsibilities: 'allocating funding to States and Territories to support improved service delivery and reform to meet nationally agreed outcomes and to achieve the national objective, including for students with particular needs.' (Para 18(a))

Among the responsibilities of the States and Territories:

19(a) ensuring that all school aged children are given the opportunity to enrol in a safe and supportive school that provides a quality education, including where students have particular needs. States and Territories are also responsible for ensuring that children of compulsory school-age attend school and therefore are responsible for

- (i) developing policy;
- (ii) delivering services;
- (iii) monitoring and reviewing performance of individual schools; and
- (iv) regulating schools;

19(d) the employment conditions of teachers in the government school sector and its impact on teacher supply

19(e) *implementing the National Curriculum* (emphasis added)

One of the sought after outcomes of the Agreement is that 'Australian students excel by international standards.' We return to this issue below.

Note that the States and Territories are responsible for setting the employment conditions that attract and retain school teachers but it is the responsibility of the Commonwealth to support their preservice tertiary training:

18. The Commonwealth undertakes responsibility for:

- (a) higher education policy, including its impact on pre-service and post-graduate teacher education and teacher supply through setting higher education national priorities, and its funding of universities

There is no direct statement of which level of government is responsible for providing or funding professional development for teachers. This is an extremely important issue because, as will be shown, most of the existing workforce has not been given the skills to deliver a credible curriculum in music and probably, other subjects in the National Curriculum.

### **National Early Childhood Development Strategy, Investing in the Early Years**

In 2009, this strategy was endorsed by COAG.<sup>1</sup>

'Principles for the National Strategy include:

- A focus on the whole of early childhood, from the antenatal period to age 8
- A focus on the whole child, across cognitive, learning, physical, social, emotional and cultural dimensions and learning throughout life.'

Music education can separately or simultaneously address all of those dimensions. The simultaneity is important because it indicates an integration of these abilities, perhaps offering some explanation for music education's effects on achievement in non-music disciplines. See below.

Governments commit to the implementation of the Strategy through a complex array of relevant programs.

### **Belonging, Being and Becoming - The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia<sup>2</sup>**

The Framework proposes five Learning Outcomes:

'designed to capture the integrated and complex learning and development of all children across the birth to five age range. The outcomes are:

- Children have a strong sense of identity
- Children are connected with and contribute to their world
- Children have a strong sense of wellbeing

<sup>1</sup> [www.deewr.gov.au/Earlychildhood/.../EarlyChildhoodDevelopmentStrategy.aspx](http://www.deewr.gov.au/Earlychildhood/.../EarlyChildhoodDevelopmentStrategy.aspx)

<sup>2</sup>

[http://www.deewr.gov.au/Earlychildhood/Policy\\_Agenda/Quality/Pages/EarlyYearsLearningFramework.aspx](http://www.deewr.gov.au/Earlychildhood/Policy_Agenda/Quality/Pages/EarlyYearsLearningFramework.aspx)

- Children are confident and involved learners
- Children are effective communicators.'

Music can contribute to all of these outcomes. The Framework notes that music plays a role as children take increasing responsibility for their own health and physical wellbeing (p32) and has multiple roles as a means of communication (pp40, 42, 43, 44, 45, 48). As an important means of communication it obviously helps children in connecting and contributing to their world. There are many studies that show children gaining confidence through music-making and more showing music's contribution to a sense of personal and community identity.

### Summary so far

The adoption in principle of the recommendations of the *National Review of School Music Education* and the commitment under the *National Declaration on the Educational Goals for Young Australians* have led on to the development of a *National Curriculum* for music. Under the *National Education Agreement* the responsibility for implementing the National Curriculum falls to the States and Territories, supported by allocations of funding from the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth also has responsibility for supporting preservice and formal post-graduate training.

Commitments to the National Curriculum cover the years of schooling and concerning early childhood development, address the needs of 5-8 year-olds. However, they make no provision for 0-5 year-olds.

Government commitment to the entire span of early childhood, ages 0 to 8, has been made under the *Early Childhood Development Strategy*. As will be demonstrated below, music education can contribute broadly to the achievement of its goals and to those of *The Early Years Learning Framework*.

### WHY MUSIC?

#### The importance of music in early childhood <sup>3</sup>

As documented above, it is the intention of all governments that music will be included in the National Curriculum and therefore in the curricula of all schools. It therefore is inevitably an aspect of this inquiry.

Since, as extrapolated from MCA research <sup>4</sup>, only 23% of public schools offer a credible sequential, developmental program of music education, there is a strong likelihood that most readers have no personal experience as students in such programs nor, therefore, experience of the benefits.

Therefore, we take a little space to note the potential contribution of a music education to early childhood development.

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<sup>3</sup> The text in this section is drawn from the submission by the Music Council of Australia to the Inquiry for a National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care, written by Dr Peter de Vries. *Music in Early Childhood Education: a Submission from the Music Council of Australia*. October 2008. <http://www.mca.org.au/web/content/view/500/>

<sup>4</sup> Prof Robin Stevens. *National Report on Trends in School Music Education Provision in Australia*. Music Council of Australia <http://www.mca.org.au/web/content/view/106/6>

Research overwhelmingly shows that music is both a biological predisposition and a cultural universal (Morrison & Demorest, 2009, p. 67). Music is an integral part of young children's lives, as evidenced in the ground-breaking research conducted by Moorehead & Pond (1941/1978) nearly seventy years ago, or the more recent rich and diverse ethnographic studies of young children's musical lives conducted by Campbell (1998). Children's play, so valued by the early childhood education community in fostering young children's learning and development, features music as a central component (Bjorkvold, 1989; Campbell, 1998; Campbell & Scott-Kassner, 2006).<sup>5</sup>

Anyone who has worked with young children knows that most children love music and can engage in musical activities on many levels. From birth music is an intuitive form of communication between mother and baby (Papousek, 1996)<sup>6</sup>, and subsequently between growing child and caregiver/s. For more than a decade it has been apparent that from infancy human beings are hardwired for musical experience (Trehub et al., 1997). That is, *all* children are born with the innate ability to respond to music and to develop musically. *However, without the right nurturing, musical ability will stall.*

Therefore it is vital that those involved in young children's growth – namely parents and educators - understand their musical development and know ways that they can nurture this very powerful form of communication and being. Music is something to be fostered in all young children.

Doing this simply for the sake of each child's musical development should be argument enough for music to be an integral part of early childhood education. However, music education has many additional benefits in other domains of young children's learning and development.

Involvement in music experiences has been demonstrated to facilitate the development of literacy and language skills in young children (Adcock et al., 2008; Barclay, 1992; Fisher et al., 2001; Hurwitz et al., 1975; Lamb & Gregory, 1993; McCracken & McCracken, 1986; Moyeda et al., 2006; Register, 2001; Yazejian & Peisner-Feinberg, 2009)<sup>7</sup>. In particular, involvement in music programs and

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<sup>5</sup> Moorehead, G. E. & Pond, D. (1941/1978). *Music for young children*. Santa Barbara, CA: Pillsbury Foundation.

Campbell, P. S. (1998). *Songs in their heads: Music and meaning in children's lives*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Bjorkvold, J. R. (1989). *The Muse within: Creativity, song and play from childhood through maturity*. New York: Harper Collins.

Campbell, P. S., & Scott-Kassner, C. (2006). *Music in childhood: From preschool through the elementary grades*. Belmont, CA: Thomson Schirmer Press.

<sup>6</sup> Papousek, M. (1996). Intuitive parenting: A hidden source of musical stimulation in infancy. In I. Delige & J. A. Sloboda (Eds.) *Musical beginnings: Origins and development of musical competence* (pp. 88-112). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

<sup>7</sup> Adcock, S., Cullen, J., & St George, A. (2008). Word-play and musike: Young children learning literacies while communicating playfully. *Australian Journal of Early Childhood* (33)2, 1–9.

Barclay, K. D. (1992). Linking lyrics and literacy through young picture books. *Young children*, 41, 76-85.

Fisher, D., McDonald, N., & Strickland, J. (2001). Early literacy development: A sound practice. *General Music Today*, 14(3), 15-20.

Hurwitz, I., Wolff, P., Bortnick, B., & Kokas, K. (1975). Nonmusical effects of the Kodaly music curriculum in primary grade children. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 8(3), 167-173.

experiences has resulted in the increase of young children's vocabulary (Moyeda et al., 2006)<sup>8</sup> and increased development in auditory language (Gan & Chong, 1998).<sup>9</sup> The development of literacy also has clear links to developmentally appropriate singing and chanting activities in which children learn lyrics to chants and songs and re-compose song lyrics (Barclay, 1992; Kenney, 1997).<sup>10</sup>

Engagement in music programs has been shown to benefit many other areas of young children's development, for instance spatial-temporal reasoning in elementary school aged children (Schellenberg, 2004)<sup>11</sup> and preschool children (Beilharz et al., 2000; Rauscher & Zupan, 2000)<sup>12</sup>.

If early childhood educators are exposed to appropriate musical skills and practices for young children, they can see the benefits of including music in their programs (de Vries, 2004)<sup>13</sup>. In a case study, de Vries found the early childhood teacher noting that when engaged in music activities the children in her care developed in terms of motor skills, increased socialization, release of pent up energy; music provided a mode for self expression, and focused children's listening skills. Early childhood educators need to be made aware of the numerous benefits of including music in their programs, and be exposed to the diverse range of musical activities that they can provide for the children in their care.

### **Brain development**

The brain's basic architecture is built over time in a process that begins before birth and continues through to adulthood. The brain is built over a succession of 'sensitive periods'. These sensitive periods are associated with the formation of specific circuits that are associated with specific abilities.<sup>14</sup>

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Lamb, S., & Gregory, A. (1993). The relationship between music and reading in beginning readers. *Educational Psychology*, 13(1), 19-27.

McCracken, R. A., & McCracken, M. J. (1986). *Stories, songs, and poetry to teach reading and writing: Literacy through language*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Moyeda, I., Gomez, I., & Flores, M. (2006). Implementing a musical program to promote preschool children's vocabulary development. *Early Childhood Research and Practice*, 8(1).  
<http://ecrp.uiuc.edu/v8n1/galicia.html>. Retrieved 16 August 2008.

Register, D. (2001). The effects of an early intervention music curriculum on prereading/ writing. *Journal of Music Therapy*, 38(3), 239-248.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid

<sup>9</sup> Gan, L. & Chong, S. (1998). The rhythm of language: Fostering oral and listening skills in Singapore pre-school children through an integrated music and language arts program. *Early Child Development and Care*, 144, 39-45.

<sup>10</sup> Barclay, K. D. (1992). Linking lyrics and literacy through long picture books. *Young children*, 41, 76-85.

Kenney, S. (1997). Music in the developmentally appropriate integrated curriculum. In C. Hart, D. Burts & R. Charlesworth (Eds.) *Integrated curriculum and developmentally appropriate practice: Birth to age eight* (pp. 103-144). Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

<sup>11</sup> Schellenberg, E. G. (2004). Music lessons enhance IQ. *Psychological Science*, 15(8), 511-14.

<sup>12</sup> Beilharz ibid

Rauscher, F. H., & Zupan, M. A. (2000). Classroom keyboard instruction improves kindergarten children's spatial-temporal performance: A field experiment. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 15(2), 215-228.

<sup>13</sup> de Vries, P. (2004). The extramusical effects of music lessons on preschoolers. *Australian Journal of Early Childhood*, 29(2), 6-10.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid. 'The development of increasingly complex skills builds upon the circuits and skills that

- *National Early Childhood Development Strategy, Investing in the Early Years. p.31*

Need some music references/illustrations

### **What happens in early childhood affects potential and reality of later development**

The convergence of evidence from a range of fields underlines the importance of a child's early growth and development for establishing the foundations of their health, learning, social and cultural outcomes into the future.

- *National Early Childhood Development Strategy, Investing in the Early Years. p.8*

Attend a symphony orchestra concert. Almost every one of the violinists, violists and cellists has begun their music education in early childhood, probably around the age of 5. The basis for those extraordinary musical skills is necessarily laid down in early childhood.

Our objective is not, of course, to produce a population of violin virtuosi; the example is intended only to illustrate the phenomenon. The first objective is to support the development of musical capacities and skills in all children during the early childhood readiness period so that they may have maximum opportunity to experience the intrinsic benefits of music making and the extra-musical benefits that have been cited above.

Nevertheless, attention should be paid also to supporting the development of the professional music sector. Consider the following:

- 'The music sector is estimated to contribute \$7 billion value-added to the Australian economy.<sup>15</sup>
- Music is a strong source of employment although the calculation of numbers is quite complex. 'The 2004 survey found that 230,800 persons were involved as live performers of music defined as *work...* Involvement in music other than as live performers contributed 69,100 to the music category. Activities include music arranging, composing, songwriting, sound engineering, recording or publishing music, and support roles for musicians, bands or ensembles (if people doing such jobs were also live performers they were put in that category). There were also a small number of people for whom no detail was obtained (about 5,300), so the total number of people involved as either performers or other music roles in the

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were formed earlier. It is through this process that early experiences create the foundation for learning, behaviour, physical and mental health. The stronger the foundation in the early years, the more likely it is that there will be positive outcomes for children. Healthy brain development is important not just for cognitive skills and future academic achievement but also for physical, social and emotional development.'

<sup>15</sup> Hans Hoegh-Guldberg. 'Value of the music sector.' *Music in Australia Knowledge Base*, Music Council of Australia. [http://www.mca.org.au/web/component?option=com\\_kb/task,article/article,78/](http://www.mca.org.au/web/component?option=com_kb/task,article/article,78/)

year to April 2004 was 305,200 (excluding persons involved in opera or music theatre but not in other musical activities).<sup>16</sup>

- Nevertheless, the music balance of payments is deeply in the red. The two published components of a music balance of payments are trade in music royalties (2005-06 \$41m credits (exports) and \$213m debits (imports), and music exports and imports (2005-06 \$63m exports, \$924m imports). Total exports of goods and services as measured \$104m exports, \$1.137bn.<sup>17</sup>

There are few countries with a positive music balance of payments. Sweden, a small country, is one of them. A study of the causes of its success found that its music education provision is very significant – both in providing a skilled workforce and discriminating listeners.<sup>18</sup> Its recommendation concerning music education: 'Build a broad education system and ensure that everyone gains entry to music education at an early age.'

### **More on international standards**

The National Education Agreement states:

1. The Agreement will contribute to the following outcomes:
  - (a) all children are engaged in and benefiting from schooling;
  - (b) young people are meeting basic literacy and numeracy standards, and overall levels of literacy and numeracy achievement are improving;
  - (c) Australian students excel by international standards;
  - (d) schooling promotes the social inclusion and reduces the educational disadvantage of children, especially Indigenous children; and
  - (e) young people make a successful transition from school to work and further study.

We refer to (c), 'Australian students excel by international standards'.

Australian musicians operate in an international marketplace – even if they remain in Australia. The audience has its main exposure to music through the media and therefore to the best music produced in any country in the world.

Musicians earn their livings mostly through live performance. Although most performances in Australia are given by Australian musicians, they must attract an audience whose expectations have been influenced by recorded performances from

<sup>16</sup> Music Council of Australia interpretation of ABS figures.

[http://www.mca.org.au/web/component/option.com\\_kb/task/article/article,82/#stat](http://www.mca.org.au/web/component/option.com_kb/task/article/article,82/#stat)

<sup>17</sup> *Music in Australia: A statistical overview, 2007*, Tables 4.5 and 4.6, pp 36-37.

[http://www.culturaldata.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0008/58544/Music\\_in\\_Australia\\_A\\_Statistical\\_Overview.pdf](http://www.culturaldata.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/58544/Music_in_Australia_A_Statistical_Overview.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> *Att ta sig ton - om svensk musikexport 1974-1999* (Ds 1999:28) (*Tuning In – Swedish Music Exports 1974-1999*). Expertgruppen för studier i offentlig ekonomi (ESO), an independent think tank in the Ministry for Finance. Chapter 8. The basic music provision in Swedish schools is one hour per week. One informant suggests that the introduction of education in musical creativity was the key factor in building the workforce that produced the exports. The study attributes the success also to the further provision of music education through municipal music schools

elsewhere and live performances by touring foreigners, some of whom are stars internationally.

This situation requires that the development of Australians' musical skills begins in early childhood for reasons already given.

With the current fixation on the development of literacy and numeracy, can the school system afford to divert time and resources from those subjects and assign them to music education?

Evidence of the beneficial effects of music education on non-musical achievement has been illustrated above. Consider also the implications of the recently released PISA rankings of national achievements.

The countries that have higher PISA rankings than Australia in reading, science and mathematics almost all offer continuous music education programs throughout the primary school years and beyond. The overall rank order for countries that ranked more highly than Australia in all three areas in 2009 was:

Shanghai, China	1731
Hong Kong	1637
Finland	1631
Singapore	1630
South Korea	1623
Japan	1588
Canada	1580
New Zealand	1572
Australia	1556

The numbers shown are the combined scores for the three disciplines.

	<b>Music education provision</b>	
	<b>Primary school</b>	<b>Secondary school</b>
<b>Shanghai, China</b>	2 hours per week across China	Elective
<b>Hong Kong</b>	Guidelines 70-100 minutes/week	55-70 minutes/week
<b>Finland</b>	45 mins/week, grades 1-7. In c13% of schools, additional 3-4 hours	Elective between music, visual arts
<b>Singapore</b>	Grades 1-4, 1 hour/week, grades 5-6, 30 minutes.	35 minutes/week
<b>South Korea</b>	2 hours/week	Grade 7, 2 hours; grade 8-10, 1 hour; grades 11-12, elective
<b>Japan</b>	45 minutes	Elective
<b>Canada</b>	By province. Manitoba 1-1.5 hours	Elective
<b>New Zealand</b>	50 minutes in theory	Required years 7-8, then elective
<b>Australia</b>	Best are Qld, Tas, 30 minutes	Elective. NSW 100 hours total, grades 7-8

There is widespread use of music specialist teachers in primary as well as secondary schools in the non-Anglo countries.

As noted, only 23% of Australian public schools offer a systematic music education. Queensland is usually acknowledged as the leader. There, primary schools offer a basic 30 minutes of music instruction per week, taught by a music specialist. In many NSW schools, where music is supposedly a mandatory subject in the primary curriculum, a very large proportion of primary schools have no music at all.

We do not have a basis for claiming that the inclusion of music in the curricula of our PISA superiors has contributed to their performance but it has not prevented them from excelling Australia.

Concerning the other objectives, we state briefly:

- a) Music programs have been shown to reduce truancy, increase participation, enable participation by students who are not performing well in the standard curriculum
- b) This paper cites abundant research demonstrating that literacy and numeracy standards are lifted by continuous participation in education in musical creation and performance
- d) Music education is used to build social inclusion and reduce disadvantage; it has been used effectively for this purpose with Indigenous children, for instance in remote NT schools.

## **THE EARLY CHILDHOOD MUSIC EDUCATION WORKFORCE**

### **Mandatory Preservice Music Education of Early Childhood Teachers**

In all States and Territories except Queensland and Tasmania, music education is delivered to primary school years K to 6 or 7 by generalist classroom teachers. What preservice training in music is mandated for these teachers? What training is provided to early childhood teachers who will work with pre-school children? Dr. Rachel Hocking conducted a study under the auspices of the Music Council of Australia in 2008<sup>19</sup> and in what follows, we draw from that study.

There is a problem 'in attempting to determine an acceptable level of music education for the birth-to-eight age group in a formal setting: there are no standardised curricula in childcare facilities until a child begins school (around age five to six). Therefore there is a lack of standardisation in the training of early childhood teachers... For example, in one degree, a graduate may qualify only to teach in childcare facilities such as preschools, to the age of five years, while in another degree, a graduate may be able to teach in both infants schools and preschools, up to the age of eight.'

Of the universities offering qualifications to teach in early childhood education, available data show that 9 were for teaching only in childcare facilities and 17 were

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<sup>19</sup> Dr. Rachel Hocking. *Music Education of Classroom Teachers: Early Childhood*. Music Council of Australia, 2008. University handbooks were surveyed to find out the degrees and subjects in which music was taught to early childhood teaching undergraduates and postgraduates. 31 degrees were found to be related to early childhood training, with some universities offering two degree options for students.

[http://www.mca.org.au/web/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=272&itemid=1](http://www.mca.org.au/web/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=272&itemid=1)

for teaching in childcare facilities and schools. The training was to teach children in these age ranges:

<b>Children's Age Ranges</b>	<b>Number of Institutions</b>
0-12	2
0-8	12
0-6	3
0-5	2
0-4	1
4-12	1
3-8	1
No data	5

Music is currently taught by universities to early childhood educators in an arts-focused subject, often as a music and movement blend.

The study surveyed 30 relevant institutions. Three of the 30 had no mandatory training in arts education. Four offered mandatory arts training but could provide no data to quantify the amount of instruction in music. The remainder offered education in music teaching, usually as an element in a subject covering two or more art forms. The following table summarises the findings.

<b>Number of years for degree</b>	<b>Number of institutions</b>	<b>Total average hours of music instruction</b>
4	17	20.0
3	6	18.9
2	2	10.6
1	2	9.8

The average estimated number of hours assigned to music instruction varies with the number of years required for the degree. Since the music instruction is concentrated into one or two semesters, the instructional time can be similar for the 4 and 3 years courses, and the one and two year courses.

Assuming an approximate average total of instructional time for a four-year degree of 1250 hours, instructional time for music ranges from zero hours in three universities to an estimated 78 hours (6.25% of the degree) at Monash University. In approximately one-half (14 out of 31) of the early childhood degree programs, music as a discrete discipline counted for less than 1% in value.

Baldly put, on the basis of an average of as little as 10 hours of music training, graduates are released into the world to deliver a sequential, developmental curriculum in music covering between 4 and 12 years. This cannot be a serious proposition.

*The preservice training in music produces a workforce that, except by accident of personal circumstance or interest, is not competent to deliver a credible curriculum.*

Nor is the provision of in-service professional development opportunities to remedy this inadequacy anything but random.

## Characteristics of the early childhood teacher workforce

A primary determinant of quality in early childhood development service provision is the workforce—their qualification levels and ongoing training, their motivation, and their interaction with families and children. Workforce issues are widely regarded as the key challenge for achieving the vision for children. The early childhood workforce is central to delivering early childhood development services and bringing about fundamental cultural change required for responsive service delivery.

- *National Early Childhood Development Strategy*, p.20

Given the above, it is not surprising that research literature continually points to the fact that teachers working in early childhood settings in Australia do not feel confident teaching music, believing they lack the requisite knowledge and skills to plan and teach music (Commonwealth of Australia, 1995; de Vries, 2006; Sharpe et al., 2005; Suthers, 2004)<sup>20</sup>. The delivery of music instruction in early childhood settings is often viewed as being unsatisfactory, with Scott-Kassner (1999) pointing to early childhood programs lacking in musical direction.

As Suthers (2007)<sup>21</sup> indicates, curriculum frameworks for early childhood music education are 'deliberately broad', and in many cases are nothing short of vague, with little in the way of practical suggestions to guide teachers (p. 57). This, along with the quantitative inadequacy of preservice training, the lack of professional development provision and the research indicating that teachers do not feel confident teaching music in early childhood settings, has resulted in unsatisfactory provision of music education in early childhood settings in Australia. What is needed are suitably qualified teachers who can teach music to young children.

Although early childhood development programs vary, most offer some combination of quality maternal, child and family health, early childhood education and care, and parent support services. *The quality of the workforce is a key factor in achieving good outcomes for children.* (Emphasis added.)

- *National Early Childhood Development Strategy*, p.8

Children under the age of 2 are capable of much when it comes to music: engaging in vocal play, experimenting with sound (including manipulating simple musical instruments), and by 24 months are more than capable of singing short songs and improvising with known songs and creating their own songs. If nurtured, by the age

<sup>20</sup> Commonwealth of Australia. (1995). *Arts education report by the Senate Environment, Recreation, Communications and the Arts References Committee*. October.

de Vries, P. (2006). Being there: Creating music-making opportunities in a childcare centre. *International Journal of Music Education*, 24(3), 255-270.

Sharpe, A., Harris, P., & McKeen, K. (2005). *The place of music and movement in the curriculum in early childhood settings – what do teachers think?* <http://www.aare.edu.au/05pap/sha05231.pdf>. Retrieved 14 August 2008.

Suthers, L. (2004). Music experiences for toddlers in daycare centres. *Australian Journal of Early Childhood*, 29(4), 45-49.

<sup>21</sup> Suthers, L. (2007). Early Childhood Music Education in Australia: A Snapshot. *Arts Education Policy Review*, 109(3).

of 5 children are capable both in terms of pitch and rhythm of accurately singing longer songs, can play musical instruments alone or in a group, can keep a steady beat while singing or moving to recorded and live music, can move expressively to music, and differentiate between contrasting musical elements such as loud/soft and fast/slow.

With an understanding of young children's capabilities, early childhood educators can plan quality musical experiences for the children in their care. Early childhood educators need to understand and be able to implement the wide *variety* of musical activities that are appropriate for young children, including singing, playing musical instruments, composing music and notating music. Singing traditional children's songs as a group and moving to popular children's audio recordings does not adequately address children's musical developmental needs. Rather, educators should provide a diversity of musical experiences, often combined with other arts areas such as dance and storytelling (Niland, 2007)<sup>22</sup> and providing opportunities to "create and experiment either through extensions to existing lessons or through dedicated time for small groups and individuals to manipulate, explore and create music" (Miranda, 2004, p. 59)<sup>23</sup>.

Research conducted by Wilson Gillespie & Glider (2010) demonstrates that early childhood teachers who are both confident in teaching music and have the requisite training use music in a multitude of ways in their classrooms, including scaffolding children's learning in academic and social skills. Their research demonstrated that music is used with great frequency in these circumstances.

### Parents as educators

Effective early childhood development programs are generally those that work directly with children and also with parents to improve their engagement, capacity, skills and confidence.

- *National Early Childhood Development Strategy*, p.8

Two groups of people are largely responsible for young children's musical development: educators and parents. With research suggesting there is a sharp decline in parental singing and playing music for children after 24 months (Custodero et al., 2003)<sup>24</sup> and a recent decline in parents singing to their infant children (Gembris & Davidson, 2002; Papousek, 1996)<sup>25</sup>, it appears that parents are not as involved in their young children's musical development.

Parents need to understand young children's musical development and be able to nurture this in the home. de Vries (2007)<sup>26</sup> found that parents are overly reliant on

<sup>22</sup> Niland, A. (2007). Musical stories: Strategies for integrating literature and music for young children. *Australian Journal of Early Childhood*, 32(4), 7-11.

<sup>23</sup> Miranda, M. L. (2004). The implications of developmentally appropriate practice for the kindergarten general music classroom. *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 52(1), 43-63.

<sup>24</sup> Custodero, L. A., Britto, P. R., & Brooks-Gunn, J. (2003). Musical lives: A collective portrait of American parents and their young children. *Applied Developmental Psychology*, 24, 553-572.

<sup>25</sup> Gembris, H., & Davidson, J. (2002). Environmental influences. In R. Parncutt & G. McPherson (Eds.) *The science and psychology of music performance* (pp. 17-30). Oxford: Oxford University Press. Papousek, *ibid*.

<sup>26</sup> de Vries, P. (2007). The use of music CDs and DVDs in the home with the under-fives: What the parents say. *Australian Journal of Early Childhood*, 32(4), 18-21.

commercially available music resources such as CDs and DVDs for their children's engagement with music, having little understanding of what they should be nurturing.

Therefore educating parents about how they can nurture their children's musical development in developmentally appropriate ways is vital. Cooper & Berger Cardany (2008) have conducted research demonstrating the effectiveness of music programs that bring parents and their children together to make music. *If such programs were to occur in preschools this could involve the preschool teacher, parents and children together to make and create music.*

Another key research finding is that quality matters when it comes to the child's learning environment, including the quality of the home learning environment and the early years of primary school. Aspects of quality include the capacity and engagement of parents in their child's development; stimulating play-based learning activities; higher qualifications of early childhood professionals; lower child-to-staff ratios and a strong relationship between the child and a stable caregiver.

- *National Early Childhood Development Strategy*, p.9

### Further summary

1. All Australian governments have made a commitment to the design and implementation of a national music curriculum in schools throughout the school years. The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority is agreed that this curriculum will be sequential, developmental and continuous.
2. This commitment does not cover the age range 0 to 5 years. However, all governments have committed to the *National Early Childhood Development Strategy*, which embraces the whole early childhood age span.
3. Research confirms that music education delivers musical knowledge and skills and also facilitates the development of literacy, language, mathematical, emotional, self-expressive, social and other skills. It can contribute significantly to the achievement of the objectives of the *National Early Childhood Development Strategy* and to the *Early Years Learning Framework*.
4. Specific musical abilities develop sequentially in early life and such development will be impaired or fail if the abilities are not stimulated. In our music-consuming culture, the normal, informal processes of music making are often missing from family life and depend upon the education system.
5. Later musical development depends upon the basis laid in early childhood. This is important to the general well-being of the populace and also to the artistic and economic success of the Australian professional music sector.
6. The music sector is estimated to contribute \$7 billion value-added to the economy and to be an important source of employment. However, its export performance is lacklustre and it can be inferred that this is due in part to the failings of the education system in music.

7. A study of the exceptional international success of the Swedish music sector found that one of the most important factors was the depth and breadth of its music education provision.
8. An objective of the National Education Agreement is that 'Australian students excel by international standards.' This increasingly is a survival issue for Australian musicians, who compete in an international market even when they are based within Australia.
9. The countries with higher PISA rankings than Australia in reading, maths and science almost all are known to provide continuous, developmental music education in schools. The assignment of resources to music apparently does not harm performance in reading, maths or science and may contribute to success.
10. The mandatory preservice music education in the university degrees of early childhood teachers is tokenistic. With as little as 9 hours of music education, they are charged with teaching music for an age span of up to 12 years. Research reveals a workforce lacking confidence and skills to teach music and poor or no delivery of the curriculum. It is fair to say that most do not even know what is possible.
11. Teachers with adequate musical training use music in a multitude of ways 'including scaffolding children's learning in academic and social skills. The research shows that music is used with great frequency in these circumstances.'
12. Parents can play an important role in music and other education. Research shows a sharp decline in parental involvement in music making and musical activity with their children. Musically skilled preschool teachers can educate parents along with children in the preschool setting.

## **SOLUTIONS**

The delivery of an effective – and preferably stimulating and inspiring – early childhood music education depends above all on the skills of the workforce.

Insofar as the workforce members have depended for their music education upon the mandatory music components of their preservice generalist degrees, most can be assumed to lack the competence to deliver a credible curriculum. Of course, there are exceptions: those people who have acquired a music education and music pedagogy by other means. But we must be concerned with the general provision.

Solutions for the early childhood programs that take place in primary schools must be made in the context of decisions about the delivery of the primary school music curriculum overall. Solutions for the earlier years or for childcare facilities can be made independently of the school systems.

*In the primary schools.* The Music Council believes that music education in the primary schools is best delivered by music specialists along with the active participation of the classroom teachers. Our reasoning:

- Delivery of the music curriculum by classroom generalists has failed, not necessarily because it is incapable of success, but because it creates a context in

which teachers have been inadequately trained and resourced and music has assumed low status in the system

- The new National Curriculum will require delivery of programs in every primary school in five art forms. It is nearly inconceivable that generalist primary school teachers can achieve competency in all five art forms. Could you?
- Well taught, primary school students are capable of achieving far greater musical skills than can be developed by most generalist teachers in the context of even a relatively well resourced and delivered preservice degree, unless they add music electives, which probably most will not
- Delivery by specialists is economically feasible, as demonstrated in Queensland and Tasmania
- The disadvantage in the use of specialist music teachers is that music education can then be confined to the period of their, presumably, brief weekly visit. Especially in the early childhood years, music can be dropped into the school day whether for its own value or to assist in learning other subjects. It is highly desirable that the generalist teacher participates in the specialist teacher's classes so that knowledge and skills in music can be gradually acquired for utilisation elsewhere.<sup>27</sup> (This, by the way, is not the practice in Queensland and Tasmania, for financial reasons.)

Therefore, whether or not the primary responsibility for delivering the music curriculum in primary schools falls to specialist teachers, generalist teachers should receive an adequate preservice music education.

If, in the event, the responsibility for delivery of the music curriculum is carried by generalist teachers, they should be provided with adequate expert support, probably through employment of regional music consultants.

Rachel Hocking notes the difficulty of establishing expectations for the music education component of preservice degrees is the lack of common agreement about school music curricula. This will be resolved sufficiently in the school systems by the introduction of the National Curriculum.

An alternative solution to achieving subject-area competency is suggested in the next section.

*Preschool years, ages 0 to 5.* However, a solution is needed for the preschool years 0 to 5. 'The national quality agenda for early childhood education and care

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<sup>27</sup> Peter de Vries, while endorsing the use of music specialists, states 'It should not just be left to a music specialist to provide music education for young children in early childhood settings as the specialist tends to have infrequent contact with children, essentially providing "a series of separated activities, relegating music to that isolated spot in the curriculum" (Fox, 1991, p. 28). The teacher/carer who is working with their children daily can program a music lesson, but more often than not there will be many moments throughout the day when music can become part of the children's day, whether this be singing songs and rhymes as part of care routines, or responding to, encouraging, talking about, and joining in with children's spontaneous musical play (Young, 2003). The "everyday and everywhere feature of children's music making" simply requires the early childhood educator to find multiple avenues of addressing children's musical development (Fox, 2000, p. 26).

encompassing national standards, streamlined regulatory approaches, a rating system and an Early Years Learning Framework' may be brought to bear. (*National Early Childhood Development Strategy p.25*)

Rectification of the inadequacies of music education in preservice degrees takes care of the future but does not address the problems with the existing workforce. To our knowledge, there is very little systematic State provision of professional development opportunities in music education nor rewards for those who undertake professional development.

There have been complaints in the press from other subject areas that the workforce's skills are inadequate. The introduction of the National Curriculum requires across the board improvements in the provision of professional development courses.

Such provision can be made directly by the various education jurisdictions and by professional associations such as the Australian Society for Music Education, the Music Council, and interesting performing organisations like The Song Room or the symphony orchestras, with State support. Professional development should be required and should be recognised and rewarded.

Professional development can be supplied face to face and online. The Music Council has collaborated with the NSW Department in the context of the Council's Music: Count Us In program to deliver PD online to some 200 primary school teachers each year, many of them in regional areas. The success of this undertaking has led to extension to other subjects in NSW, and similar experimentation in other states.

The arguments for the use of music specialists may apply also for childcare centres. However, here it is even more important that the childcare generalist is able to introduce music in a fluid and spontaneous way and the need for adequate preservice and inservice training is, if anything, more urgent.

We note National Early Childhood Education and Care workforce initiatives 'including additional university places for early childhood teachers, the removal of TAFE fees for child care students and paying 50% of the HECS-HELP fees of early childhood teachers who work in areas of high disadvantage.'

Decisions about the music education provided in preservice generalist degrees are taken by the universities. There has been a long regression in this provision, both in hours committed and in some cases the quality of the instruction.<sup>28</sup> In some instances, the provision has become so meagre that lecturers cannot be found, or fill positions while lacking basic knowledge.

So we have a situation in which, for instance, the NSW system has made music a mandatory component of the primary school curriculum but does not require, through its accreditation or employment processes, any demonstration by applicants for primary school teaching positions that they are capable of delivering the curriculum. The degree, with content decided by the universities, suffices for

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<sup>28</sup> Rachel Hocking: *National Audit of Music Discipline and Music Education Mandatory Content within Pre-Service Generalist Primary Teacher Education Courses: a report*. Music Council of Australia, August 2009. [http://www.mca.org.au/pdf/mca\\_preservice\\_finalreport.pdf](http://www.mca.org.au/pdf/mca_preservice_finalreport.pdf)

accreditation. This leaves the universities free in effect to decide what the NSW teaching workforce is capable of teaching.

The Music Council proposes that State accreditation requirements ensure that teachers are capable of delivering the curriculum in music and indeed, in other subject areas.

Information received by the Council informally indicates a difficulty in filling positions for music teaching specialists. Most of these are employed at the secondary level. However, we would expect that if there is a problem at secondary level, it will be felt also in early childhood and primary school years. We noted already that under the National Education Agreement, the States have the responsibility for attracting and retaining teaching staff. We propose that special attention is given to this problem and solutions found and implemented. It may be, for instance, that talented musicians would be more attracted to teaching if they were able, under the conditions of employment, to maintain both careers.

The penurious circumstances that have applied in school music education are not encouraging to innovation. Adequate training of teachers and provision of educational services should be accompanied by the introduction of opportunities for research and innovation in teaching materials and methods.

### **An alternative solution to achieving subject area competence**

Above, we expressed disbelief that generalist primary school classroom teachers can be expected to achieve teaching competence in five art forms.

In fact, there are statements from most disciplines that generalist teachers are not competent to teach them. There are even observations about perceived inadequate competence to teach mathematics, despite its place as one of the two core disciplinary areas.

There are two contending needs, then: the need for young children to receive competent instruction in a range of subjects perhaps too large to be encompassed by teachers of normal ability: and therefore a pressure towards specialisation that could result in children seeing each day a procession of specialist teachers. This, versus the need for pastoral care, for children to be cared for by teachers who are in loco parentis, who have the opportunity to build continuing, caring relationships with each child.

Hong Kong has a solution. It does not have generalist teachers in primary school. Our informant says "ALL primary teachers teach 2 to 3 subjects normally. This means that primary children see two or three teachers each week, each of whom are specialists in the particular subjects that they teach (e.g., a primary teacher might specialize in teaching Mathematics, English and Music only)."

The Music Council has not had sufficient time to explore the Hong Kong situation before making this submission. But it strongly recommends such exploration to the Productivity Commission.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The recommendations listed below address in some measure these Terms of Reference:

**Scope**

- 1a. ... the mix of knowledge and skills required to meet service need...
- 2c. qualifications pathways particularly pathways that will ensure accessibility and appropriateness of training to meet the qualifications and competencies required for the various occupations in the workforces
- 3a. the composition and skills of the existing workforces
- 3c. the most appropriate mix of skills and knowledge required to deliver on the outcomes in the COAG national framework
- 4a. policy, governance and regulatory measures to maximise the efficiency and effectiveness of the workforces

***The Early Childhood Development Workforce***

- 1. Factors affecting the current and future demand and supply for the ECD workforce, and the required mix of skills and knowledge, including [inter alia]:
  - 1a. the availability and quality of pre-service education programs, including through undergraduate and postgraduate education and VET, and consideration of training pathways
  - 1d. the quality and skills of the workforce
  - 2d. potential labour market failures

***The Music Council recommends that:***

- 1. A sequential, developmental, continuous music education should be a mandatory element of the curriculum across the early childhood years in both schools and childcare centres.
- 2. Delivery of the music curriculum, especially in the school years, should be the responsibility of trained music specialists, with the active support and participation of the classroom generalist teachers.
- 3. Those responsible for music education in the early childhood setting should also recruit and train parents to participate in music making and the music education of their children.
- 4. Preservice degrees for primary classroom generalist teachers should include the acquisition of skills at least sufficient for effective delivery of the National Curriculum in music and for the preschool years, a music curriculum to be developed under other auspices, possibly the National Early Childhood Development Strategy or its delegated authority.
- 5. The preservice music education should be improved through an appropriate level of commitment by the universities to producing graduates capable at least of teaching the relevant curricula, increased financial support to that end from the

Commonwealth, and introduction of appropriate standards of accreditation and employment eligibility by the State authorities.

6. Professional development opportunities should be provided systematically for existing members of the workforce to enable them to reach at least the standards required for the new qualifying degrees. The courses can be offered face to face or online by school systems and professional associations. Completion should be recognised and rewarded.
7. Students should receive financial support to enable them to undertake early childhood education courses.
8. New conditions of employment and recruitment strategies should be developed by the States to secure and retain the services of specialist music teachers.
9. Structures and provisions should be established to encourage research and innovation in early childhood music education.
10. The Productivity Commission should explore the Hong Kong school system's solution to the need for subject area specialisation in primary school teachers with a view to adoption in Australia.