



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

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STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND YOUTH AFFAIRS  
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Mr Mark Parton MLA

## Submission Cover Sheet

Inquiry into the cessation of the Music  
for Colleges course

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SUBMISSION ON INQUIRY INTO THE CESSATION OF THE MUSIC FOR  
COLLEGES COURSE, MAY 2019

FRIENDS OF THE SCHOOL OF MUSIC

SUBMISSION ON

INQUIRY INTO THE CESSATION OF THE MUSIC FOR  
COLLEGES COURSE

MAY 2019

# SUBMISSION ON INQUIRY INTO THE CESSATION OF THE MUSIC FOR COLLEGES COURSE, MAY 2019

## *Terms of Reference*

1. *The past delivery of the Music for Colleges (also known as the H Course music) including, but not limited to:*
  - a. *Demonstrated long term benefits and outcomes;*
  - b. *Demand;*
  - c. *Programs on offer; and*
  - d. *Teaching resources.*
2. *The short and medium term impact of the 2018 decision to cut funding for the Music for Colleges program.*
3. *Options for continuing the program including, but not limited to:*
  - a. *Alternative funding streams; and*
  - b. *Alternative delivery streams.*
4. *Any other relevant matter.*

## **Why it is relevant for us to make this submission**

The Friends of the School of Music (FSOM) is a non-profit community association, which aims to be a source of practical and financial support to students of the ANU School of Music. We advance musical endeavours within the School and help foster its engagement with the Canberra community.

The Friends have had a long association (over 30 years) with the pre-tertiary program (the H course and before it the Type 1 course, and its predecessor). We are well placed to comment on the benefits of the course as we have longitudinal and qualitative experience through working with these students. We have seen the benefits to students in their musical development, the benefits for the ANU School of Music through its connection to secondary schools, and the benefits to the wider Canberra community in nurturing its talented local future musicians.

In fact, the pre-tertiary program, until its cut to funding, has been the “usual pathway” for a large number of students from their secondary college studies into Australian National University music degrees. We are very concerned that a program with such a long and successful history and that adds value in so many ways, should cease to be funded.

Apart from the benefits of the course to school students, the ANU School of Music itself is at a critical time in its history. After a difficult period, the School has reformed into a vibrant and successful institution with high enrolments at undergraduate and postgraduate level. The Music for Colleges not only encourages local students to stay in Canberra to pursue a place at the School but also adds to the depth and prestige of this Canberra institution. Restoring Music for Colleges would contribute significantly to the ongoing success of the ANU School of Music

## SUBMISSION ON INQUIRY INTO THE CESSATION OF THE MUSIC FOR COLLEGES COURSE, MAY 2019

It is also worth noting that we manage two relationships of direct relevance to this course. Eastlakes Football Club as part of their long-term commitment to local community enrichment, donate funds to the Friends specifically for this pre-tertiary course.

The Embassy of Hungary hosts an annual concert where the Music for College students have the opportunity to perform before the diplomatic community, their friends, family, and the general public. Experience such as this, regular and ongoing, is simply not available to high performing college students in any other context. The Friends also has excellent relations with other embassies throughout Canberra who provide opportunities for pre-tertiary students to perform with each other as well as with professional musicians.

Fundraising concerts of the Friends of the School of Music, which fund grants and prizes to support students of the ANU School of Music. Classical and jazz themed concerts run throughout the year. We also support the ANU SOM Ensemble Prizes. Our patron, the spouse of the Governor-General has hosted an annual concert at Government House, which the Friends organises with performers amongst the best students at the School. This provides students with exposure at the highest levels.

### **Addressing the Terms of Reference**

#### **Benefits of the Music for Colleges course**

The Music for Colleges course has been the only pathway offering advanced pre-tertiary music students experience in a university setting in the ACT. This program has better prepared students for their subsequent university studies through exposure to professional teachers and performers as well as the challenge provided by one another. They have the opportunity to learn and perform with other high performing students, solo and in ensembles. Music is, by its nature, collaborative and these opportunities have been essential in preparing them for tertiary programs. If we wish to have a cohort of high performing musicians with well-developed networks and future careers in music in Canberra, we need this program to continue.

It has been far more cost effective for music students to stay in Canberra where they have begun to establish their reputation, their networks and performance opportunities. It is far harder leaving Canberra to study in another city, especially with the increased costs involved in doing so. The pre-tertiary option allows for the choice of staying “home”.

There is no better evidence than that of the students who have completed the pre-tertiary course.

*“Doing the course, getting university experience as a college student was incredible because it was a pivot to me choosing a career in music and also*

## SUBMISSION ON INQUIRY INTO THE CESSATION OF THE MUSIC FOR COLLEGES COURSE, MAY 2019

*encouraging me to stay in Canberra. I am a freelance recording engineer and musician now.”*

*“I don’t think there’s anything like the Open School of Music course, in that it gives you a bridge between being a music student at school and a music student at university. I think it’s fair to say that if it didn’t exist I probably wouldn’t have gone to music school and I wouldn’t be a working musician today.”*

*“I always enjoyed playing drums, however never really learnt anything specific until I took ANU Type 1 jazz course. I took it for 2 years and ... I cannot imagine myself being in this position at the moment, being able to play professionally in jazz communities, if I hadn’t done the course.”*

*“It introduced me to ensemble music, and I’ve learned so much about communication and expression, not only in ensembles but in masterclasses from people like Malcolm Bilson and Dave Eggar and many, many other artists and the knowledge they give you can’t find anywhere else, you just can’t.”*

Apart from building skills, confidence and maturity in performance, individually and in ensembles, pre-tertiary students have been exposed to invaluable extended work in aural training, theory and composition. They have also developed connections with local gigs, local festivals and performance opportunities, essential for their future professional music careers. In 21st century Canberra we want to nurture and grow our own high quality music and arts culture. Funding this program supports this goal.

Thousands of students have benefited from the unique opportunity to experience university music studies while still in college showing that demand is there. We understand it was the first and was longest running pre-tertiary course in the ACT of any kind.

### **Impact of the Decision to Cut Funding**

The decision to cease this unique course will have a detrimental impact on ACT secondary college students wishing to be competitive for a career in music.

### **Access and Equity**

The Music for Colleges course has provided talented Canberra college music students regardless of their backgrounds, from both public and independent schools, with opportunities to extend themselves. While there may be alternatives for some music students, such as summer schools, or intensive master classes from time to time, they tend to be ad hoc, a not sustained and not accessible to everyone. There is no comparison with the quality and value to the student, the School and the community of the pre-tertiary program.

## SUBMISSION ON INQUIRY INTO THE CESSATION OF THE MUSIC FOR COLLEGES COURSE, MAY 2019

The other H courses that attract support, such as mathematics, sciences and languages, offer advanced pathways for learning through the secondary college system. High performing music students deserve the same opportunity. Without the Music for Colleges scheme, talented high performing ACT music students are disadvantaged compared to students in other states and territories where advanced pathways for study are available.

### **Options for Continuing the Program**

The ANU School of Music is the only institution in our view capable of providing this training. Unlike other states and territories, there are no secondary music colleges in Canberra. It is the central place to nurture high performing college students.

The Friends Constitution limits its activities to those involving the students and staff of the School of Music. The opportunities we provide to pre-tertiary students such as performance experience before high level audiences, are only available to those studying at and through the School.

### **Recommendations**

The Friends of the School of Music request that the Standing Committee on Education, Employment and Youth Affairs recommend:

1. continued financial support from the ACT Government for the reinstatement of the Music for Colleges Course to ensure high performing college students continue to have access to an advanced pathway for their studies ensuring equity regardless of social or financial background and with students in other fields of study; and
2. that the H course must stand alongside other H courses
3. that ANU School of Music is the only institution in the ACT capable of delivering such a program.