

Government Response to the Standing Committee on Education, Employment and Youth Affairs on the Cessation of the Music for Colleges Course Report 7

**Presented by: Yvette Berry MLA
Minister for Education and Early Childhood Development**

March 2020

Executive Summary

Music is an important part of the cultural fabric of the ACT and ACT schools play an important role providing the appropriate opportunities for students to engage with music and to support and nurture aspiring musicians.

The Australian National University (ANU) has historically offered music extension courses for students in years 11 and 12 to support talented musicians in ACT schools. The ACT government commenced discussions with the ANU on the new Community Outreach Program in December 2016 to manage the transition away from previous music programs. The decision to transition government arts funding away from Music for Colleges by the end of 2019 was announced in February 2018 by the Minister for the Arts, Creative Industries and Cultural Events. It is important to note that the historic funding for the Music for Colleges program for music development and community access (through artsACT) was distinct from the funding for the totality of H Courses (through the Education Directorate) for programs in a range of subjects focused on individual student extension. Separate funding agreements and governance arrangements were in place with the ANU. The ANU subsequently advised that it was no longer able to offer the H course in Music.

The ACT Government has been consistent in its position that the ANU receives funding from multiple sources and the decision on the allocation of funding to programs and therefore the cessation of any offering, has been a decision of the university.

The Government notes the important role the ANU School of Music has provided over many years and appreciates that the Music H Course was highly valued by students, teachers and parents for the high calibre tuition it provided and the opportunities it afforded. The Government also notes that the Music H Course only benefits a very small proportion of the senior secondary cohort, including those from the Catholic and Independent school sectors.

The ANU has confirmed that the course could not be delivered without an additional \$230,000 funding and on this basis the Government does not agree to recommendations 1, 2 4 and 6, and instead agrees to the dissenting recommendation provided by Mr Pettersson MLA.

The Education Directorate has designed an alternative offering that will ensure music extension opportunities for talented music students in the public education system, by strengthening the existing music program in ACT public schools. This will be facilitated by:

- continuing to offer high quality music programs within Colleges;
- further develop music education pathways with the Canberra Institute of Technology;
- the Instrumental Music Program which will allow students to have performance and practice opportunities through ensemble and auditions; and
- engaging specialist instructors to provide sessional instruction, augmenting existing music programs and the Instrumental Music Program. This is subject to cost and may be a means-tested support to enhance equity while supporting financial viability

The Government would like to thank the Committee for conducting this Inquiry and would also like to thank the members of the public who took the time to make a submission and to give evidence at the public hearings. Their concern and commitment to music education is commendable.

Recommendation	Lead Agency	Government Response	Status	Future Action
1. The majority of the Committee recommends that the ACT Education Directorate immediately resume talks with the ANU School of Music to assess whether the H Course in Music can be reintroduced for Music students entering Year 11 in 2020.	Education Directorate	Not Agreed	The Education Directorate has continued to discuss with ANU the provision of the Music H course. Any continuation of the H course offering would be disproportionately more expensive than other H courses provided by ANU. In support of talented year 11 and 12 students the Education Directorate has provided enhanced services and enrichment opportunities to continue to nurture talented musicians.	
2. The majority of the Committee recommends that discussions between the ACT Education Directorate and the ANU School of Music include consideration of students who entered Year 11 in 2019 and who would otherwise have enrolled in the H Course in Music.	Education Directorate	Not Agreed	The Education Directorate has continued to discuss with ANU the provision of the Music H course. Any continuation of the H course offering would be disproportionately more expensive than other H courses provided by ANU. In support of talented year 11 and 12 students the Education Directorate has provided enhanced services and enrichment opportunities to continue to nurture talented musicians.	

Recommendation	Lead Agency	Government Response	Status	Future Action
<p>3. The majority of the Committee recommends that discussions between the ACT Education Directorate and the ANU School of Music acknowledge that any consideration of more cost effective delivery models not put at risk the current accreditation status that contributes to a student's Australian Tertiary Admission Rank calculation.</p>	<p>Education Directorate</p>	<p>Agreed</p>	<p>The ACT Government agrees that any H Course offering should be able to contribute to a student's ATAR.</p> <p>The alternative offerings and enhanced services that the Directorate has put in place will further support students in their ability to study for their ATAR.</p>	
<p>4. The majority of the Committee recommends that the ACT Education Directorate redirect funds to ensure the immediate resumption of the H Course in Music once an acceptable agreement has been reached with the ANU School of Music.</p>	<p>Education Directorate</p>	<p>Not Agreed</p>	<p>The Education Directorate is committed to funding a range of courses and opportunities to support student learning and wellbeing.</p> <p>The Education Directorate currently funds the ANU \$120,000 per annum to deliver 11 H Courses in STEM and Asian Languages to both year 11 and 12 students.</p> <p>ANU requested an additional \$230,000 per year to deliver a H course program which is almost double the cost of the entire existing H course program.</p>	

Recommendation	Lead Agency	Government Response	Status	Future Action
<p>5. The Committee recommends that artsACT continue to support several programs, including Girls Rock and Girls Jazz, both aimed at young girls; Community School of Rock, for all members of the community, and My Song, a mentorship program for Aboriginal youth.</p>	<p>Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate (artsACT)</p>	<p>Agreed in Principle</p>	<p>artsACT has a three-year funding agreement with the ANU for the Community Outreach Program for 2018, 2019 and 2020 and includes Girls Jazz, Community Rock, My Song and the Developing Musicians programs. artsACT proposes to discuss a new three-year agreement with the ANU for 2021, 2022 and 2023 which may include the current or new programs pending outcomes and priorities. Girls Rock is being separately supported through a funding agreement with Girls Rock! Canberra Inc for 2020 and 2021.</p>	
<p>6. In the event the ANU School of Music finds itself unable to continue to provide appropriate levels of tuition under the reinstated model, the majority of the Committee recommends that the course be reviewed by the incoming ACT Government following the October 2020 elections to ensure the music extension course continues to deliver the elite music education programs it was designed to do.</p>	<p>Education Directorate</p>	<p>Not Agreed</p>	<p>The ACT Government will continue to support music within the ACT both through the multifaceted music outreach arts funding programs of artsACT and through the nurturing and supporting of all students, including those at an elite level.</p>	

Recommendation	Lead Agency	Government Response	Status	Action
<p>I recommend that the ACT Government continue to provide an advanced pathway for gifted and talented musicians students in year 11 and year 12. The pathway should be funded and managed by the Education Directorate, who must ensure that the course fulfils the Board of Senior Secondary Studies accreditation for the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate and Australian Tertiary Admission Rank. Consideration should be given to priority enrolments and a co-contribution model when designing the new program.</p>	<p>Education Directorate</p>	<p>Agreed</p>	<p>The ACT Government has explored cost effective solutions to provide opportunities to talented young musicians.</p> <p>The Education Directorate has developed an alternative option that will enhance the Instrumental Music Program providing gifted and talented music students in the Instrumental Music Program with extension opportunities. This will be an additional offering to supplement the Board of Senior Secondary Studies music courses offered in colleges that are able to count towards ATAR.</p>	