

The provision of classroom music programs to regional Victorian primary schools

Jennifer Heinrich

La Trobe University, Bendigo.

Abstract

Anecdotal evidence suggests that many schools in rural areas, do not operate classroom music programs due to a shortage of qualified staff and with access to tertiary music education rapidly diminishing in regional Victoria, there is little indication that the situation will improve.

This paper reports on a mixed methods research project that shows numbers and types of music programs operating in rural primary schools and universities, then how music teachers perceived their roles and undergraduate preparation for music teaching.

The findings show that tertiary specialist music education has all but disappeared from regional Victoria. Principals are struggling to find staff to teach music in their schools and only a small percentage of responding music teachers were qualified specialists. Pre-service training in music is seen to be lacking in both quantity and quality and teachers are highly critical of the placement of music within the Arts Key Learning Area particularly when it comes to reporting.

The article concludes that despite the arts' inclusion in the new *Australian Curriculum*, Victorian primary schools students will not have equality of access to music education until there is an increase in status/funding of music education and accordingly, in the number of music teachers being educated.

Key words: Classroom music programs, Primary schools, Pre-service training in music, Music within the Arts Key Learning Area, Australian Curriculum

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In November 2005, Professor Margaret Seares reported to the Honorable Dr. Brendan Nelson, Minister for Education, Science and Training on what was the most extensive review of music in the history of Australian education. In The National Review of School Music Education (NRSME) Seares stated that the review revealed:

cycles of neglect and inequity which impact to the detriment of too many young Australians, particularly those in geographically and socially disadvantaged areas. (DEST, 2005, p. iii)

Existing literature reveals that there have been some initiatives in response to the review's recommendations (Lierse, 1995-6; Pascoe, 2007; Stevens, 2010). However seven years on, little evidence was found to indicate that these initiatives have had a significant impact on the number of primary music programs operating in regional Victoria. Data gathered show that a large percentage of schools in rural regions of Victoria are missing out on a music education program and that much of what is being taught is neither sequential nor taught by qualified staff.

Background to the study

Essentially, the impetus for this research was driven by a professional concern in the realm of teacher education. The researcher has taught music in primary and secondary schools for over twenty years and for the last ten, she has also taught in undergraduate primary teacher education, writing and teaching music elective units. During this time, regular requests were received from local school principals, asking for “a good music graduate” while music electives at the university were slowly being discontinued. The question of a connection between the two arose and a concern over just how widespread the problem might be. Was this the only university being forced to cut music education options for students? Were principals all over country Victoria struggling to find music teachers and how did currently practicing music teachers perceive the situation? This study therefore examined the current issues pertaining to the provision of music education in schools and universities in regional Victoria, gathering quantitative and qualitative data from all parties involved, including universities, music teachers and schools. National and international literature were examined at length in order to place the findings in context, with a particular focus on Australian government education policy and curriculum which directly affect all three parties in the provision ‘chain’.

What defines a “music teacher”?

For the purposes of the study, the term “music teacher” or “music specialist” referred to the *role* of the teacher rather than to their qualifications (unless otherwise specified). Music teachers surveyed for this study were responsible for music programs that operate for a full class of children, usually during “release time” for the generalist teacher.

Literature review

The literature reviewed examined the reasons why music education should be offered in primary schools. This exploration provided authoritative justification for music educators’ belief that music is of benefit to children and school programs. The review also examined the role of undergraduate teacher education and government policy and curriculum.

Music education for children: why provide it?

When examining the value of music in education, the literature revealed a number of reasons why the discipline should be taught at primary school level. Studies into community attitudes showed that the majority of public would like to see music and the arts occupy a more central role in school education (Australian Music Association, 2001; Costantoura, 2000; DEST, 2005). It was also argued that all children, regardless of where they live or what type of school they attend have equal rights to a quality music education (DEST, 2005; Global Access Partners, 2011).

Despite links often being made between the study of music and success in other subject areas, there were mixed findings in this area. Some suggested that this is likely (Costa-Giomi, 2004; Ilari, 2003; Scripp, 2003), while others remained more reserved in their conclusions (Forgeard, Winner, Norton, & Schlaug, 2008; Hetland, 2000). There was no conclusive evidence showing that the connection is direct rather than indirect, though current research is seeking to establish this (Forgeard et al., 2008). The literature did however, strongly support the links between the study of a musical instrument and the accelerated development of some parts of the brain (Gazzaniga, 2004; Geoghegan, 2004; Ho, Cheung, & Chan, 2003). Classroom music programs, it was found, are more likely to positively influence other areas of student well-being such as self-esteem, ability to work in a team, improved

school attendance, increased confidence, ability to persist and decreased anger and stress (Bryce, 2004; Caldwell, Vaughan, & Harris, 2011; Davies-Splitter, 2009; Fiske, 1999).

A strong argument was made for the value of music in its own right as part of a well-rounded education (Coulter et al., 1995; Eisner, 1998; Stefanakis, 2002) as well as for the purposes of vocation (Global Access Partners, 2011). There was a considerable body of literature on the importance of arts education in fostering creative and innovative leadership (Sharp & Metais, 2000; Temmerman, 2006b; Winner & Hetland, 2007) and on the shift away from traditional teacher-dominated learning to curricula with a greater emphasis on social and emotional learning (Clouder et al., 2008; OECD, 2001; UNESCO, 2007). In addition, it was pointed out that no type of education can intrinsically be considered of value without taking into consideration the appropriateness of content and the quality of teaching (Bowman, 2010; Hodges & O'Connell, 2005; Temmerman, 2008).

Policy, curriculum and funding

To understand how policy and curriculum affect music education in Victoria, the study examined how they are represented in the broader context of Australian education policy. How music is represented was found to have a bearing on how it is perceived by the community together with staff and students in schools. (DEST, 2005). The literature showed that music is grouped with four other subject areas in a Key Learning Area that is not currently regarded as compulsory in schools except in Queensland (MCEECDTA, 2008). This is part of a world-wide trend to combine related disciplines, possibly because of economic rationalism, the redistribution of scarce resources and a fear of falling educational standards (Watson, 1999, p. 221). In many cases this has resulted in music "all but disappearing from the radar" (DEST, 2005, p. 106). It was found that there is a degree of 'lip service' paid to the

importance of the subject in policy documents that is not followed through in curriculum or its implementation (Bamford, 2006, p. 11) and it was noted that policy without appropriate funding and infrastructure does not produce positive outcomes (Champion, 2011; Kelly, 1999). In addition, the Victorian Essential Learning Standards were seen to be too general to be useful to teachers in writing curricula for their schools (Gill, 2007; Watson & Forrest, 2005).

The Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) *Specialist Area Guidelines* require a music teacher in Victoria to have a:

- (a) Major study in Music which includes Practical Music *or*
- (b) Major study in Music *together with* AMEB Grade VI or Year 12 Practical music *or*
- (c) Major study in Music which includes Practical Music specialising in one or more musical instruments (2008, p. 4).

When the Institute refers to a "major", they require a study of six discipline units (single semester subjects) throughout a four-year Bachelor of Teaching degree (2008, p. 2). However, the integrity of the guidelines is undermined by the opening statement which reads:

Nothing in the following implies a requirement by the Institute for employers to insist that a registered teacher should hold particular specialist area qualifications to teach in particular areas (2008, p. 1).

Therefore, despite the guidelines being the *preferred* background for music teachers, principals are in no way obliged to insist that the staff they employ to run music programs have these qualifications. It is possible to conclude that the Institute itself is aware of how difficult it can be to employ teachers that meet the specifications.

Some writers argued that the emphasis on literacy and numeracy has had a negative impact in Australian schools on other subject areas, including music and the other arts (Alter,

Hays, & O'Hara, 2009; Gibson & Anderson, 2008; Lierse, 1995-6). This was shown to be the case in several other countries also such as the USA, UK, France, Hong Kong and Canada (McMurrer, 2008; Sharp & Metais, 2000). The emphasis on literacy and numeracy was seen to be exacerbated by NAPLAN testing and the *My Schools* website in Australia (Gill, 2011; Lierse, 1997; Santiago, Donaldson, Herman, & Shewbridge, 2011).

Pre-service teacher education

Within the theme of teacher education, several areas of concern arose in the literature. One was the reduction of time allotted to arts study within generalist primary teacher education (Coulter et al., 1995; DEST, 2005; Munday & Smith, 2010; Temmerman, 2006a). This theme was linked to the issue of funding reductions and the amalgamation of music with other art forms in the curriculum (Global Access Partners, 2011). The reduction of music from undergraduate teaching courses applied to both generalist and specialist music teaching with the emergence of generic “arts amalgam” subjects and less opportunities to specialise (Temmerman, 2006a). These factors resulted in inadequate levels of confidence and experience for generalists particularly and in some

cases specialists, to effectively deliver classroom music programs (Andrews, 2004; Sharp & Metais, 2000). A further disadvantage was that students often come to their tertiary studies with little or no school experience of music and the arts (Dinham, 2007; Jeanneret, 2007). In addition, the literature raised questions about the appropriateness of too much discipline-style content in teacher education courses (Holden & Button, 2006; Joseph & Heading, 2010; Temmerman, 1997) and whether or not it is practical to expect generalist teachers to deliver appropriate levels of music education to primary school students at all (Holden & Button, 2006; Stevens, 2003).

Methods

This study used a mixed methods approach, gathering both quantitative and qualitative data. In addition, internet and personal communication were used to gather data on tertiary music education opportunities for potential Victorian teachers. A ten-question survey was emailed to all state, Catholic and independent primary school principals in the five non-metropolitan Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) regions (see Figure 1 below). A second survey link for music teachers

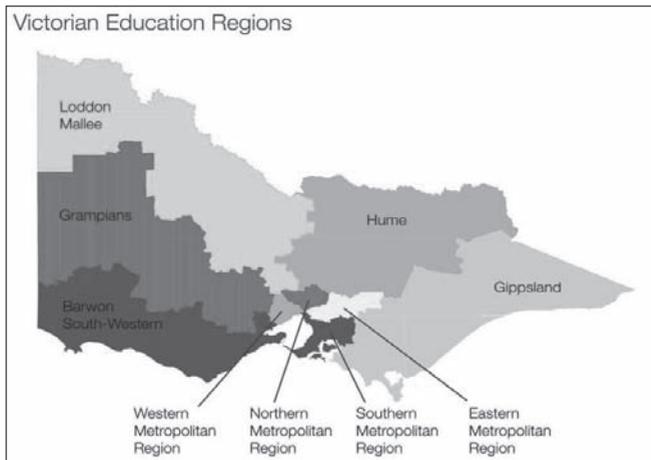


Figure 1: DEECD region locations (Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, 2009).

was included in the email for principals to forward if the school operated a classroom music program.

Upon return of the survey questionnaire, quantitative data were organized into tables and graphs representing the trends as statistics. Qualitative data was retrieved from the comments sections at the ends of questions in each of the two surveys. The data were analysed and grouped in accordance with similar themes. The results are shown and discussed in the three results sections following.

Results and discussion

1. Teacher education in regional Victorian universities

The Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) clearly outlines in its *Specialist Area Guidelines* what is required in order for a teacher in Victoria to be regarded as a music specialist (VIT, 2008). The following information places into perspective how difficult it is for tertiary students, particularly in rural areas, to achieve these qualifications.

The city

Some students from regional areas of Victoria elect to reside in Melbourne and study music in metropolitan universities. This is an expensive exercise involving away-from-home living expenses as well as standard costs associated with tertiary education. Across Victoria, teacher education is offered by nine universities. The majority of these are located in Melbourne as shown at Table 1 below.

Of the seven universities in Melbourne offering teacher education, three offer VIT-approved music specialist education: Melbourne and Monash Universities in the form of music degrees and Victoria University with its six VIT- approved music electives. The remaining five all offer arts amalgam subjects with Deakin and RMIT offering two music electives.

The country

Table 2 shows the primary teacher music education offered by regional universities (and regional campuses of city universities).

Table 1: Primary teacher music education available in Melbourne Universities (2011).

Teacher Education Facility	Degree(s) offered	Compulsory "arts" subject (with music component)	Music electives	Music major	Music degree
Deakin University	Bachelor of Ed.	1	2		
Monash University	Bachelor of Music and Bachelor of Education				√
Victoria University	B.Ed P-12 or B.Ed. (Early Childhood / primary)	1	6	√	
University of Melbourne	Bachelor of Music + Master of Teaching (secondary) or Master of Teaching (primary)				√
Australian Catholic University	Bachelor of Ed.	2			
La Trobe University	Bachelor of Teaching (Primary)	1			
RMIT University	Bachelor of Ed. (Primary) or Bachelor of Ed. (Primary and Arts expertise).	1	1 2		

There are no tertiary institutions in country Victoria offering a music degree, nor are there any that offer the six units of elective study required to meet VIT specialist guidelines for the subject area of music (Victoria University is the only institution in the state to offer this option). It is therefore not currently possible to qualify as a music specialist (in accordance with VIT guidelines) outside Melbourne. Most of the institutions above offer one compulsory arts amalgam unit for one semester within their B.Ed. courses with ACU Ballarat offering one elective and Deakin in Geelong, four.

2. Music Teachers' Survey

These results were gathered via an electronic survey forwarded to classroom music teachers by principals. Approximately 62% of responding principals said that they had a music program operating within their school ($n = 185$), but only 117 music teachers responded to the survey.

What is the education background of participating music teachers?

The majority of responding music teachers had studied a teaching degree with either a compulsory music/arts component or such a unit coupled with music electives. How many electives participants took was not asked, neither was the year in which study took place (it is no longer possible to undertake 6 discipline units of tertiary music study outside Melbourne.) It is therefore only possible to conclude that 22% of participating music teachers definitely have VIT-approved specialist qualifications. It is likely that *some* of those who studied more than ten years ago will have taken 6 discipline music electives and be similarly qualified, but unlikely that this is a large number or that any who studied more recently will have had this opportunity.

Table 2: Primary teacher music education in Victorian regional universities (2011)

Teacher Education Facility	Degree(s) Offered	Compulsory "arts" subject (with music component)	Music electives	Music major	Music degree
Deakin University (Geelong campus)	B.Ed.	2	4		
Deakin University (Warrnambool campus)	B.Ed. (Primary)	1			
Charles Sturt University (Albury/Wodonga campus)	B.Ed. (K-12) B.Ed. (Early childhood)	1			
Ballarat University	B.Ed. B.Ed. (Early childhood) Bachelor of Teaching (Early childhood education)	1			
Monash University (Gippsland campus)	Bachelor of primary education	1			
Australian Catholic University (Ballarat campus)	B.Ed. (Primary)	1	1		
Latrobe University (Bendigo and Mildura campuses)	B.Ed.	1			

Are the music programs being taught sequential in nature?

About 75% of music teachers initially described their music program as sequential. Despite this, in the comments, 44 participants (39% of the total) indicated that they would *like* to be offering a sequential program but for a variety of reasons, were unable to do so. This suggests that the true figure for participating teachers running a sequential program is likely closer to 61% than 75%.

What type of content is offered in music programs?

Singing and games are the most popular kinds of music content being taught by participating music teachers. It would be of interest to determine the nature of “games” being played in music classes. While it is optimal for students to be learning in an enjoyable environment, if the activities referred to are not educational, they are possibly a cause for concern. Again, while no-one would be likely to argue against the place of singing in a music program, even just for the joy of the experience, ideally it would be incorporated with specific educational outcomes in mind.

In the comments section, teachers were invited to list the “other” types of music content they were offering in their schools. Their

responses included: drama, creative movement, instrumental music, music technology, full school musicals, recorder and music theory.

Music’s status within the arts key learning area

Question 8 of the *Music Teachers’ Survey* asked for perceptions about music’s placement in the Australian Curriculum grouped with five other areas under one key learning area. Nearly half (45%) of respondents stated that they thought it had a negative impact on the subject area:

Each of those subjects need time to teach separately. You can’t expect it all to be taught in one forty minute lesson per week, especially music which is really another language.

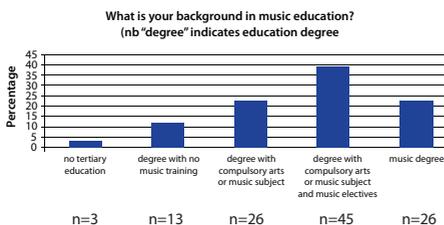
Common objections were that the subject areas (particularly visual and performing arts), are simply too different to be combined under one discipline area – a finding in support of the literature (DEST, 2005, pp. xii-xiii; Gill, 2007). Many also stated that this led to a “watering down” of subject content and a lack of appropriate time within the curriculum in which to teach music, also discussed in the literature (Alter et al., 2009; DEST, 2005; Lierse, 1995-6).

Reporting within the arts key learning area is not appropriate

A quarter of comments about music’s status within the arts key learning area pertained to the difficulties of reporting within the arts KLA, indicating that this is an issue of importance to practicing music teachers and worthy of note by curriculum writers:

With our reporting system music and art just get averaged out into a black blob! If a child excels in one area and not the other the result just comes out as average, which a comment can possibly overcome but it still looks bad (and there isn’t much room to comment anyway).

Figure 2: Study undertaken by currently practising music teachers.



Levels of satisfaction with music teacher education

The majority of participating teachers studied in Melbourne or rural Victoria. Although approximately 60% of students who studied in these institutions were satisfied with the music component of their education, only 15% were “very satisfied” and 24% were “dissatisfied” or “very dissatisfied”:

More interested in extending my knowledge rather than preparing me to teach small children the concepts and elements of music. Needed more practical ideas.

Many teachers made reference to the small amount of *time* dedicated to teaching music in their courses and to the *type of content* delivered in courses. The survey also showed that 68% of respondents would have done more music in their course if it had been available and that the amount of music offered in courses had significantly declined since the 1980s.

Dissatisfaction with tertiary music education content

A clear theme emerged regarding the lack of practical material pertaining to teaching and to the lack of instruction on how to structure a sequential music program:

...the content is generally quite irrelevant to the actual occupation, with many ideas being very outdated and unrealistic.

A more structured expectation of what kids would be expected to learn at each level.

This theme links closely earlier comments which revealed that nearly 40% of respondents would like to be offering a sequential music program but felt unable to do so. Many participants also referred to the importance of quality teaching in tertiary courses. It was suggested that those lecturers currently teaching in schools often made the best presenters.

A leaning towards Orff and Kodaly

Throughout the music teachers’ survey, there were regular references to Orff and Kodaly. Teachers indicated that the discovery of these approaches to teaching music had proven beneficial to their teaching and that they would have liked exposure to them earlier in their career:

I wish I had known about Orff during my training. I later was involved in VOSA and it totally changed my teaching...so much more relevant to primary students

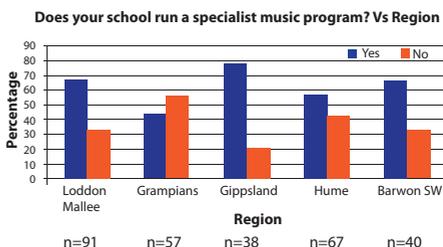
3. Principals’ survey

What percentage of participating schools operate a classroom music program?

There were 301 responses received to the principals’ survey with 38% indicating that they did not operate a classroom music program and 62% saying that they did. One respondent skipped the question. Figure 3 shows the DEECD location of schools with and without a classroom music program.

The Loddon Mallee, Grampians and Hume regions (all to the north of the state) had the greater number of schools *without* a music program in operation. The Grampians was the only region in the study that had a greater number of schools without a program (55%) than with (45%). Possible reasons for this are examined later in the report.

Figure 3: The location of music programs across rural Victoria.



Type of schools involved in the surveys

Principals were also asked what type of school they worked in.

This information showed that while the state and Catholic schools’ percentages for having a music program sit very close to the overall percentage (61.7%), the independent schools’ figure is much higher (84.2%). The figures indicate that there is more emphasis on music programs in independent schools than in the other two systems. The emphasis on particular areas of curriculum is likely to be influenced very directly in independent schools by the opinions of parents whose financial input into their childrens’ education makes these schools more answerable to parental pressures than those in the state and Catholic systems. The figures confirm that many students in country Victoria are disadvantaged in their access to music education not just by geography but by finances as well. This supports information in the literature regarding lack of equality in Australia when it comes to access to music education (DEST, 2005; Global Access Partners, 2011).

Reasons why music programs are not offered in some schools

In cases where a school did not operate a classroom music program, principals were

asked what the most relevant reasons were. Budget restrictions (65%) and lack of availability of qualified staff (47%) were the two most common responses to this question. The third most popular reason (insufficient room on the timetable) was referred to often in the comments, with frequent reference made to an emphasis on literacy and numeracy.

I think it’s important, but with all this extra emphasis being on literacy and numeracy, the need for specialist music teachers, especially in smaller schools like ours is put to the way side so we can focus on English, Maths and Integrated Studies.

Several principals also indicated that they are forced at times to choose what subjects are made available to their students on the basis not of what they decide is best for them, but instead on what staff are available in the area:

For two years we had an art specialist instead of a specialist music teaching program, simply because we couldn’t employ a teacher.

The effect of small school size and location

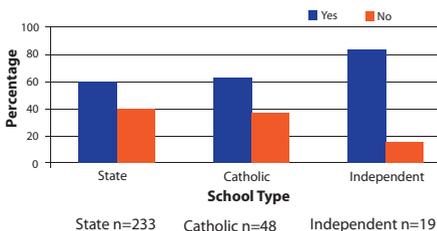
Location and subsequent size of rural schools was seen by principals to be a very significant factor in hindering the employment of music teachers. As student numbers in the country are lower than in the city, schools tend to be smaller and therefore require a specialist only for a small time fraction. Comments to this effect were made by twenty principals. Isolation was also seen to be a contributing factor in a secondary sense, in that principals felt teachers would be unlikely to want to travel long distances either from a major centre to get to their school, or between schools to get enough hours to make the job worthwhile.

Quality of teachers available

Principals also suggested that it is can be difficult to find a *good* teacher. It was often indicated that finding someone with suitable music skills *and*

Figure 4: Which types of schools run classroom music programs.

Do you have a music program? Vs what type of school is yours?



good teaching practices/behavior management ability can be very challenging.

Suitability of available personnel is always an issue - they need to be good teachers as well as musicians!

Comparisons across regions

In general, it was found that the three northern-most regions were struggling the most in their issues with music program provision. The data indicates that in three of the four comparisons between regions, the Grampians and Hume regions encountered the most difficulties, while Gippsland and Barwon South West regions experienced the least. One possible reason for the variation between northern-most and southern regions is that of geography and population distribution. Barwon South West and Gippsland are both regions with lengthy coastal access, quite possibly offering more attractive real estate and lifestyle options to teachers than the northern regions.

It is also important to consider that the two regions at opposing ends of the spectrum when it comes to difficulties employing music teachers are each home to one of Victoria's largest rural centres with universities. Barwon South West (the region that struggled the least) is the location of Deakin University, Geelong which offers the most music electives outside Melbourne. Ballarat University which offers no music electives, is in the Grampians region which struggled most often to find music teachers. It was concluded that a more detailed examination of these tertiary

institutions might reveal some reasons for the variation in numbers of music programs in these cities.

A possible link between universities and schools

Victoria's 3 largest cities (outside Melbourne) are all home to universities offering undergraduate teacher education. There was a marked variation between the cities in numbers of classroom music programs operating there.

Geelong is situated only 69 km from Melbourne and is relatively large (193,615 people). It was therefore less likely to be subject in the same degree as Ballarat and Bendigo to the factors of isolation being examined in this study. It is also possible that the low number of responses (*) from Geelong did not give an accurate representation of the situation in schools in that city. It was therefore decided to compare Ballarat and Bendigo (Loddon Mallee region) as they are both about 150 km from Melbourne and both have similar population size (approximately 90,000).

An examination of the history of music education at the two local universities showed that the two cities had similarly rich opportunities for music education until the mid 1990s. At that time, Bendigo continued to offer music electives, but Ballarat did not. This is a possible explanation for the low number of responding schools (31%) operating a music program in that city. La Trobe University in Bendigo persisted with six music electives until 2006 and ran four until the end

Table 3: Numbers of schools operating music programs in major rural centres.

Town	No. that have program	No. of responses	% who have prog
Bendigo	15	18	83
Ballarat	4	13	31
Geelong	3	*5	60

of 2008. It was also the city of the three with the largest number of schools operating a music program (83%).

On the basis of the data in this section then, it is possible to conclude that the inclusion of music electives in undergraduate teaching courses *may* result in a larger number of schools in the area offering classroom music programs.

Conclusion

The research provided empirical evidence for what has long been suspected in professional circles – that there is far from equal opportunity for access to quality music education for children across all Victorian schools. This knowledge is of importance and relevance to country Victorian people on a number of different levels: first to parents and children affiliated with schools; second, to principals and teachers in primary schools; third, to administrators and music educators in tertiary institutions; and, fourth, to policy makers and curriculum writers currently making decisions vital to the education of regional Victorian primary school children.

This research has explored each of the elements present in the 'chain' of music education provision to regional Victorian school children. At the centre of provision is a difficulty with supply of qualified music teachers. This supply is largely the responsibility of regional universities who declare themselves unable to fund quality music-specific arts education. If universities do not prioritise music education and get funding to reinstate music electives for undergraduate teachers in the country, music teachers are in danger of disappearing from rural areas altogether. The study reveals furthermore, that the places in Australia and overseas that have the highest percentages of schools with classroom music programs are those where the subject is a *compulsory* component of the curriculum with appropriate amounts of time allotted in the timetable. Given that a report the size and significance of the NRSME saw no change in

the way music was funded or represented in Australian education, the findings in this research would suggest that *compulsory inclusion of music in the curriculum* is likely to be the only measure to bring about long-term, significant improvement in equality of access to music education in Australia. Although the language in the *Australian Curriculum* carries the suggestion that the arts are to be a compulsory in all Australian schools, there is no indication of any change to infrastructure currently rendering such a situation impossible.

There is an urgent need for bridging the gulf between so called 'lip service' paid in education policy documents and the ground-level implementation of arts programs in schools. While it is the responsibility of government to produce policy, it also holds the responsibility of providing appropriate funding to implement its policy. The study therefore recommended that government appropriately fund schools and universities so that the inference of music and the arts' importance to education in policy documents, be realized in concrete terms. Money is urgently required in order for universities to fund small elective subject areas and for schools to be able to afford teachers, equipment and space to implement quality music programs.

The research found that 45% of participating music teachers believed music education to be negatively affected by its placement within the Arts Key Learning Area. Clearly music teachers would prefer to see music as a stand-alone subject but it was recommended that the Arts Key Learning Area be separated at a minimum, into two separate strands known as visual arts and performing arts. Even this degree of differentiation within the learning area would be an improvement, particularly in the area of reporting.

International and local (Queensland) experience showed that it is possible to raise the number of music programs in operation by making the subject compulsory. While it is true

that Queensland still struggles to fill teaching positions in the most isolated of locations, with 87% of schools operating classroom music programs, it is clear that significant gain is possible. It was therefore recommended that the compulsory implementation of arts subjects in the curriculum, hinted at in *Shape of the Australian Curriculum: The Arts*, be made clearly compulsory, with an appropriate amount of time per week in the timetable specified as in the case of physical education. In time, it is proposed, the student beneficiaries of a Prep to Year 8 compulsory music education would eventually take up student tertiary music education student positions and satisfy most of the demand for music teachers, as is the case in Queensland.

For future research, a study conducted in the metropolitan area to complete the picture (for Victoria at least) showing numbers of music programs operating in primary schools would be valuable. More up-to-date data on secondary schools would also be of benefit at this time. Furthermore, the research showed that there are places in Australia and overseas where there are high numbers of music programs in operation in primary schools. Insights into how this has been achieved at all levels of the provision chain would be of great benefit to Victorian arts educators.

In response to the *National Review of School Music Education* Robin Pascoe, one of the eight on the steering committee, said:

At an immediate level, the recommendations have financial consequences but more specifically, they represent a call to changes in attitudes and values. They are about shifting cultures of neglect and low status and have a long term trajectory of reform built into them. Such reform concepts are difficult in short term political cycles and shifts in ministerial portfolios. The danger for any review is that it will be given a cursory nod and then filed away and forgotten. Arts educators need to follow up the political process again and again, they need stamina, perseverance and persistence. The picture is of the long march not the sprint (Pascoe, 2007, pp. 264-265).

The "long march" for arts educators towards changing attitudes and increasing funding continues, particularly at present with the writing of the *Australian National Curriculum* in progress. Shortly after the release of the NRSME, there was a change in government and it would seem that sadly, most of the review has received only the "cursory nod" Pascoe refers to. This research forms part of arts educators' "long march" towards equality of music education for all Australian children.

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Jenni Heinrich graduated from The University of Melbourne in 1987 with a Bachelor of Music Education and has recently completed a Master of Education at La Trobe University. Her instrument of study was classical guitar. She has taught in primary and secondary schools in Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia and in London and lectured in music education for eleven years. Currently she is music specialist at two small, rural primary schools in Central Victoria.