

## Ensuring Professional Leadership in Music Education Reform in NSW: MTANSW's Position on the Joint Select Committee's Inquiry into Arts and Music Education and Training Report no 1 for consideration by Government as it prepares its response due by 12 March 2025

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### Introduction

The **Music Teachers' Association of New South Wales (MTANSW)** welcomes the **Joint Select Committee's Inquiry Report** and calls for a **substantive government response** that delivers **systemic, long-term reforms** to ensure universal access to high-quality music education in NSW.

MTANSW is the **peak professional body for music teachers in NSW**, representing teachers across **all educational settings**—including **private studios, schools (public, independent, and Catholic), corporate providers, conservatoriums, and tertiary institutions**.

For **over 113 years**, MTANSW has been a **prominent voice in music education**, with **state-based MTAs operating across Australia for over a century**. MTANSW is currently **leading the process of federating** with other state MTAs to establish a **unified national presence**, ensuring **effective engagement** on critical issues such as **the national curriculum, workforce development, and professional standards**. This process, set to be completed by **late 2025**, will create **the largest professional organisation in the music teaching and education landscape**, strengthening advocacy and support for music educators nationwide.

Our focus in this response is ensuring that:

- The government's reforms **reflect the professional expertise of music educators**.
- **MTANSW is included** in the development of the **Music Education Plan** (Recommendation 12).
- **Industry regulation and accreditation frameworks** (Recommendation 10) are developed **with the profession, for the profession**.



## Key Recommendations Supported by MTANSW

### 1. MTANSW strongly endorses Finding 4

*"That it is essential for all students in New South Wales primary schools to receive quality, sequential and ongoing music learning."*

Music education must be recognised as a **fundamental right** of every child. Systemic inequities in access to quality music education must be addressed **through structured policy reform** within the NSW Department of Education.

### 2. Support for a Government-Led Music Education Plan (Recommendation 12)

MTANSW supports the development of a **Music Education Plan**, led by the **NSW Department of Education**, and recommends that this plan:

- Be developed in **consultation with an Advisory Group**, including **MTANSW as the professional body for music teachers**, alongside music education think tanks, consultants, specialist music teachers, principals, conservatoriums, music education providers, the NSW Teachers' Federation, and tertiary institutions providing Initial Teacher Education (ITE).
- Be a **long-term (10-year) commitment**, with **clearly defined targets, funding allocations, and annual public reporting** to the Minister for Education.
- Ensure **universal access to high-quality music education** in government schools, particularly in **regional, rural, and low-SES areas**.
- Establish a **clear standard** for **sequential, ongoing** music education in NSW schools, addressing gaps between **curriculum expectations and actual provision**.
- Introduce **mandatory minimum music education time allocations** for K-6 students, delivered by **qualified and confident** teachers.
- Strengthen pathways for **professional development and specialist accreditation** for music educators.

### 3. MTANSW's Role in Regulation and Accreditation (Recommendation 10)

MTANSW is **uniquely positioned** to lead efforts to develop **appropriate industry regulation**, ensuring that:

- Any **framework for industry regulation** aligns with professional teaching standards and **supports, rather than hinders, access to quality music education**.
- High-quality, **accredited music educators are recognised**, while providing **clear pathways** for non-accredited tutors to deliver basic music tuition where appropriate.
- Accreditation and professional standards are **profession-led**, rather than dictated by **external agencies with no direct expertise in music education**.

- MTANSW, as the **peak professional association for music teachers**, takes on a role similar to **professional colleges in medicine, law, and architecture**—ensuring **high standards, accreditation pathways, and professional development opportunities** for music educators.

This is an **opportunity to professionalise music teaching**, creating **clearer career pathways, stronger teacher training, and accreditation processes** that ensure students receive the **highest quality education from qualified professionals**.

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### MTANSW's Role in the Implementation of the Inquiry's Recommendations

MTANSW seeks a **formal role** in the **implementation of the Inquiry's recommendations**. Unlike philanthropic bodies or general education organisations, **MTANSW represents, and is accountable to, the profession itself**. Our **raison d'être** is ensuring **high-quality music teaching** is accessible to all students.

We have the capacity to:

- **Advise on policy implementation**, ensuring reforms align with **international best practice in music education**.
- **Engage with music teachers across NSW** to **disseminate information, collect feedback, and ensure reforms are informed by real-world teaching practice**.
- Provide **ongoing professional development** to support the implementation of any new standards or curriculum changes.

MTANSW is in the process of establishing an **Advisory Council**, which will:

- **Provide expertise in policy, education, and industry engagement**.
- **Strengthen collaboration** between school-based and independent music educators.
- Ensure **MTANSW's policies and programs reflect evidence-based best practice**.

We urge the NSW Government to **recognise MTANSW's leadership role in this space**, and to engage with us in shaping reforms that will have a **lasting impact on the profession and the quality of music education across NSW**.

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### Next Steps & Follow-Up

We understand that the **NSW Cabinet will now have the Government's Response in hand** and that time may not permit a meeting at this stage. However, **MTANSW stands ready to assist** in any way that may be required as the **Government moves towards implementation**.



In particular, we wish to highlight the importance of:

- **MTANSW's inclusion in the Advisory Group for the Music Education Plan** (Rec. 12), ensuring that the voice of the profession is represented in shaping its implementation.
- **MTANSW's role in shaping regulation and accreditation frameworks** (Rec. 10), to ensure professional standards are set **with the profession, for the profession.**
- **The funding and resourcing of professional development pathways for music educators**, to support the successful rollout of any proposed reforms.

Best regards,

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