

Q44.

Review to Inform a Better and Fairer Education System

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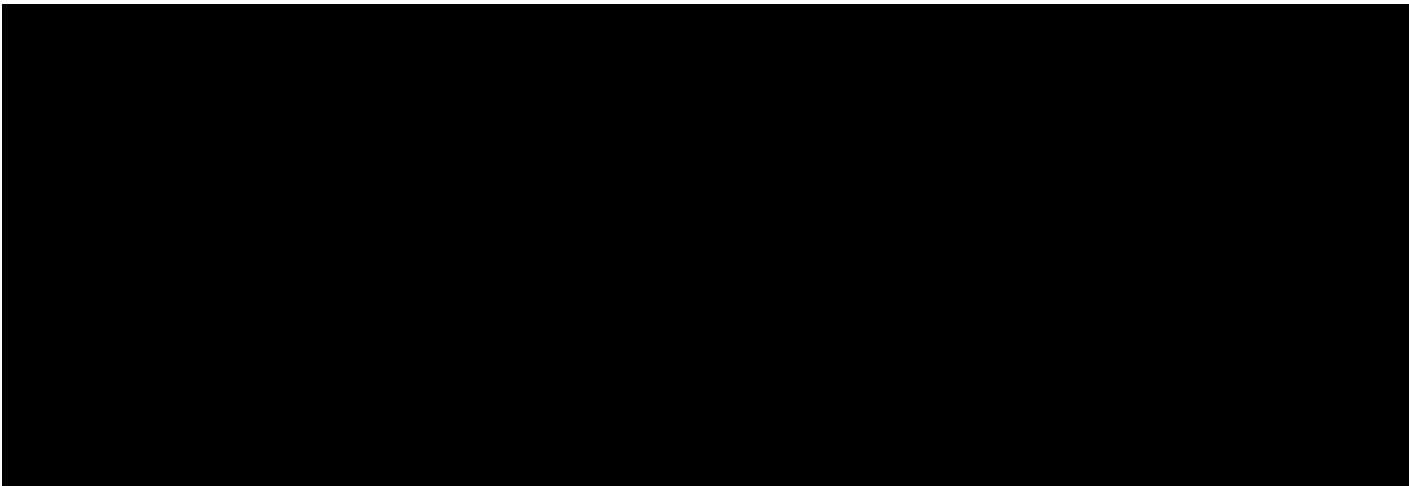
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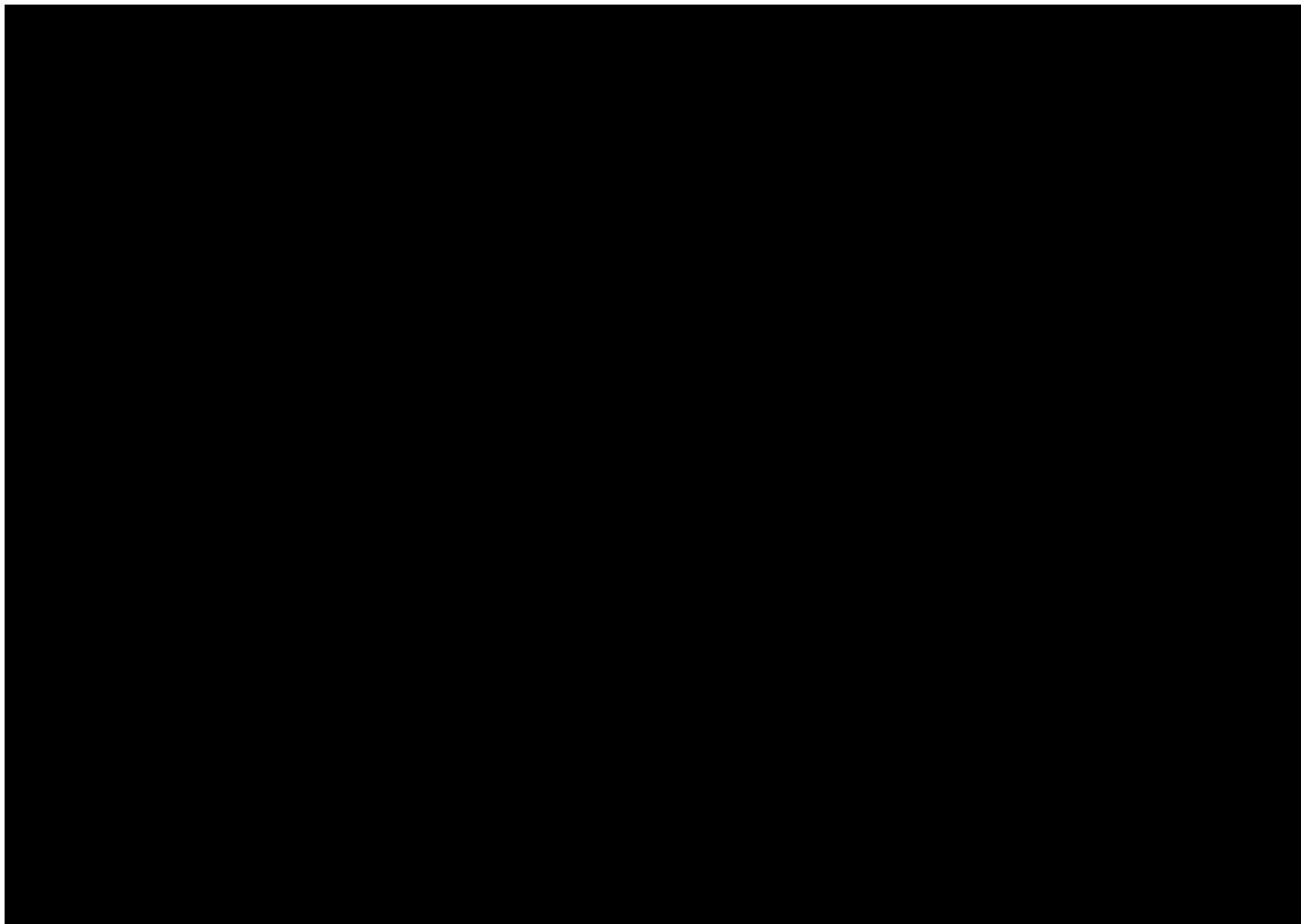
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Q54.

Chapter 2: Improving student outcomes – including for students most at risk of falling behind

Q1. 1. What are the most important student outcomes for Australian school students that should be measured in the next NSRA? Should these go beyond academic performance (for example, attendance and engagement)?

The most important student outcomes include academic performance, but miss the broader picture of ensuring that every student has equitable opportunity to pursue education to the extent that they wish to. Outcomes cannot measure equity if opportunity is not ensured for all. Student opportunity can be measured by engagement, additional support measures (e.g., for students with a disability), well-being, and funding.

Q2. 2. What are the evidence-based practices that teachers, schools, systems and sectors can put in place to improve student outcomes, particularly for those most at risk of falling behind? Are different approaches required for different at-risk cohorts?

There is limited understanding of the types of educational activities that support cognitive development and improved student outcomes in Australia, focusing almost exclusively on literacy and numeracy rather than a perspective that attends to the education of the whole child. In addition to a reliable association established between music lessons and academic achievement (irrespective of family income or parent education levels), music promotes social inclusion, school engagement, mental health and wellbeing, and even helps to prevent youth crime. Creative music-making in particular supports marginalized youth through effects on social and cultural inclusion and connection, self-esteem, and empowerment. We propose that all children across Australia ought to have equitable access to music education as a public good.

Q3. 3. How can all students at risk of falling behind be identified early on to enable swift learning interventions?

Preventative measures of engaging all children in schooling and developing positive associations with learning (agency and self-efficacy) ought to be implemented alongside any interventions for individual students. We recommend that investing in music education as a public good for every child across Australia would support schools, teachers, and students to engage with learning in positive ways with beneficial outcomes for both individuals and the school community.

Q4. 4. Should the next NSRA add additional priority equity cohorts? For example, should it add children and young people living in out-of-home care and students who speak English as an additional language or dialect? What are the risks and benefits of identifying additional cohorts?

Yes. If every child is to have equitable opportunity to education across Australia, this process needs to account for every child. This should include children and young people living in out-of-home care, incarcerated youth, students who speak English as an additional language or dialect, and students with a disability. All of our children and young people are vital to the success of our society, and all should be equitably supported through education. A creative and culturally responsive music education can enrich the lives of all children and young people, no matter their background, ability, or circumstance. Furthermore, in working towards equity and inclusion through music, we invest in the academic, social, emotional, and creative prosperity of our nation as a whole.

Q5. 5. What should the specific targets in the next NSRA be? Should the targets be different for primary and secondary schools? If so, how? What changes are required to current measurement frameworks, and what new measures might be required?

1. The regular and consistent provision of music education for Australia's most vulnerable and disadvantaged youth in schools associated with 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.

Q6. 6. How can the targets in the next NSRA be structured to ensure evidence-based approaches underpin a nationally coherent reform agenda while allowing jurisdictions and schools the flexibility to respond to individual student circumstances and needs?

• Short Term Representing an intensified snapshot of well-being, 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 to secure weekly music lessons and support the vibrant musical life of every school that also connects with local communities and cultures

Q7. 7. How should progress towards any new targets in the next NSRA be reported on?

1. The number of youth detention centre schools offering a music program for young people. In education Australia's most disadvantaged youth with significant well-being, academic, school engagement, equity, and inclusion challenges, youth justice has already been identified as in urgent need of innovative solutions. As a relatively small system, youth justice centre schools also represent an ideal context to generate a robust evidence base for the benefits of music education. 2. The expansion and diversification of music teacher mentoring programs to build teacher capacities relating to equity and diversity in music education at all career stages, particularly in relation to First Nations music, culture, and knowledge systems, curricular adaptation for varied abilities, and the cultural and linguistic diversity of local communities. This will ensure that school music opportunities can best serve local student populations and needs. 3. The employment of music culture specialists in regions of particular need to establish an allied network of support 4. Music teacher recruitment and retention

Q55.

Chapter 3: Improving student mental health and wellbeing

Q8. 8. What does it look like when a school is supporting student mental health and wellbeing effectively? What is needed from school, systems, government and the community to deliver this?

In a school that is supporting student mental health and well-being, you will see students skipping, playing, singing, and laughing. Students will have a trusting and warm rapport with their teachers and school leaders, and respectful and open relationships with each other. Parents and guardians will feel confident and secure to work together with schools in meeting students' diverse needs. The boundaries between school and communities will be porous, with the rich cultural and linguistic diversity of surrounding communities welcomed into classrooms and co-curricular activities. A school that supports student mental health is one where everyone can be themselves, and feel a sense of belonging.

Q9. 9. What evidence-based wellbeing approaches currently being implemented by schools and communities should be considered as part of a national reform agenda?

There is substantial research to demonstrate music's positive effects on mental health and well-being, supporting cognitive function and mood, but also fostering social connections. Music education is a life-enhancing and fundamental part of being human, with the power to change and shape lives. 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".

Q10. 10. Should a wellbeing target be included in the next NSRA? Could this use existing data collections, or is additional data required?

Q11. 11. Would there be benefit in surveying students to help understand student perceptions of safety and belonging at school, subjective state of wellbeing, school climate and classroom disruption? Would there be value in incorporating this into existing National Assessment Program surveys such as NAPLAN?

Yes. It is vital that all children feel safe and secure to be themselves at school, and feel supported by families, guardians, teachers and school leadership. It is also vital, particularly in superdiverse societies such as Australia, that students feel a sense of belonging, not through conforming to narrow expectations of childhood but that can embrace the rich diversity and creativity of our nation.

Q12. 12. To what extent do school leaders and teachers have the skills and training to support students struggling with mental health?

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 confidence. The often narrow focus on western art music styles and instruments also has significant implications for the inclusion and equity 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. This means that music teachers are not adequately equipped to engage students in music-making that would support their mental health and wellbeing in the music classroom and more generally. For music to support students' mental health and wellbeing as a substantial body of research demonstrates it can, it needs to be intentional, inclusive, creative, and culturally responsive, with teachers supported to connect with students in multifaceted ways. Generalist teachers need more music education training, and all teachers need more equity and inclusion training.

13. 13. What can be done to establish stronger partnerships between schools, Local Health Networks and Primary Health Networks?

Particularly in areas of need, including regional and remote areas and areas of significant diversity, a designated music and culture specialist could be employed 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, to establish an allied network of resources and support for teachers, schools, and students. Leveraging existing health networks but also cultural infrastructure would ensure that every Australian school can meet curricular mandates in creative and culturally responsive ways supporting student mental health and wellbeing in the music classroom but also across school life more broadly.

Q19. 14. What can be done to ensure schools can easily refer students to services outside the school gate that they need to support their wellbeing? How can this be done without adding to teacher and leader workload?

An allied network of expertise and resources bringing together teachers, schools, health networks but also professional music organisations, tertiary institutions (including regional hubs), Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders and musicians, and cultural and community programs and services would ensure a perspective on health and wellbeing that extends beyond a medicalised perspective to one that takes the whole child into account. Music is an ideal medium through which to connect opportunities for self-expression and identity formation (vital to wellbeing) with cultural communities, educational supports, community services and more.

Q56.

Chapter 4: Our current and future teachers

Q20. 15. What change(s) would attract more students into the teaching profession?

Amidst a global teacher shortage, there is a critical need to attract and retain music teachers. Teacher agency in interpreting and implementing curricular directives is essential for them to meet the needs of students and local communities, and teachers need to be afforded the freedoms and trust to do this. Furthermore, many musicians teach, but do not have the qualifications to work in school contexts. Yet, many schools rely on volunteer music organisations or commercial music enterprises to meet curricular needs when teachers are unavailable or over-extended. The implementation of 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 would ensure some consistency across professionals, and better-equip school teachers but also broader community and cultural services with the skills and knowledge to support students as needed.

Q32. 16. What change(s) would support teachers to remain in the profession?

An allied network involving teachers and schools, professional music organisations, tertiary institutions (including regional hubs), Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders and musicians, and cultural and community programs and services would support music teachers to flourish and allow for targeted professional development addressing equity and inclusion. Expand and diversify teacher mentoring programs to build teacher capacities relating to equity and diversity in music education at all career stages, particularly in relation to First Nations music, culture, and knowledge systems, curricular adaptation for varied abilities, and the cultural and linguistic diversity of local communities. Examples of existing mentoring programs are: the Australian Youth Orchestra's National Music Teacher Mentoring Program, DUET Music Learning and Mentoring program, SA Music Education Strategy

Q31. 17. What change(s) would support qualified teachers to return to the profession?

Funding professional development opportunities for music, culture, or community professionals to further support the proposed allied inter-sectoral network to deliver music education for students, would support teachers who may be overextended. This would lead to better workload management and support teachers to teach in creative, culturally responsive, and professional ways. Teachers currently are required to complete too much administration that impedes upon their agency and professionalism.

Q30. 18. What additional reforms are needed to ensure that the schools most in need can support and retain highly effective teachers?

Q29. 19. What can be done to attract a diverse group of people into the teaching profession to ensure it looks like the broader community?

Q28. 20. What can be done to attract more First Nations teachers? What can be done to improve the retention of First Nations teachers?

Q26. 21. What reforms could enable the existing teacher workforce to be deployed more effectively?

Q25. 22. How can teacher career pathways, such as master teachers and instructional specialists, be improved to attract and retain teachers? How should this interact with the Highly Accomplished or Lead Teacher (HALT) certification and the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers?

Supporting existing certification standards through particular attention to issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion, in relation to an inter-sectoral network that brings teachers and schools together with tertiary institutions, community services, healthcare, professional institutions and organisations as well as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders and musicians, would ensure that teachers can be connected to their students communities, and develop their skills in culturally responsive ways that meet the needs of their students. This would empower teachers to engage in life-long learning that is relevant for their workplaces and school populations.

Q24. 23. Are there examples of resources, such as curriculum materials, being used to improve teacher workload or streamline their administrative tasks?

Q23. 24. How should digital technology be used to support education delivery, reduce teacher workload and improve teacher effectiveness? What examples are you aware of?

Q22. 25. Are there benefits for the teaching profession in moving to a national registration system? If so, what are they?

Q57.

Chapter 5: Collecting data to inform decision-making and boost student outcomes

Q27. 26. What data are of most value to you and how accessible are these for you?

Q35. 27. Is there any data that are not currently collected and reported on that is vital to understanding education in Australia? Why is this data important?

Q34. 28. Should data measurement and reporting on outcomes of students with disability be a priority under the next NSRA? If so, how can this data be most efficiently collected?

Q33. 29. Is there a need to establish a report which tracks progress on the targets and reforms in the next NSRA? Should it report at a jurisdictional and a national level? What should be included in the report?

Q32. 30. Is there data collected by schools, systems, sectors or jurisdictions that could be made more available to inform policy design and implementation? What systems would be necessary to enable these data are made available safely and efficiently?

Q31. 31. The Productivity Commission and Australian Education Research Organisation (AERO) have identified the need for longitudinal data to identify the actual students at risk of falling behind based on their performance (and not on equity groups alone) and to monitor these students' progress over time. Should this be the key data reform for the next NSRA?

Q30. 32. Should an independent body be responsible for collecting and holding data? What rules should be in place to govern the sharing of data through this body?

Q29. 33. Is there data being collected that is no longer required?

Q28. 34. How could the national Unique Student Identifier (USI) support improved outcomes for students?

Q58.

Chapter 6: Funding transparency and accountability

Q36. 35. Are there other objectives for funding accountability and transparency we have missed?

Q39. 36. How can governments make better use of the information already collected and/or published to achieve the objectives?

Q38. 37. What other funding accountability and transparency information regarding schools (both your school and the education system more generally) would be useful?

Q37. 38. What are the priority gaps in the current funding transparency and accountability arrangements from your perspective?

Q59. Do you have any additional comments? (2,000 characters)

Q52. If you have more information you would like to share with the Expert Panel, please send a written response as a .docx or RTF format to NSRA.submissions@education.gov.au. An additional PDF version may also be submitted. Please make sure to note that your email is to be considered alongside your current submission.

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