

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

12.1 Introduction

The challenge of this research project has been to work with an incomplete set of statistical data from the various states and territories. As indicated, the lack of uniform policies and practices in relation to the collection of statistical data about music education at the state and territory level has been a major impediment to identifying not only the situation in each state or territory over a reasonable time span but this has also meant that national trends have been difficult, and in most cases impossible, to ascertain. Nevertheless, as indicated in the introductory chapter, one of the positive outcomes of the research has been a reasonably comprehensive mapping of the current situation regarding music education in government schools but to a much lesser extent in the Independent and Catholic school systems with some national trends being able to be identified in relation to certain of the research questions.

12.2 Questions 1 and Question 2

*What are the numbers of primary and secondary schools in each of the three systems (public [i.e. government], Independent and Catholic systems)?
In each of these categories and at each of these levels, what are the total numbers of students?*

The answers to these two questions provided by State Investigators, together with additional statistical information from Australian Bureau of Statistics, formed the basis for calculating teacher: student ratios and for the various percentage calculations used in the analysis of data provided by State Investigators in relation to Questions 3 to 11.

12.3 Question 3

In each of the categories, what are the numbers of specialist music teachers?

The data available from the states and territories for this question was unfortunately quite incomplete with the result that longitudinal data was available for only three states (Queensland, South Australia and Victoria). The situation regarding classroom music in the two states for which data was provided is slightly ambiguous. In Queensland, there has been a significant improvement in the teacher: student ratio in government schools—in 1980 the ratio was one teacher for every 2005 students whereas in 2002, the situation had improved significantly to one teacher for every 670 students. The findings in South Australia on the other hand show a slight deterioration in the teacher: student ratio in government schools from one teacher for every 249 students in 1992 to one teacher for every 327 students in 2002. However given, at

worst, a teacher: student ratio of 1: 327 in South Australia the situation is comparatively better in South Australia than it is in Queensland.

In relation to the instrumental music teacher situation, there are data from each of the three states—Queensland, South Australia and Victoria—that suggest an overall improvement in two states (Queensland and Victoria) and a slight deterioration in South Australia.

Table 12.1

Teacher : Student Ratios in Government Schools in Queensland, South Australia and Victoria to 2002

Year:	1980	1989	1995/96	2002
Queensland	1: 3179			1: 1343
South Australia			1: 1732	1: 1953
Victoria		1: 1972		1: 1687

As the table above so clearly indicates there is very limited data upon which to make any summation of the overall national picture. However, the indications are that, despite the increase in the teacher: student ratio in South Australia, there has been an improvement in the other two states and within a range of about 600 students, data from the three states indicates that there is an average instrumental teacher : student ratio of approximately 1: 1660. In the case of Queensland is noteworthy that the instrumental music teacher: student ratio, like the classroom music teacher: student ratio, has improved markedly (by more than halving in both instances) over the past twenty or so years.

12.4 Question 4

In each of the categories, what are the numbers of students receiving music instruction?

As with the previous question there are insufficient data to identify any national trends. However, it is possible to summarise the situation as follows.

- In the Australian Capital Territory, classroom music is a compulsory subject in Year 7 in most government high schools and it could therefore be assumed that 100% of students in that year received classroom music instruction.
- In New South Wales, it is mandated that all students attending primary schools should receive classroom music instruction and that, in addition, all students during the course of their Lower Secondary School years (most usually in years 7 to 8) should receive 100 indicative hours of music instruction in order to achieve the NSW Board of Studies School Certificate by the end of their Year 10.
- In the Northern Territory, the available data suggest that approximately 25% of all students across all years (primary through to the end of secondary) received music instruction during 2002. From the information in Table 4.12, the overall percentage of students receiving music instruction in those schools designated as primary schools is 53.66%, with the breakdown into categories

being 30.02% of primary students in government schools, 49.55% in Catholic schools and 81.41% in Independent schools.

- In Queensland, the assumption is that *all* primary school students from P to Year 7 in government schools receive music instruction. The situation in Catholic and Independent schools is unclear because no statistical information was available.
- In South Australia, the percentage of students in government schools (accounting for both primary and secondary school enrolments) receiving music instruction during 1995 was 23.97 and during 1996 was 23.25. It is also possible to compare the percentage of secondary students in government schools receiving music instruction: in 1995, there were 19.88% of secondary school students receiving music instruction whereas in 1998, the percentage had fallen to 17.27. These figures represent a slight decline in the percentage of students in South Australian government schools receiving music instruction.
- There were no statistics available for Tasmania although official sources estimate that all students in primary schools should be receiving musical instruction.
- In Victoria, the only statistics available are from the 1988 Ray Review which estimated that approximately 25% of all post-primary school students were receiving music instruction at that time.
- In Western Australia, there were no statistics available on which to form a view on the numbers of students receiving music instruction.

Although the evidence is purely anecdotal, the situation in Victoria with the introduction of the two versions of the Victorian *Curriculum and Standards Framework—The Arts* in 1995 and 2002 respectively, is that the somewhat more relaxed approach taken in the CSF and in its interpretation particularly in primary schools, many students are either (i) receiving regular instruction in the form of a systematic and sequential music curriculum from their generalist classroom teachers or an on-staff music specialist teacher or, more likely, if music is being taught at all, it is likely to be in the form of a pedagogical means for teaching the current extra-musical classroom topic or theme rather than being directed to the teaching of the elements of music *per se*. It is also a fairly common practice for music classes to be taken by volunteer parents with some musical knowledge and skills, or by a local musician or outside music teacher during perhaps a regular fortnightly ‘withdrawal’ time when the classroom teacher is given time for preparation, marking or other non-classroom duties. The fact that only two strands, Visual Arts and ‘Performing Arts’—the latter of which may consist of one or more of the three performing arts (music, dance and/or drama)—are required under the *Curriculum and Standards Framework II—The Arts* for Levels 1 to 3 (Prep to Year 4) means that music is no longer even nominally required to be taught in Victoria government primary schools. Although Music is then included in its own right as one of six arts strands for years 5 to 12, effectively the *CSF II* represents a significant loss of ground for Music at the lower and middle primary school levels in Victoria.

Given that there are currently trials being undertaken of other curriculum models—for example the Queensland *New Basics—Curriculum Organisers* (Education Queensland 2000), the integrity of music as a discrete curriculum area may well be under threat. The Queensland Curriculum Basics for instance has, as its objective,

‘managing the enormous increase in information resulting from globalisation and the rapid rate of change in the economic, social and cultural dimensions of our existence’. This curriculum is being trialled in thirty-eight schools for a four-year period from 2000 and has four areas of development, which are based on four key questions:

5. Life pathways and social futures
Who am I and where am I going?
6. Multiliteracies and communications media
How do I make sense of and communicate with the world?
7. Active citizenship
What are my rights and responsibilities in communities, cultures and economies?
8. Environments and technologies
How do I describe, analyse and shape the world around me?
(Education Queensland 2000)

Although there is presumably the possibility of including some music within this context, its traditional role as a discrete area of the curriculum appears to have been entirely lost. Such a radical approach to curriculum design and development could well be the direction to be taken nationally in the future and may well mean that the number of students receiving formal music instruction may well decrease markedly under any new curriculum regime.

12.5 Question 5

If possible, what is the breakdown of the number of music students by grade (year) level?

In relation to this question there is insufficient data to identify any national trends.

12.6 Question 6

What is the number of students sitting for graduation (end-of-secondary-school) examinations in music subjects?

In many respects, this question elicited the most data of any of the questions posed in this research project. In order to provide a basis for comparison between states and identification of national trends in relation to the numbers of students undertaking one or more Music subjects as part of their end-of-secondary-education assessment, the tables of comparative statistics cited in Section 6.9.1 has been confined to statistics for end-of-Year 12 enrolments only in Music subjects rather than those for Year 11 or for combined Year 11 and Year 12. (It should be noted that in some states—Victoria for example, end-of-secondary-education assessment incorporates assessment undertaken in both Years 11 and 12.)

Also, given the need to ensure as much consistency in any comparison between states, the total of discrete enrolments in *all* available music subjects taken at the

end-of-year 12 has been used for the ‘number of students’. Bearing in mind that some candidates may take two or more Music subjects at the end-of-year-12, the percentage figures calculated will represent a slightly inflated percentage of the total number of students enrolled for end-of-year-12 examinations. However, there will at least be consistency when making comparisons and identifying national trends.

As indicated above, the number of students undertaking Music subjects at Year 12 level may be viewed as one of the key indicators of the extent of music teaching in Australian secondary schools. Despite some gaps in the statistical data and some anomalies (such as in Queensland in 1995 and the large percentage in Tasmania in 1998), the following table (previously included as Table 6.27) indicates either a fairly consistent or slight increase in the percentage of the Year 12 student population who undertake music subjects.

Table 12.3

Percentage of students studying Music subjects at Year 12 in Australian States and Territories, 1988-2001

Year:	1988	1991	1992	1995	1998	2000	2001
ACT		8.39%*					6.89%
NSW	6.40%	5.40%*	5.50%	5.30%	5.90%	6.60%	7.10%
NT				3.38%	2.87%	5.56%	8.84%
QLD			5.66%*	0.23%	5.84%	6.41%	6.38%
SA			3.56%*				5.91%
TAS					12.58%	8.56%	9.43%
VIC			2.86%*	3.48%	3.89%	4.50%	4.20%
WA			2.48%*	2.65%	3.08%	3.27%	3.69%
Av. %		4.73%#					6.55%

the average of 1991/1992 percentages was calculated from the only available statistics from six states / territories (marked with *)—i.e. total of 28.35 ÷ 6 = 4.73

The situation in the Australian Capital Territory and Queensland has remained fairly constant over the past decade or so. Other states/territories, most notably the New South Wales, Northern Territory, South Australia, Victoria and Western Australia have seen modest increases over the decade. The situation in Tasmania has fluctuated over the past five years but overall appears to have the largest proportion of student population undertaking music studies at its end-of-secondary-education examinations followed closely by New South Wales. It is significant that the number of its end-of-secondary-education candidates in music subjects has, despite one or two exceptions, increased annually so that by 2001, the national average number of students taking music at year 12 was 6.55% compared with the comparable percentage from 1991/92 of 4.73.

12.7 Question 7

In each system, what is the number of hours of music instruction offered in each year level?

The following table (previously included as Table 7.8) indicates the situation in each state in relation to the number of hours of classroom music instruction (mandated or average estimates) in government schools according to year levels. It also allows for comparisons to be made between states.

Table 12.4

Hours allocated for Music Instruction in Government Schools in Australian States and Territories according to Year Levels, 2002

Level	Primary	Years 7/8	Years 9/10	Years 11/12
State				
ACT	No prescribed time requirement	Elective Music	Elective Music	Elective Music
NSW	Although no prescribed time requirement, 1990 legislation mandates music instruction in each year of primary school.	Mandated course in yrs 7/8 requires 100 indicative hrs for School Cert.	Elective Music as 100/200/300 indicative hrs.	Prelim and HSC Music courses require 120 indicative hours each.
NT	Av. weekly 1.25 hrs or 50 min lessons p.w. for core music with additional co- and extra-curricular music if specialist; less if no specialist	Year 8—No core Music, but 3.5 hrs p.w. if Elective Music plus additional time for co- and extra-curricular music.	No core Music, but 3.5 hrs p.w. if Elective Music plus additional time for co- and extra-curricular music.	No core Music, but 3.5 hrs p.w. if Elective Music plus additional time for co- and extra-curricular music.
QLD	Recommended 1.5 hrs p.w. but c.87% of students receive 0.5 hrs p.w.	In Yr 8 students typically receive 4 hrs p.w. for one semester.	Music Elective—typically 4 hrs p.w. for one semester.	Music subjects require 55 hrs for each semester / 110 hrs for the whole year.
SA	Av. of one lesson p.w.	In Yr 8 students receive 5 x 40 min lessons in Music for one term of the school year.	Elective Music between 160 and 220 mins per week.	SSABSA Music allocation consistent with other subjects at this level.
TAS	Av. of 30 to 60 mins p.w.	Estimated 1 to 2 hrs p.w. when offered	TASSAB Music courses offered; A course = 25 hrs, B courses = 100 hrs, C courses = 150 hrs.	TASSAB Music courses offered; A course = 25 hrs, B courses = 100 hrs, C courses = 150 hrs.
VIC	No mandated hours of music instruction—will depend on staffing.	No mandated hours of music instruction—will depend on staffing.	No mandated hours of music instruction—will depend on staffing.	VCE Music units (2 required in Yr 12 for each subject) each requires 50 hrs of classroom instruction
WA	No prescribed time requirement.	No prescribed time requirement.	No prescribed time requirement.	Prescribed time requirement as for other subjects taken for TEE or non-TEE music subjects.

The situation in independent and Catholic schools is impossible to ascertain due to lack of data.

As can be seen, the situation varies considerably between states and territories. In some states/territories—the Australian Capital Territory, New South Wales, Victoria and Western Australia, there is no weekly period of time prescribed or mandated for [class / core] music instruction at the primary level in government schools. In other states and territories, there are either recommended or prescribed minima or average of hours to be allocated for music instruction at primary level—in Northern Territory, it is assumed that music will be taught for an average of 1.25 per week, in Queensland for 1.5 hours per week and in Tasmania for between 30 and 60 minutes per week. In South Australia, while it is assumed that primary school students will receive at least one music lesson per week, this is not mandated and indeed some school principals are satisfied to consider choir time as representing classroom music instruction.

At secondary level, the only state to have mandated music studies is New South Wales where students must undertake a music subject with a minimum of 100 indicative hours in year 7, 8, 9 or 10 as part of the requirements for the New South Wales School Certificate. Other states assume that Music will be available as an elective from Years 7 and 8 through to Years 11 and/or 12 when Music may be taken as part of the end-of-secondary-education examinations. A notable feature of the music studies at the secondary level in Australia is the lack of uniformity in the expectations of education authorities regarding core music studies at secondary level where subject specialist (rather than generalist) teachers are by far the norm.

12.8 Question 8

Of those hours, how many are devoted to core (mandatory, where it exists) curriculum and how many to music electives?

Table 12.4 above provides a summary of the situation in each state in regarding the number of hours of classroom music instruction (mandated or average estimates) and elective music studies in government schools. The table also allows for comparisons to be made between states.

Typically, whether music instruction is prescribed or recommended, it is expected that music will be included in the primary school curriculum for a minimum of one 30-minute lesson per week through to lessons totalling 1.5 hours per week. There is also the expectation in most states that music will be taught in Years 7 and/or 8 with the time allocation being from 1 to 2 hours through to 4 hours per week. Aside from the situation in New South Wales where students in their Years 7 to 10 must complete a minimum of 100 indicative hours in music in one of their years to gain the NSW School Certificate, music is an elective subject for study from Year 9 through to Year 12 varying time allocations. Typically the time allocation is between 100 and 120 for each year-long music subject.

The situation in Independent and Catholic schools is impossible to ascertain due to lack of data; however, the situation at Years 11 and 12 where music subjects may be taken for end-of-secondary-education qualification, the same time allocations apply to students across all systems.

12.9 Question 9

In each system, how many hours of instruction/participation are devoted to extra-curricular music activities? (this can only be an estimate)

Overall, there was little statistical data and certainly no uniform data about the number of hours devoted to extra-curricular music activities in schools. The best that could be done by most State Investigators was to report on the range of school music extra-curricular activities and where possible to give an estimate of the number of hours. Depending on the type of school—primary or secondary—and the category of school—government, Independent or Catholic school—the range of activities and the time allocated to extra-curricula music activities varies widely. Where a structured extra-curricular primary school band program is in place—as in Tasmania—there are additional ensemble rehearsal requirements of between 60 and 90 minutes per week to the small group instrumental music lesson of between 30 and 60 minutes per week. Otherwise, extra-curricular music activities vary so much that it is impossible to make any reliable estimate of the number of hours allocated to such activities.

12.10 Question 10

Compared to the previous period, are school music programs constrained or supported by: a) availability of trained music teachers, and b) adequacy of music facilities, equipment, teaching materials?

As indicated previously, this question has highlighted several important problem areas, not only in relation to issues of the supply of specialist music teachers and the adequacy of music facilities, and equipment, but also in relation to broader policy issues.

One of these issues is a long-standing one—namely the unrealistic expectation, particularly of government primary schools, that classroom music will be properly taught by generalist primary school teachers. In reality this does not occur as it should in several states—in New South Wales, to some extent at least in the Northern Territory and South Australia, and in Victoria. The chief problems associated with this issue are:

- There is a mismatch between the extent—in terms of time allocation and therefore of curriculum content—of music curriculum studies undertaken by prospective teachers in their pre-service teacher education courses and the expectations of education authorities and/or the school in relation to classroom music teaching
- There is also a lack of teacher professional development opportunities particularly for primary school music teachers with many states adopting the

policy of leaving in-service education to teacher professional associations to provide

- Related in part at least to the lack of teacher professional development is a decline in the availability of curriculum support staff; evidence was presented that Music Branch or similar curriculum support had been dispensed with and, although there have been some appointments of Arts Curriculum Officers (such as in Western Australia), these appointments are often non-music specific.
- While there is a policy in place that classroom music teaching at the primary level should be undertaken by generalist teachers, the argument for the provision of musically-qualified teachers to ensure that music teaching takes place loses creditability.
- The frequently referred to ‘over-crowded curriculum’ at the primary school level which has seen the introduction of new curriculum areas such as mandatory LOTE or Information Technology has resulted in less time being available for class music teaching; in addition, the inclusion of five art forms (or strands) instead of the traditional two (Music and Visual Art) has resulted not only in a further decline in the available time for teaching music but has had repercussions for teacher education where many institutions have felt compelled to introduce a wider range of arts areas to their arts curriculum studies.

At the secondary level, schools—both non-government and government—appear to have higher staffing levels and better infrastructure in terms of teaching space and equipment as well as being better funded overall than the primary school sector. With one or two exceptions, the availability of qualified secondary music specialists does not appear to be a significant issue.

In some states, the funding of instrumental teaching still appears to be a problem, particularly at the primary school level.

12.11 Question 11

At tertiary level in each state, how many hours of instruction are provided in music/music pedagogy to students of primary school teaching?

Despite the limited data available, statistics from the ACT and New South Wales indicate a significant decline in the amount of music curriculum studies in course of generalist primary teacher education. There is also evidence of a significant decline in South Australia as well. Reasons for this decline have already been outlined—an increasingly crowded primary school curriculum and the expansion of The Arts from Music and Visual Arts to five arts areas with a consequent decrease in time allocation for music curriculum studies. This situation is likely to be fairly uniform across all primary teacher education courses in Australia. The result is that generalist primary teaching graduates, unless they have undertaken elective music and/or music education units within their courses, are unlikely to be sufficiently competent or confident to teach music effectively to their classes.

The situation regarding the preparation of specialist secondary music teachers is somewhat more optimistic. There is evidence from Queensland and Victoria that there has been an overall increase—presumably meeting the demand for secondary specialist music teachers—in the number of secondary music education graduates. The implication here is that, despite the rhetoric included in primary curriculum framework documents in some states that music is an integral part of primary arts education, if music is not being effectively taught at the primary level because of a lack of skills and knowledge among generalist primary teachers and there is not adequate provision for music specialists in primary schools, there may be a shift towards music being taught solely at the secondary school level and becoming merely an extra-curricular offering in primary schools.

From a cognitive-developmental perspective, there is considerable evidence to suggest that music learning should take place from the Early Childhood Education levels if children are to receive an effective education in music. The current situation in Australia from the perspective of generalist primary teacher preparation is that, with such limited time allocations for music curriculum studies being presumably uniform across all Australian primary teacher education courses, there is little chance that primary teachers will be capable of implementing music curriculum in their classrooms.

12.12 Recommendations

Due to the limited nature of the statistical data available from the states and territories, the usefulness of the findings is less than had been hoped. Nevertheless, one of the most important findings to emerge from the research is the fact that there is the lack of uniform policies and practices in relation to the collection of statistical data about music education at the state and territory level. Indeed, aside from statistics collected, end-of-secondary-education assessment authorities (which have a statutory obligation to do so), for whatever reason, state and territory education departments either do not collect or (as has been evident on some occasions) are unwilling to release statistical state on music education. This has made the identification of trends at both state/territory and national levels almost impossible in most instances.

During the mid 1960s, Graham Bartle, then Senior Lecturer in School Music at the University of Melbourne, was commissioned by the Australian Council for Educational Research (with funding from the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation) to undertake a nation-wide survey of music education that involved approximately 150 schools. The report of this research was subsequently published as *Music in Australian Schools* (ACER, 1968). Bartle's findings at that time were that music in primary schools at the time was patchy, depending on whether the class teacher had any interest or expertise in music, and that even though secondary school music was more accepted it was rarely offered beyond the year 8 level. Major recommendations included details for employing itinerant instrumental teachers in government schools who could help lay the foundation for further development of the subject in secondary schools by beginning instrumental training at the primary school level.

Despite some shortcomings in this research study, it has nevertheless set a useful benchmark in relation to several aspects of music education policy and practice and with a more detailed examination of some of these issues, a replication study could prove most useful as a means of identifying trends in the overall pattern of development in music education in Australian schools.

The key recommendation from the current research is the need for a comprehensive national survey of school music education in Australia. The present research has been undertaken on a very limited budget and the scope of its research questions has necessarily been limited by the available funding. Having identified some of the current issues in music education and also the lack of available data—particularly longitudinal data—from government education authorities as well as the almost total lack of information from the Independent and Catholic school systems, a large-scale and adequately funded research project needs to be undertaken.

Accordingly, there is a need for the Music Council of Australia together with professional associations such as the Australian Society for Music Education and/or the Australian Association for Research in Music Education and with music industry groups such as the Australian Music Association to form a strategic alliance with one or more university partners to prepare an application for an Australian Research Council Linkage Grant. The application should be for sufficient funding to allow for a comprehensive survey of a representative sample of Australian schools of all types—primary, secondary, senior secondary and other ‘mixed-age’ (such as there are in Northern Territory)—and in all categories—government, Independent and Catholic schools. Ideally, the study should also draw on statistics that may also be available from state/territory education departments that may not have been available for the present study. To this end, representation should also be made to national and/or peak bodies such as the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, the Australian College of Educators, National Council of Independent Schools, the National Council of the Australian Council of Deans of Education, and the Australia Council to enlist their cooperation in locating data.