



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND YOUTH AFFAIRS
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Submission Cover Sheet

Inquiry into the cessation of the Music
for Colleges course

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My name is Thomas Fell and I have been a teacher with the Music for Colleges (jazz) Program since 2015:

- In 2015 I was an ensemble teacher and Yr 12 coordinator/lecturer.
- From 2015 to present I have been the saxophone teacher for the jazz course (yr 11 and 12). I was also an ensemble teacher in 2018.

Over the past 5 years I have also taught saxophone, band and classroom music in several schools in Canberra including Campbell High School, Lyneham High School and Marist College.

One of the major impacts of the ending of the Music for Colleges program is the lack of an institutional pathway for instrumental students of above average ability. I have many private saxophone students that I work with from a young age until they reach Year 10. For exceptional students, the natural question at the end of Year 10 is: what are my options for studying music in college? There are few colleges in Canberra that offer exceptional music programs. In previous years many of my best students knew that the Music for Colleges program existed, often had peers already in the program, and looked forward to auditioning and continuing music regardless of what ACT college they went to. The ACT education system now does not provide a music course/community for its most talented students.

Why does that matter?

1. Because many of those students go on to organise their own creative projects in our community and their training gives them the confidence, networks and ability to produce work of a high standard.
2. Because many of those students collaborate with artists in other genres. Students who have studied jazz have the skills to play hip-hop, rock, funk, pop, latin and other contemporary styles. In my experience students from the music for colleges program quickly integrate into Canberra's musical community and increase the pool of quality musicians that artists in other genres can work with.
3. Because those students increase the pool of quality instrumental teachers in Canberra. Some will also go on to study education and become classroom music teachers.
4. There is a public good in having places/programs where we can celebrate our best arts students. We celebrate them by investing in them.

There is of course a place for a program that has more emphasis on participation but I believe the above benefits will not be the outcomes from such a program. A so-called 'elite' program is part of a healthy arts/music 'ecosystem' in Canberra.

Finally a few personal anecdotes on the benefits of the Music for Colleges program for Canberra:

- I play saxophone regularly in Canberra. It is rare that I am working in a band without at least one member who was in the Music for Colleges program over its long life. As an example, I play in Brass Knuckle Brass Band, it has 3 of 8 members who were participants and all three are also music teachers in Canberra.
- Many of my students in the Music for Colleges program go on to study music at University.