



REVIEW TO INFORM A BETTER AND FAIRER EDUCATION SYSTEM

1 August 2023

The Access to Music for Inclusion and Equity (AMIE) network would like to thank the Expert Panel for the opportunity to submit recommendations to inform a better and fairer education system for Australian children and youth. AMIE represents a collective of scholars and innovative music professionals from around Australia working to ensure that the lives of all children and young people, no matter their background, ability, or circumstance, are enriched by a creative and culturally responsive music education.

Acknowledging that this review sits within a broader context of education systems change, we urge the Federal and State and Territory Governments to **reposition music education from a privilege reserved for the wealthy or talented few to a public good**. Responding to the Review's Terms of Reference 1-4, this paradigm shift is particularly timely in:

1. **Driving real improvements in student outcomes:** There is a reliable association between music lessons and academic achievement, irrespective of children's age, engagement in other activities, family income, and parent education levels¹.
2. **Improving student mental health and wellbeing:** Music improves mental health and wellbeing through its effects on cognitive functions, mood, and social connections. Creative music-making in particular supports marginalized youth through effects on social and cultural inclusion and connection, self-esteem, and empowerment².
3. **Supporting schools to attract and retain teachers:** Leveraging existing expertise and resources across multiple sectors will support teacher skill development, wellbeing and confidence, supporting recommendations 1, 2, 5, 7, 16 of the Quality Initial Teacher Education Review³.
4. **Ensuring that decision-making is research-informed:** Implementation priorities prioritise Australia's most vulnerable and disadvantaged youth while presenting key opportunities for ongoing evaluation of music education provisions.

¹ Degé, F., Wehrum, S., Stark, R., & Schwarzer, G. (2014). Music lessons and academic self-concept in 12- to 14-year-old children. *Musicae Scientiae*, 18(2), 203–215.

² Dingle, G. A., Sharman, L. S., Bauer, Z.... & Wright, O. R. L. (2021). How do music activities affect health and well-being? A scoping review of studies examining psychosocial mechanisms. *Frontiers in psychology*, 12, 713818.

³ Commonwealth of Australia (2021) [Next steps: Report of the quality initial teacher education review](#)

To secure an equitable opportunity for every child across Australia “to receive an education that includes culture, creativity, humanities and the arts”⁴, including those often excluded by mainstream schooling, we make 3 recommendations based upon an extensive body of international research and aligning with national policy agendas:

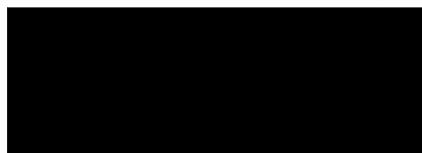
- | | |
|--|---|
| Rec 1 Creative Education | Invest in music education for <i>every</i> child across Australia, supporting schools and teachers to interpret curricular directives in line with local cultures and needs. |
| Rec 2 Networked Support | Leverage existing infrastructure and government funding to support schools through an allied network of music expertise and resources, ensuring equitable and inclusive access to a creative and culturally responsive music education. |
| Rec 3 A Sustainable Workforce | Attract and retain music teachers through an allied network of support and the provision of opportunities for ongoing professional skill development focused on equity and inclusion. |

We recommend that this process be initiated through three implementation priorities, beginning with securing music provisions for Australia’s most vulnerable and disadvantaged youth, to sustainably building teacher capacities to address diversity, equity, and inclusion through music, to ensuring that every Australian primary school can meet curricular mandates in creative and culturally responsive ways.

Employing a systems-wide approach to successfully achieve these priorities, we outline four key targets focusing on different support mechanisms to ensure equitable access to music education for every child across Australia.

We would be happy to provide further evidence or information to the committee.

Yours Sincerely on behalf of the AMIE network,



Dr. Alexis Anja Kallio
Contact person, Access to Music for Inclusion and Equity network (AMIE)
Deputy Director (Research)
Queensland Conservatorium, Griffith University



⁴ Commonwealth of Australia (2023). [*Revive: A place for every story, a story for every place.*](#)

BACKGROUND: MUSIC EDUCATION AS A PUBLIC GOOD

Music education is a life-enhancing and fundamental part of being human, with the power to change and shape lives. Music underpins children's social and emotional development and is woven through the cultural fabric of our society. Music supports social inclusion⁵, school engagement⁶, mental health and wellbeing⁷, cognitive function⁸, and even helps to prevent youth crime⁹. Amidst a post-pandemic mental health crisis, rising fundamentalism and intolerance, and intensifying societal inequity, we cannot afford to ignore the profound evidence for the individual and social benefits of music. Indeed, these potentials are so significant that UNESCO has proclaimed the arts and culture as a “**global public good**”¹⁰.

And yet, two-thirds of Australian primary school and one-third of secondary **students do not have access to any school music education**¹¹. There is limited understanding of the types of educational activities that support cognitive development and improved student outcomes, wellbeing, and inclusion. As a result, current music education offerings reflect a broken system of failed curricular mandates¹², the rapid erosion of classroom music, and widespread inequity between schools, communities, and regions¹³¹⁴¹⁵. Furthermore, compulsory music in general primary teacher education has declined by 53% since 2009, meaning that student teachers on average only have 8 hours to develop essential skills and creative confidence¹⁶. The often-narrow focus on western art music styles and instruments also has significant implications for the inclusion and equity¹⁷ of First Nations students and those from language backgrounds other than English, as teachers feel ill equipped to engage music's potential to connect with diverse cultures while also shaping new modes of being and belonging in the world.

Such barriers to music education do not only disadvantage young Australians musically or academically, but impede equity, wellbeing, and inclusion more broadly. Through the three recommendations in this submission, we propose that **all children across Australia ought to have equitable access to intentional, inclusive, creative, and culturally responsive music education**. In achieving this important step towards equity and inclusion through music, we invest in the academic, social, emotional, and creative prosperity of our nation and can begin to address some of the most complex social challenges of our time.

⁵ Marsh, K. (2019). Music as dialogic space in the promotion of peace, empathy, and social inclusion. *International journal of community music*, 12(3), 301-316.

⁶ Crawford, R. (2017). Creating unity through celebrating diversity: A case study that explores the impact of music education on refugee background students. *International Journal of Music Education*, 35(3), 343-356.

⁷ Bradley, D., & Hess, J. (Eds.). (2021). *Trauma and resilience in music education: Haunted melodies*. Routledge.

⁸ Collins, A., Dwyer, R. M., & Date, A. (2020). *Music education: A sound investment*. Alberts Tony Foundation.

⁹ Kallio, A.A. (2022). The transformative potentials and politics of music in juvenile justice settings. *Music Education Research* 24(4), 405-416.

¹⁰ [1] UNESCO. (2022). [Reshaping policies for creativity: addressing culture as a public good](#).

¹¹ Brasche, I., & Thorn, B. (2018) Addressing dimensions of “The Great Moral Wrong”: How inequity in music education is polarizing the academic potential of Australian students, *Arts Education Policy Review*, 119(3), 124-136.

¹² ACARA (2023). *Australian Curriculum: Music*; AITSL (2023). *Music connects language and social skills*.

¹³ Pascoe, R., Leong, S., MacCallum, J., Mackinlay, E., Marsh, K., Smith, B., Church, T., & Winterton, A. (2005). *National review of school music education: Augmenting the diminished*. Australian Government.

¹⁴ Government of South Australia. (2018). *Music for a world class education: Music Education Strategy 2019 to 2029*.

¹⁵ Parliament of Victoria. (2013). *Inquiry into the extent, benefits and potential of music education in Victorian schools*. Education and Training Committee.

¹⁶ Collins, A. & Hocking, R. (2023) *Fading Notes: the State of Music Education for the Next Generation of Primary Teachers – Summary Report*. Alberts | The Tony Foundation.

¹⁷ Campbell, P. S. (2021). Musica exotica, multiculturalism, and school music. *Visions of Research in Music Education*, 16(5), 20.

RECOMMENDATION 1 - CREATIVE EDUCATION

Invest in music education as a public good for *every* child across Australia, supporting schools and teachers to interpret curricular directives in line with local cultures and needs.

- Secure **1 hour of music lessons for every student per week** for grades F-8 supported by opportunities to join co-curricular groups such as choir, learning an instrument, or engage with styles of music that reflect local community identities and cultures.
- Equip all primary schoolteachers with **musical skills and confidence** to interpret curricular directives in line with local needs, cultures, and abilities as part of general primary teacher education supported by a broader allied network of expertise and resources¹⁸.

RECOMMENDATION 2 - NETWORKED SUPPORT

Leverage existing infrastructure and government funding to support schools in all regions through an allied network of expertise and resources, ensuring equitable and inclusive access to a creative and culturally responsive music education.

- Employ regional music and culture **specialists to liaise between schools** and professional music organisations, tertiary institutions (including regional hubs), Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders and musicians, and cultural and community programs and services.
- **Expand and diversify teacher mentoring programs** to build teacher capacities relating to equity and diversity in music education at all career stages¹⁹, particularly in relation to First Nations music, culture, and knowledge systems²⁰, curricular adaptation for varied abilities²¹, and the cultural and linguistic diversity of local communities²².

RECOMMENDATION 3 - A SUSTAINABLE WORKFORCE

Attract and retain teachers through an allied network of support and providing opportunities for ongoing skills development focused on equity and inclusion issues.

- **Expand tertiary music and music teacher education** to prepare graduates to work with diverse cultures and abilities, but also in new settings such as youth justice, healthcare, social services etc. ensuring life-long and inter-sectoral support for music as a public good²³.
- Fund professional development opportunities for music, culture, or community professionals to develop an **allied inter-sectoral network** to deliver music education for students where teachers may be unavailable or overextended²⁴.

¹⁸ Commonwealth of Australia (2023). [Strong Beginnings: Report of the Teacher Education Expert Panel](#).

¹⁹ E.g., the Australian Youth Orchestra's [National Music Teacher Mentoring Program](#), [DUET Music Learning and Mentoring program](#), [SA Music Education Strategy](#)

²⁰ Webb, M., & Bracknell, C. (2021). Educative power and the respectful curricular inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music. In Kallio, A.A., Westerlund, H., Karlsen, S., Marsh, K., & Saether, E. (Eds). [The politics of diversity in music education](#). Springer.

²¹ Bell, A. P., Bonin, D., Pethrick, H., Antwi-Nsiah, A., & Matterson, B. (2020). Hacking, disability, and music education. *International Journal of Music Education*, 38(4), 657-672.

²² Barton, G., & Riddle, S. (2022). Culturally responsive and meaningful music education: Multimodality, meaning-making, and communication in diverse learning contexts. *Research Studies in Music Education*, 44(2), 345-362.

²³ Westerlund, H., & Gaunt, H. (2021). [Expanding professionalism in music and higher music education: A changing game](#). Taylor & Francis.

²⁴ Canham, N. (2021). [Preparing musicians for precarious work: Transformational approaches to music careers education](#). Routledge.

IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES

To implement these recommendations, we suggest that youth who have already fallen behind be prioritised as those who require the most support for societal and school reintegration. We then propose to expand these benefits to every child and young person by ensuring that teachers are equipped and supported by an allied network to provide weekly music classes in all primary and secondary schools.

- | | |
|------------|--|
| Short term | Representing an intensified snapshot of wellbeing, academic, school-engagement, equity, and inclusion challenges, the impact of providing creative and culturally responsive music lessons for all incarcerated youth would be profound. Already identified as in urgent need of innovative solutions, youth justice centres also represent an ideal context to generate a robust evidence base for the benefits of music education. |
| Mid term | Expand and diversify teacher mentoring and professional development programs to build teacher capacities to address equity and inclusion through music education at every career stage. These programs should initially foster generalist classroom teachers' capacities to engage with First Nations music, cultures, and knowledge systems as well as intentional and creative music-making for students with (dis)abilities. |
| Long term | Ensure that every Australian school can meet curricular mandates in creative and culturally responsive ways by funding a qualified music educator or a partnered delivery model (utilising an allied network of music providers coordinated by regional music and culture specialists) to secure weekly music lessons and support the vibrant musical life of every school that also connects with local communities and cultures. |

TARGETS

Employing a systems-wide approach to achieve these priorities, we outline four key targets focusing on different support mechanisms to ensure equitable access to intentional, inclusive, creative, and culturally responsive music education for every child across Australia. Each target also represents an opportunity for formative evaluation.

1. **The regular and consistent provision of music education for Australia's most vulnerable and disadvantaged youth** in youth detention centres, as contexts already identified as highly inequitable and in urgent need of innovative education and rehabilitation programs.
2. **Establish an inter-sectoral inclusion and equity mentoring framework for generalist primary school teachers**, particularly those who lack experience or confidence with music, work in areas of significant disadvantage or diversity, or in rural and remote areas.
3. **Employ regional music and culture specialists** in areas of significant disadvantage or diversity and in rural and remote areas to liaise between music teachers of grades F-8 and other organisations and services, to develop an allied network of resources and support.
4. **Implement at least one compulsory music education unit in every tertiary primary education degree, and at least one compulsory pedagogy unit in every tertiary music degree** to ensure a diverse and well-equipped workforce for schools and communities.

1 August 2023

Dear Expert Panel

I write on behalf of the Australian Society for Music Education (ASME) in strong support of the response by **The Access to Music for Inclusion and Equity (AMIE) network** to the National School Review Agreement Consultation Paper.

ASME aims to support, represent, and advocate for music education at all levels and sectors in Australia as an integral part of education and community life. Our approximate 1,000 members are music educators in early childhood settings, primary and secondary schools, tertiary institutions, and community and professional music organisations across the country. Formed in 1967, ASME is Australia's only affiliate organisation of the International Society for Music Education (ISME), which exists under the auspices of UNESCO's Music Council.

The AMIE network submission speaks directly to the mission of ASME. Access is the most significant issue facing school music education in Australia. We advocate for every F-8 school student in the country to have access to a sustained, creative, and culturally responsive school music education that is contextualised for their local community. Vulnerable and disadvantaged children are in the most urgent need of music education's benefits, including improvements to student outcomes, engagement, and mental health and wellbeing (Recommendation 1). Australian school music education is currently supported by a range of organisations that work in isolation under precarious conditions, including numerous volunteer professional teacher associations, non-profit community music programs, and commercial enterprises. The impact of these existing programs could be amplified through an allied network of music expertise and resources supported by federal and state government infrastructure and funding (Recommendation 2). Amidst a global teacher shortage, there is a critical need to attract and retain music teachers. An allied network would support music teachers to flourish and allow for targeted professional development addressing equity and inclusion (Recommendation 3).

ASME is eager to contribute to a systems-wide approach to improve Australian school music education. We would be happy to provide further evidence and information to the panel.

Yours sincerely

Dr Jason Goopy
President
Australian Society for Music Education



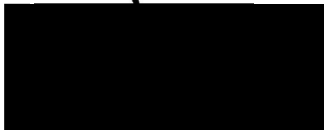
31 July 2023

The International Society of Music Education endorses the submission by AMIE “Music Education as Public Good”. The recommendations align with the UNESCO Rights of the Child, and underpin our organisation’s mission to support the provision of music education to every individual in the world.

We are the premier International Music Education Organisation in the world, are affiliated to the International Music Council and UNESCO and represent members in more than eighty countries. Accordingly, the International Society of Music Education unreservedly supports the recommendations provided by AMIE:

1. Investing in music for every child across Australia
2. Leveraging support for schools and teachers to provide music education for all, and
3. Attracting and retaining a workforce in music education

Signed:



Dr. Bo Wah Leung
President, ISME

ISME is affiliated to the International Music Council and UNESCO
ISME has members in more than eighty countries
ISME is the premiere international organisation for music education
ISME respects all musics and all cultures
ISME believes that every individual has a right to music education

Faithfully submitted,



Ryan Zellner, Ph.D.
CEO, ISME

