

9<sup>th</sup> March 2023

To Whom It May Concern,

Thank you for the opportunity to address the Senate Inquiry into the National Cultural Policy.

The Australian Music Association is the industry body representing wholesalers, importers, manufacturers, retailers, and associated businesses for music products in Australia. Established in 1977, the AMA has a strong history of supporting and advocating for the music products industry and contributing to the development of musical life in Australia. One of our main interests, and the focus of this submission, is growing music making in Australia.

Our submission to the National Cultural Policy consultation process had four proposals, each of them affecting our members and relatively low cost opportunities for the Federal Government. They were:

- Provide universal access to music education through systemic improvements to, at least, meet the requirements of the Australian Curriculum: The Arts
- Specifically reference participation in the arts, strategies and institutions that support participation in the arts
- Guarantee radiofrequency spectrum for cultural use, particularly in the 600 MHz band
- Implement a system of Musical Instrument Certificates

None of these areas were specifically addressed in the National Cultural Policy, *Revive*. There is, however, some action on the fourth point, in the government's response to the Samuel Review of the EPBC Act. We will monitor its progress.

Participation in music, from a young age and throughout life, is very important to our members ('more to start, fewer to quit') and *Revive* could have done more to encourage participation in the arts at all stages of life, in all communities. We would be happy to comment further on this, and our work on Make Music Day which is an international campaign to celebrate music making and encourage participation in it.

The key issue we are interested in, and the missed opportunity of *Revive*, is to make progress on improving access to quality music education.

This is not a problem that the Federal Government alone can solve, and it is certainly not one that the creation of the *Australian Curriculum: The Arts* will solve, but it is definitely something that jurisdictions working individually and collectively can address.

*Revive* contains no references to 'music education' at all, only to 'arts education'. Although several artforms are combined in the Australian Curriculum, and several issues facing music education such as Initial Teacher Education are reflected in the other artforms and subject areas, there are particular challenges around provision and resourcing for music education that require policy interventions.

*Revive* says "The growth and stability of Australia's cultural and creative workforce depends on continuous career development that builds confidence in creative sector careers and equips creative practitioners of all ages to utilise their skills as both workers and artists....This begins with arts education and continues through career pathways in the arts". It goes on to acknowledge the well documented benefits of arts education ("Research shows that arts education improves student literacy and numeracy outcomes, and also helps to improve social and emotional wellbeing and resilience in children and young people.") However, when it comes to action,

Revive only claims to “support the delivery” of the Australian Curriculum’s five artforms, and “Support specialist in-school arts education programs that directly draw from cultural and creative sector expertise, focussing on areas of identified disadvantage.” It is not clear how the policy supports the delivery of the Australian Curriculum, in a subject area like music where issues with provision are well known.

These actions have merit, but do not address the challenge in any new or substantive way. The policy takes no serious steps forward in providing *universal access* to a *quality education in music*, which is what we and others in the music sector would like to see.

We would be happy to discuss this further and the AMA is part of the Advisory Group for *Music Education: Right From The Start*, currently the leading initiative in Australia to address the systemic challenges of music education quality and provision.

Some work is being done to collect data that describes the challenges and prompts solutions but we still lack the data to fully understand how many students in Australian schools have access to a quality education in music, how well prepared and confident classroom teachers are to teach music, and whether schools have sufficient resources to provide a quality education in music. We don’t know, for example, how much the situation has changed (for better or worse) since the *National Review of Music Education* in 2005.

As a way forward, the Federal Government can:

- **Acknowledge** the lack of universal access to quality music education, rather than treating it as a ‘given’ through the existence of the *Australian Curriculum: The Arts*;
- Make a serious effort to **measure and monitor** the nature and extent of music education provision;
- Develop some initiative/s within the **Department of Education** and/or the Education Ministers Meetings to improve music education in Australian schools, perhaps starting with the issue of Initial Teacher Education.
- **Develop a strategy** to improve music education in particular jurisdictions based on success in others.

Other than the lack of specific actions to improve music/arts education, there is much to be hopeful about in *Revive*. We will follow developments in Creative Australia, in particular Music Australia, and other initiatives with interest.

For reference, the following page is copied from the AMA submission to the National Cultural Policy consultation process.

Regards,

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Executive Officer  
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## Music Education

Pillar:	<b>The Centrality of the Artist</b> (Also: All other pillars)
Portfolio/s:	Education (DESE), Arts
Context:	Goal 3, Creative Australia Policy; Australian Curriculum: The Arts
Proposal:	Provide universal access to music education

Our comments will focus on the provision of music education in Australian schools, which arguably addresses all five pillars. The third (Centrality of the Artist) is the approximate equivalent of Goal 3 from the Creative Australia policy, which referred to arts education.

The aims of the 2013 Creative Australia policy were:

- 1 Every student has the opportunity to receive an arts education.
- 2 Creativity in schools is considered as a vital 21st century skill to drive innovation and productivity.

These are worthy goals that could be retained almost without modification, but Australia needs more and better strategies to achieve these aims.

Quality music education is not universal in Australia. Although progress has been made, including through initiatives (National Music Teacher Mentoring Program) and curriculum (Australian Curriculum: The Arts, NSW Music Syllabus review), we don't really know the extent to which students are receiving an arts education at all, the depth and quality of their arts education experience, the training and preparedness of teachers to deliver the arts curriculum, or the resources available (and required) to deliver the curriculum.

The AMA values music education and music making very highly. There is considerable work to be done and some progress has been made including through the previous Cultural Policy, initiatives since that time (for example, parliamentary inquiry and subsequent Music Education Strategy in South Australia) and more recent efforts. The Creative Australia policy proposed the implementation of the Australian Curriculum: The Arts, and the National Arts and Cultural Accord, as the mechanisms for improving access to arts education.

The notion that jurisdictions ought to work together to advance arts education, as proposed and partly achieved through the previous cultural policy, goes some way to finding a solution. Perhaps rather than becoming uniform, the different education systems and jurisdictions ought to learn from each other. All states having an equal amount of music in Stage 4 could lead to a reduction in NSW; all states having an equal instrumental music system could lead to a reduction in Queensland. The kind of cross-jurisdictional work that has been done on live music policy, through the Live Music Office, is an example of where developments, policies, and legislation in one jurisdiction can inform improvements in another.

The AMA is a member of the *Music Education: Right From The Start* Advisory Group. This initiative, led by Alberts Music, is a major development in the work that needs to be done: the strategic and targeted improvement of systems. For example, the system of Initial Teacher Education is vital to the delivery of the curriculum, and this initiative is commissioning research on that issue. Particular school systems require more attention than others, such as public primary schooling in NSW & Victoria, and this initiative is focusing on those issues.

We refer to and support the *Music Education: Right From The Start* submission which has further detail.

### References:

- Australian Government. *Creative Australia* (2013). <https://www.arts.gov.au/documents/creative-australia-national-cultural-policy>
- Department for Education, South Australia. *Music Education Strategy* (2019). <https://www.education.sa.gov.au/schools-and-educators/strategies-and-initiatives/music-education-strategy-and-innovation-fund/music-education-strategy-and-music-innovation-fund>
- Collins, A., Dwyer, R., Date, A. *Music Education: A Sound Investment* (2020). [https://www.alberts.co/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Alberts\\_Music-Education-Report\\_A4.pdf](https://www.alberts.co/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Alberts_Music-Education-Report_A4.pdf)
- Alberts Music. *Music Education: Right From The Start* (2022). <https://www.alberts.co/music-education/>