Evaluation of Regional Conservatorium music programs for school students
FINAL REPORT – Book 2
Prepared for the Association of New South Wales Regional Conservatoriums

8th April 2016

Disclaimer
Any representation, statement, opinion or advice, expressed or implied, in this publication is made in good faith, but on the basis that the Western Research Institute (WRI) or its employees are not liable (whether by reason of negligence, lack of care or otherwise) to any person for any damage or loss whatsoever, which has occurred or may occur in relation to that person taking (as the case may be) action in respect of any representation, statement or advice referred to above.

Contact Details:
Street Address:
Level 1 126 William St
Bathurst NSW 2795

Mailing Address:
PO Box 9374
Bathurst NSW 2795
Ph: 02 6333 4000

Email: team@wri.org.au
Website: www.wri.org.au
“Music education is as important as numeracy and literacy”

CONTENTS

Phase 3 – Quantitative fieldwork ................................................................. 4
Parent Surveys .......................................................................................... 11
School Surveys ....................................................................................... 21
Primary Student Survey ......................................................................... 27
Secondary Student Survey ..................................................................... 34
Conclusion ............................................................................................. 41
Recommendations .................................................................................. 44
Appendix 1 – Achievement of KPIs and changes to ETH ...................... 51
Appendix 2 – NSW Regional Conservatorium compliance with BOSTES Curriculum ................................................ 55
Appendix 3 – Interim Conclusions ............................................................ 56
Western Research Institute ..................................................................... 61
Phase 2 of the evaluation sought to collect and understand qualitative data on the impacts and operations of Conservatorium programs in schools and on campus. In the resulting analysis, a number of hypotheses were developed regarding Conservatorium services, based on the information gained through qualitative interviews. The focus of Phase 3 of the evaluation was to test these hypotheses across the wider network of regional Conservatoriums to arrive at more definitive conclusions on the operations and impacts of Conservatorium services. A total of 570 surveys were completed, made up of 360 parent surveys, 19 school staff surveys, 105 primary student surveys and 86 secondary student surveys.

Methodology

In Phase 3, online surveys were undertaken with students, parents and school staff, including Principals and school teaching staff involved with the organisation and running of Conservatorium programs in their respective schools. Survey data has been analysed and discussed below by survey cohort (primary student, secondary student, parents and school staff).

Survey Design

Survey selection

Survey respondents were selected by a number of means, depending on the particular cohort:

- The key criteria for parents invited to complete a survey was that they had a child between the ages of 8 and 18 years of age currently undertaking Conservatorium tuition. The majority of parents who completed a survey were contacted directly by their local Conservatorium by email or personal contact. This process was managed by each Conservatorium for their local area and often involved a mass email to all parents. Parents were also invited to undertake a survey through an invitation and information letter sent through participating schools.

- A Principal and or a senior teacher (involved in organising a Conservatorium’s program at their school) from each of the 34 schools were invited to undertake a survey.

- Students were invited to participate in evaluation surveys in one of two ways. Students receiving Conservatorium tuition through their school were invited via an invitation and information letter sent through their school. Campus students, similar to campus parents, were invited via email (to their parents). Again, this process was managed by each Conservatorium for their local area and often involved a mass email to all parents.

Method of survey

Surveying was undertaken primarily through the online surveying tool, SurveyMonkey. Respondents were also offered the opportunity to undertake surveys via a paper based survey. A small number of paper surveys were completed and returned, which were then entered (including verbatim responses) into the SurveyMonkey online tool.
Completion criteria
A number of surveys did not meet the minimum criteria to be included in the final response data. Issues included insufficient number of questions completed, no parent identification, and child was not currently attending Conservatorium.

Survey themes
Surveys were designed with input from the Department and the Association, to test information gathered in qualitative interviews captured in Phase 2. The main subject areas tested in surveys were:

- Value of music education
- Reputation of Conservatoriums
- Satisfaction with Conservatorium services
- Operational strengths and areas for improvement
- Student impacts
- School impacts

Parent and school staff surveys provided questions relating to their views, interactions and observations on Conservatorium services. Student surveys sought to test the social and emotional wellbeing (SEWB) of students, including their emotional, social and cognitive wellbeing, aligning with the Department of Education’s Wellbeing Framework.

Social and emotional wellbeing
The initial student survey methodology was designed so that students receiving Conservatorium tuition would provide information on their social and emotional wellbeing and additional information on their participation in Conservatorium tuition. The SEWB aspect of the survey was to be tested against the findings of a control group of student surveys, who do not participate in Conservatorium tuition. The aim of this methodology was to provide a means of isolating (to some extent) the social and emotional wellbeing impacts of participating in Conservatorium tuition.

Unfortunately, participation rates for control group students were not high enough to gather meaningful data and a comparative analysis of SEWB data could not be undertaken. Student surveys were designed to compensate for this potential outcome, to some degree, by asking questions that probed the extent to which Conservatorium tuition impacts on student social, emotional and cognitive wellbeing. On this basis, survey results identify student levels of social and emotional wellbeing and the impacts of their participation in Conservatorium tuition on the three identified aspects of social and emotional wellbeing.

In a related issue, the student survey question on extra-curricular activities was intended to identify the level SEWB impact of these types of activities on control students. Whilst control student surveys were insufficient to include in data analysis and reporting, this question has been reported on as it provides background information on the activities of student respondents.

Analysis
Survey data was analysed by target cohort, including parents, school staff, primary students and secondary students. These results are presented below.
In addition, segment analysis of survey data was undertaken for parent and student surveys to explore potential insights into differences in survey responses. Segment analysis included:

- Parent surveys analysed by their child’s Conservatorium attendance at school or campus
- Parent surveys by parent income
- Combined primary and secondary student surveys by Conservatorium attendance at school or campus

Overall, it was found that segment analysis did not discover significant differences requiring extensive reporting. There were, however, a small number of interesting insights.

It was found that parent surveys had a small but largely consistent difference in results when analysed by campus and school parents. Campus parents often reported slightly more favourable responses, although this was not consistent for all questions. To the contrary, when student responses were analysed by where students received their Conservatorium tuition (campus or school), school students often reported slightly more favourable metrics. Again this was not consistent for all questions.

Student results, analysed by campus or school Conservatorium attendance, also showed that campus students reported:

- Significantly lower metrics on some SEWB indicators (pride, excitement and confidence)
- Less public performances and lower enjoyment of public performances. This was negated to some degree by segment analysis of parent surveys, which showed that parents of campus students advised that their children were engaged in more public performances
- Significantly lower incidence of certain positive emotions when asked how Conservatorium programs made them feel (calm, proud, excited)
- Higher metrics in terms of making friends through Conservatorium programs

The differences in survey results between student attendance at campus or school may be explained by the fact that school surveys were mainly undertaken by primary students, as Conservatorium school programs are predominantly aimed at primary schools. On this basis, the majority of school student survey feedback came from primary students and the majority of campus feedback came from secondary students.

A further data analysis issue requiring explanation relates to the methodology for scored responses in parent and school staff surveys. These surveys utilised an average scoring methodology, on certain questions, to provide an overview of survey responses. In these questions, respondents were asked to rate their responses on a 1 – 10 scale. They were also provided with an option of ‘Don’t know’. The average score was the average of all number rated responses, with ‘Don’t know’ responses not included as they did not provide a numerical response. In a small number of cases, report analysis has highlighted high ‘Don’t know’ responses when relevant.

**Data issues**

Analysis of survey data highlighted a number of data and interpretation issues that have impacted on the inclusion and analysis of survey data. These include:
- A very small number of primary students (2) didn’t provide a school. These were classified as ‘Other’ in results
- A student survey question, relating to the school or Conservatorium where the student receives tuition, received a number of unclear answers (for example, only a town name was entered). In these circumstances, unless a specific school name was provided, it was assumed that the student received tuition at a campus
- Questions with an open ended responses required subjective interpretation and analysis
- A further issue was that school staff surveys received a limited response, with only 19 surveys being completed. On this basis, school staff survey results are indicative only. No segment analysis was undertaken of school staff survey results and reporting is descriptive only.

### Sample

Online surveys were undertaken with student, parent and school staff cohorts across the network of regional Conservatoriums. Representation across these regions differed according to local conditions. Detailed information is included below on the sample achieved in each of the survey cohorts.

### Parents

Across NSW 398 parents logged in to begin a survey. Of this group, 360 were eligible and completed a survey, with the percentage breakdown across Conservatorium regions as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conservatorium</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Central Coast Conservatorium</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarence Valley Conservatorium</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coffs Harbour Regional Conservatorium</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goulburn Regional Conservatorium</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gunnedah Conservatorium</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macquarie Conservatorium of Music</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mitchell Conservatorium</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murray Conservatorium</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New England Conservatorium of Music</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Rivers Conservatorium</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orange Regional Conservatorium</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riverina Conservatorium of Music</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South West Music</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamworth Regional Conservatorium</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Hunter Conservatorium</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wollongong Conservatorium</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young Regional School of Music</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Parents were asked how many children they had currently attending Conservatorium tuition. Parents advised that they had 289 primary children and 229 secondary children currently attending Conservatorium tuition.
Parents were also asked where their children received tuition from their local Conservatorium. Of these parents, 137 (38 percent) indicated that their children received Conservatorium tuition at school, 249 (69 percent) at a Conservatorium campus, 15 (4 percent) parents advised that their children received Conservatorium services in an alternative location, such as at home or town hall. Of these parents 39 (11 percent) advised that their children received Conservatorium services in more than one location.

In terms of the Conservatorium services that children were, or had been, involved in, 300 parents indicated that their children had been involved in individual tuition, 177 in a small group (including ensembles, band, choirs, etc), 106 in a large group (including ensembles, band, choirs, etc), 13 in a whole of class (compulsory). A further 10 advised that their children had been involved in ‘Other’ types of tuition.

**Schools**
Throughout regions serviced by Conservatoriums within the Association, Principals and relevant teachers at 34 schools were contacted to participate in surveys. A total of 19 surveys were complete at 18 different schools. Of these, there were 14 public primary schools, 2 private primary schools, 1 public high school and 1 private high school. Given the relatively low number of school staff surveys, survey results are indicative only.

Participating schools and completed surveys are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conservatorium</th>
<th>School Surveys Completed</th>
<th>Number of Surveys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Central Coast Conservatorium</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarence Valley Conservatorium</td>
<td>Westlawn Public School</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grafton Public School</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coffs Harbour Regional Conservatorium</td>
<td>Narranga Public School</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goulburn Regional Conservatorium</td>
<td>Gunning Public School</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Windellama Public School</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gunnedah Conservatorium</td>
<td>Gunnedah Public School</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macquarie Conservatorium of Music</td>
<td>Dubbo Public School</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mitchell Conservatorium</td>
<td>MacKillop College Bathurst</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murray Conservatorium</td>
<td>Jindera Public School</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New England Conservatorium of Music</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Rivers Conservatorium</td>
<td>Ocean Shores Public School</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orange Regional Conservatorium</td>
<td>Mullion Creek Public School</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Catherine McAuley Catholic Primary School</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riverina Conservatorium of Music</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South West Music</td>
<td>St. Michael's Primary School</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Deniliquin North Public School</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamworth Regional Conservatorium</td>
<td>Tamworth High School</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nundle Public School</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Hunter Conservatorium</td>
<td>Scone Public School</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wollongong Conservatorium</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young Regional School of Music</td>
<td>Young Public School</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Services provided by Conservatoriums in these schools included individual tuition, large and small group tuition (including ensembles, band, choirs, etc) and whole of class compulsory tuition.

**Primary students**

Primary student surveys were completed by 105 students across the Association network of regional Conservatoriums. The average age of primary students who completed the survey was 10 years. Of this group, 37 were male (35 percent) and 68 female (65 percent). Of these students, 68 (65 percent) attended Conservatorium tuition at school and 37 (35 percent) attended a Conservatorium campus.

The percentage breakdown of completed primary student surveys by Conservatorium region is shown below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conservatorium</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Central Coast Conservatorium</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarence Valley Conservatorium</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coffs Harbour Regional Conservatorium</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goulburn Regional Conservatorium</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gunnedah Conservatorium</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macquarie Conservatorium of Music</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mitchell Conservatorium</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murray Conservatorium</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New England Conservatorium of Music</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Rivers Conservatorium</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orange Regional Conservatorium</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riverina Conservatorium of Music</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South West Music</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamworth Regional Conservatorium</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Hunter Conservatorium</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wollongong Conservatorium</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young Regional School of Music</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note*: 2 student surveys entered an invalid response when asked what Conservatorium they attended. These have been classified as other.

**Secondary students**

Secondary student surveys were completed by 86 students across the Association network of regional Conservatoriums. The average age of secondary students who completed the survey was 15 years. Of this group, 39 were male (45 percent) and 47 female (55 percent). Of these students, 7 (8 percent) attended Conservatorium tuition at school and 79 (92 percent) attended a Conservatorium campus. The higher campus attendance, when compared with primary student survey data, is consistent with the predominantly primary school focus of Conservatorium tuition in schools.

The percentage breakdown of completed secondary student surveys by Conservatorium region is shown below.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conservatorium</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Central Coast Conservatorium</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarence Valley Conservatorium</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coffs Harbour Regional Conservatorium</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goulburn Regional Conservatorium</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gunnedah Conservatorium</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macquarie Conservatorium of Music</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mitchell Conservatorium</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murray Conservatorium</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New England Conservatorium of Music</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Rivers Conservatorium</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orange Regional Conservatorium</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riverina Conservatorium of Music</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South West Music</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamworth Regional Conservatorium</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Hunter Conservatorium</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wollongong Conservatorium</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young Regional School of Music</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Parent Surveys

Surveys were completed by 360 eligible parents across the Association network of regional Conservatoriums. Parents advised that they had 289 primary children and 229 secondary children currently attending Conservatorium tuition.

Demographic Analysis

When asked for their age, 47 percent of respondents were in the 45 – 54 age category, whereas 35 – 44 was the next largest category, with 44 percent of respondents.

Survey respondents were 89 percent female and 10 percent male.
Approximately 2 percent of respondents identified as Aboriginal and 97 percent identified as non-indigenous. With regard to education, 74 percent of respondents had achieved a tertiary degree or diploma.

When asked about household income before taxes, 36 percent of respondents nominated that they earned over $100,000 per annum and 25 percent didn’t know or didn’t wish to divulge.
Value of music education

Parents were asked to rate the value that they place on their children’s musical education on a scale of 1 – 10, where 1 was no value and 10 was great value. Survey results show that parents value their children’s music education very highly, providing an average score of 9.2 out of 10. This confirms qualitative evidence gathered during group interviews, where parents provided a 9.4 score for the importance of music education.

Reputation

Parents were asked how they would rate the reputation of their local Conservatorium of music on a scale of 1 – 10, where 1 was very poor and 10 was very good. Parents provided a strong positive response to this question, with an average score of 8.8 out of 10. For this question, 81 percent of respondents rated Conservatorium reputation as 8 or above. Again this confirms qualitative evidence which found that, whilst parents generally had strong positive views of the reputation of Conservatoriums, some operational issues had negatively influenced parent views.

When asked to provide a number of words that described their view of the reputation of the local Conservatorium, parents provided 807 responses, 94 percent of which were positive. The top five responses, which accounted for 227 responses, were in the following order:

1. Professional
2. Excellent
3. Friendly
4. High quality, standard and regard
5. Quality

Other positive responses included:

- Encouraging
- Inclusive
- Committed
- Reliable
- Positive community aspects
- Great
- Talented
- Dedicated
- Good or very good
- Inspirational

Of the 52 negative responses, 18 responses highlighted that Conservatorium services were expensive and a further 5 responses related to poor administration. Other negative responses were varied.
Satisfaction

Qualitative evidence suggested that parents were quite satisfied with Conservatorium services. Qualitative information was evidenced by basic data gathered during group interviews, whereby parents provided an average 8.9 out of 10 score for their satisfaction, and an 8.8 score for their perceived view of their child’s satisfaction.

Parent surveys further tested how parents would rate their overall satisfaction with Conservatorium music tuition on a scale of 1 – 10, where 1 was completely unsatisfied and 10 completely satisfied. Parents provided a strong positive response, with an average score of 8.6 out of 10 and 80 percent of responses in the 8 -10 range.

When parents were asked how satisfied they thought their children were with their Conservatorium tuition, they provided a similar response. Perceived student satisfaction was given an average score of 8.7 out of 10. Again, 80 percent of responses were in the 8 -10 range.

Parents were also asked to rate their satisfaction with certain aspects of Conservatorium services. These aspects were drawn from issues raised through qualitative interviews. On balance, satisfaction levels are high, but with lower responses for certain aspects of Conservatorium services.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Average Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How engaging the music lessons are</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How informative the music lessons are</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservatorium staff interpersonal skills</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservatorium staff teaching skills</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservatorium communications</td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The convenience of music lessons</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The cost of Conservatorium lessons</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The value you are getting for the money you pay</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to Conservatorium scholarships</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Parents reported high levels of satisfaction with aspects related to tuition, including student engagement, how informative lessons are, lesson convenience and Conservatorium teacher interpersonal and teaching skills. It should be noted, however, that in excess of 5 percent of parent responses did not know how to rate how engaging and informative lessons are. This ‘don’t know’ response was slightly higher than in other metrics.

Other aspects of Conservatorium services rated lower, but with reasonable overall levels of satisfaction. Conservatorium communications (including administrative & organisational communication), cost of lessons and value for money all rated lower levels of satisfaction. This is in line with qualitative evidence that these issues are concerning some parents.

Access to Conservatorium scholarships had the lowest satisfaction rating. Even more telling was that, when asked about their satisfaction with access to Conservatorium scholarships, 37 percent of respondents
answered that they did not know. This suggests that many parents are uninformed about Conservatorium scholarships and those that are informed are less satisfied with this aspect of Conservatorium services.

**Strengths and areas for improvement**

Parents were asked for their views on the strengths and areas for improvement in Conservatorium services. This was an open-ended question where parents could write a short comment on issues of their choice. This feedback was coded and a thematic analysis was undertaken to understand the most common response. Parents provided 174 positive responses as to Conservatorium strengths and 169 responses on areas for improvement.

Whilst individual feedback is necessarily related to specific Conservatoriums, survey data suggests that there are common strengths and areas for improvement. The most common responses are presented below.

**Strengths**

**Teachers**

Teachers were the most common strength reported by parents, with approximately 38 percent of responses highlighting Conservatorium teachers. Reports included feedback that these teachers were expert, skilled, friendly, nurturing, wonderful, excellent, committed and high quality. Whilst qualitative findings included numerous reports of well-regarded Conservatorium teachers, it is arguable that qualitative findings did not appreciate the extent to which Conservatorium teachers are a strength of Conservatorium operations.

**Quality tuition**

High quality services and tuition was highlighted by approximately 17 percent of parents as a strength of Conservatoriums. Parents highlighted specific types of tuition (such as ensembles and theory), provided overall views on the quality of Conservatorium services, discussed the reputation of Conservatoriums and mentioned individual aspects, such as Conservatorium curriculums.

**Developing, engaging and inspiring**

Developing, engaging and inspiring students was another common response, with approximately 16 percent of parents highlighting relevant aspects.

**Variety and accessibility**

A similar (16 percent) response rate was also recorded for parent views on the variety and accessibility of Conservatorium services. Parents discussed flexibility, inclusiveness, the variety of options and the ease of access of Conservatorium services.

**Areas for improvement**

**Communication**

The most common area for improvement highlighted by parents was communication, which was mentioned in 22 percent of responses. Poor communications were also a major area for improvement in qualitative interviews. Better communication was discussed in surveys in terms of communicating student’s progress in lessons and organisational aspects such as missed lessons, cancellations, events and
concerts, requirements and costs. Poor communication was highlighted for teaching and administration staff.

**Variety of services**
The next most common area for improvement (18 percent) related to the variety of services available. Greater availability was discussed in terms of range of instrumental and group tuition, more performance opportunities, more availability of lesson times and a greater variety of tuition in different musical styles.

**Venue and facilities**
Conservatorium venue and facilities was highlighted by approximately 15 percent of parents as an area for improvement. This feedback related to the physical premises and amenities, including feedback on toilets, air conditioning, peeling paint, musty odours, limited performance space and parking. This issue was unexplored in Phase 2 qualitative interviews, and to that extent, consists of a new finding.

**Financial**
Financial matters were viewed as an area for improvement by approximately 9 percent of parents. This related to the cost of Conservatorium services and aspects of billing, payment and Conservatorium scholarships. Again, this is supportive of qualitative findings, whereby cost and matters relating to the payment for missed lessons were relatively common complaints.

**Administration**
Parents also voiced complaints over aspects of Conservatorium administration, which confirms qualitative feedback. Approximately 10 percent of responses highlighted negative aspects of Conservatorium administration and administration staff behaviour. Areas for improvement highlighted include administrative staff behaviour and attitudes, administrative systems and technology, administration staff communication skills and professionalism.

**Teaching staff**
In addition, 8 percent of respondents identified Conservatorium teaching staff as an area for improvement. Issues discussed included inconsistent teaching and communication standards, the level or quality of teaching, under or unqualified teachers, and professional appearance. Interestingly, survey data has uncovered considerably less feedback on poor teaching and interpersonal skills than found in Phase 2 qualitative interviews, which may suggest that this is less of an issue across the Association’s network.

It should be noted that Conservatorium teaching staff and the variety of services provided by Conservatoriums have been highlighted as both strengths and areas for improvement. For teaching staff, this would likely relate to the fact that many Conservatorium teaching staff across many Conservatorium locations are likely to have a percentage of negative student/parent encounters. On balance, a much higher percentage of parents provided strong support for Conservatorium teachers, which is supported by strong support from primary and secondary students (as data illustrates below). With regard to the variety of Conservatorium services being considered a strength and area for improvement, it is likely explained by different levels of knowledge of Conservatorium services, or different views on what can be classed as a wide variety of services.
Parents were asked a number of questions about the impact of Conservatorium programs on their children. These related to impacts in terms of music education, other education and non-education impacts, including emotional, behavioural and life skill impacts.

**Student Impacts**

Parents were asked to rate the extent that these impacts had occurred for their children on a 1 – 10 scale, where 1 was not at all and 10 was a lot. Survey results illustrate strong music education impacts observed by parents.

**Music education impacts**

Phase 2 qualitative interviews highlighted that Conservatorium tuition had significant impacts on students in a number of different ways. These impacts were increased musical competency; the ability to discuss musical experiences in new ways; an increase in the number and quality of public musical performances by students; increased participation and engagement in music; and access to new musical opportunities.

Parents were asked if their child had been involved in more public performances as a result of their Conservatorium tuition. Survey results showed that 73 percent of parents reported that their child had been involved in more public performances. A further 26 percent of parents advised that their children were not involved in more public performances, whilst the remaining 1 percent advised that they did not know.

When parent survey data was analysed according to whether their children attended a Conservatorium program at school or on campus, it was found that campus parents indicated a much higher rate of child performances. This data analysis indicated that 75 percent campus parents reported that their child had been involved in more public performances, as opposed to 64 percent for school parents.
Parents whose children were participating in more public performances due to their Conservatorium tuition were then asked if the quality of those performances increased. Parents were asked to rate this improvement on a scale of 1 – 10 where 1 was not at all and 10 was a lot. The average score was 8.7 out of 10, indicating that involvement in Conservatorium tuition had resulted in substantial improvements in public performances.

**Other education impacts**

Parent surveys asked two questions to elicit data on the connection between student participation in Conservatorium tuition and positive/negative impacts on other areas of student education. Limited evidence has been found drawing a link between the two in qualitative interviews, although there was common feeling that music tuition assisted learning. These findings appear to be supported by survey data.

Parents were asked if they could attribute positive gains in other areas of their child’s education to their participation in a Conservatorium music program. They were asked to rate the degree to which this had occurred on a 1 – 10 scale, where 1 was not at all and 10 was a lot. Parents provided an average score of 6.7, suggesting that they felt students’ other education was benefiting, although only moderately. It should be noted, however, that 23 percent of parents indicated that they did not know if there was any link between Conservatorium tuition and positive gains in other education.

Parents were also asked if they could attribute any negative impacts of Conservatorium tuition on other areas of their child’s education. Based on the same 1 – 10 scale, parents found relatively little negative impact with an average score of 4.2. However, the more relevant data was that 70 percent of parents found no negative impacts at all and 9 percent of parents indicated that they did not know. This suggests very low levels of negative impacts.

**Non-education impacts**

Qualitative interviews with parents found that students were positively impacted by their participation in Conservatorium tuition in areas outside of their education. These impacts were principally in the realms of emotional, behavioural and life skill impacts. Qualitative interviews found significant non-educational impacts, which could be categorised in the following ways:

- Confidence and self-esteem
- Socialisation and positive relationships
- Positive emotional experiences
- Life skills (including factors such as responsibility, discipline, focus and maturity)
- Identity and belonging
- Behavioural
- Developmental

Parent surveys tested student impacts in these categories, confirming the qualitative findings. Parents were asked to what extent their children were positively impacted on these metrics by their participation in Conservatorium programs. Parent responses were on a 1 – 10 scale, where 1 was not at all and 10 was a
lot. As illustrated below, it can be seen that parents attributed strong positive non-education impacts for their children.

Parents were also asked if they had noticed any negative non-education impacts on their children that they attributed to participation in a Conservatorium program. Parents provided 38 responses highlighting negative social and emotional impacts due to participation in a Conservatorium programs. This equates to 11 percent of all parent response.

Parents were able to provide a short written response, indicating the nature of the negative impact. These were:

- 8 of these responses indicated that Conservatorium tuition had resulted in some degree of stress or worry (mostly mild). This was generally experienced when encountering difficult music, exams and performances
- 8 responses indicated issues with Conservatorium teachers/director. Poor behaviour, teacher turnover and teacher shortcomings were raised as negative issues for students
- 6 responses related to negative social issues mostly relating to Conservatorium students being bullied at school for playing music
- There were 10 ‘other’ issues, which related to personal problems, such as fatigue, grumpiness, arguing and busy schedules

Most significant impact

Parents were also asked what was the most significant impact on their child (if any) of being involved in a Conservatorium program. Again, parents were able to provide a short written response, indicating the nature of the impact, if they wanted to provide feedback. This question received 282 responses. A thematic analysis of responses indicated a number of common responses, which largely confirm the most significant student impacts found in qualitative interviews:
Individual parent responses on the most significant impact on their child of Conservatorium tuition include:

“A better understanding of the theory and more confidence”

“A deeper love of music and feeling inspired by her teacher’s modelling to improve her own playing”

“A sense of being valued as a person and of development musically”

“Ability to read notation fluently”

“Discipline and confidence”

“More mature, happier”

“No significant change”

“Not wanting to take lessons anymore”

“Talking with adults has improved”

“They appear proud of their achievements in learning an instrument”

“They enjoy making good music in an ensemble, being part of a band/group”
School Surveys

Throughout regions serviced by Conservatoriums within the Association, Principals and relevant teachers at 34 schools were contacted to participate in surveys. A total of 19 surveys were complete at 18 different schools.

Reputation

School staff were asked how they would rate the reputation of their local Conservatorium of music on a scale of 1 – 10, where 1 was very poor and 10 was very good. School staff gave a very high reputation ranking, with an average score of 9.2 out of 10.

School staff were asked what words they would use to describe the reputation of their local Conservatorium. These included:

- Professional
- Flexible
- Friendly
- Quality
- Reliable
- Supportive
- Friendly
- Helpful

Satisfaction

School staff were asked how they would rate their overall satisfaction with Conservatorium services on a scale of 1 – 10, where 1 was completely unsatisfied and 10 completely satisfied. School staff provided an average score of 8.7 out of 10. When asked how satisfied they perceive students are with Conservatorium classes and tuition, school staff provided a similar average score of 8.8 out of 10.
School staff were also asked to rate their satisfaction with specific aspects of Conservatorium services on a 1 – 10 scale, where 1 is completely unsatisfied and 10 is completely satisfied. Survey responses illustrated a high level of satisfaction with all aspects of Conservatorium services.

**School impacts**

Qualitative interviews highlighted that schools experienced a range of different impacts from the Conservatorium services that they received. Further, the type of services and school impacts experienced were influenced by the community that the school serviced, its socioeconomic status and other local factors. Impacts highlighted through qualitative interviews were tested in school staff surveys to establish the extent to which these impacts were experienced across schools being serviced by Association Conservatoriums. School surveys illustrated varying levels of impact.

Some outcomes were experienced across all or most schools:

- Two outcomes, ‘Providing students with new opportunities’ and ‘Achieving quality student school performances’ were experienced across all participating schools, with 100 percent of school surveys reporting that these outcomes had occurred as a result of Conservatorium services at their school.
- Two further outcomes, ‘Increasing student music education’ and ‘Enhancing school music programs’ were also reported to have been experienced in most schools surveyed, with both outcomes receiving a 95 percent positive response.

Other outcomes were widely experienced in schools:

- 79 percent of school surveys also found that Conservatorium programs had improved the school’s image in the community.
- 74 percent of responses indicated that their school used Conservatorium programs to better engage with parents and the community.
A further 74 percent of school responses reported that Conservatorium programs assisted with student wellbeing.

Similarly, 74 percent of school responses reported that Conservatorium had assisted their school to excel in performing arts.

Some outcomes were in the mid-to low range:

- 42 percent of responses indicated that their school utilised Conservatorium services to achieve the BOSTES music syllabus.
- 47 percent of responses indicated that their school used Conservatorium programs to assist disadvantaged students.

Some outcomes were experienced by fewer schools:

- 32 percent of school surveys reported that Conservatorium programs had assisted their school to increase resilience in the face of adversity.
- 26 percent of schools surveys reported that an outcome of Conservatorium programs at their school had been in the professional development of school teaching staff.

**Strengths and areas for improvement**

School staff were asked what, if any, were the positive or negative operational issues experienced with Conservatorium services at their school. Limited feedback was provided in school staff surveys on the operational strengths and areas for improvement. All school survey comments are included below.

Operational strengths were identified as:

- “A far more expansive program - instrument choice”
- “Admin always tries to assist with any request”
- “Excellent rapport with students, work well with the school and making sure students are at lessons”
- “Opportunities like KiaOra concert”
- “Punctual, respectful of students, flexible time- frames”

Areas for improvement were identified as:

- “Beginning of the year communication/set up”
- “Music students missing some lesson time”
- “Not all tutors are engaging classroom teachers”
- “Perhaps additional focus on technical aspects of music”
- “Poor communication skills by a music teacher”
“Some delay in communication regarding students who have withdrawn from program”
“Trying to provide spaces for tutors can be difficult”

**Student Impacts**

School staff were also asked a number of questions about the impact of Conservatorium programs on students. These related to impacts in terms of students’ music education, other education and non-education impacts, including emotional, behavioural and life skill impacts.

**Music education impacts**

Qualitative interviews with school staff suggested that participation in Conservatorium programs resulted in strong gains in music education. These findings have been confirmed in school staff surveys. School staff were asked to rate the extent of the impact of Conservatorium programs on students’ musical education. These impacts were rated on a 1 – 10 scale, where 1 was not at all and 10 was a lot.

All school staff surveys confirmed that participation in Conservatorium programs had resulted in students participating in more public performances. When asked to rate the extent to which these performances had improved in quality, school staff provided an average score of 8.6 out of 10, suggesting that Conservatorium tuition resulted in significantly improved public performances.

School staff surveys also indicated that Conservatorium tuition had strong positive impacts in other areas of student musical education.

**Other education impacts**

School staff were asked two questions in the survey to understand their views on the connection between student participation in Conservatorium tuition and positive/negative impacts on other areas of student education. Interestingly, whilst qualitative interviews with school staff found limited evidence linking participation in Conservatorium programs with increased other educational performance, survey results suggest a stronger link.
On a 1 – 10 scale, where 1 was not at all and 10 was a lot, school staff surveys suggested a relatively strong link between Conservatorium program participation and gains in students' other education, providing an average score of 7.1 out of 10. Conversely, when asked if there were any negative other education impacts of Conservatorium programs, surveys provided an average score of 2.5, suggesting a low level of negative impacts in this area.

**Non-education impacts**

Qualitative interviews found that students were positively impacted by their participation in Conservatorium tuition in areas outside of their education. These impacts were principally in the realms of emotional, behavioural and life skill impacts.

School staff were asked to rate the non-education impacts of Conservatorium programs on students on a 1 – 10 scale, where 1 was not at all and 10 was a lot. School staff surveys confirmed strong positive non educational impacts.

School staff were also asked if they had observed any negative non-educational impacts on students as a result of their participation in Conservatorium programs. School staff were asked to provide a short written response detailing any negative impacts. Only two negative impacts were reported.

The first negative impacts related to a former Conservatorium teacher who allegedly intimidated students, whereas the second negative impact related to timetable clashes where students were forced to choose one extracurricular activity over another.
Most significant impact

School staff were asked to provide a short written response detailing the most significant impact of Conservatorium programs on students. Survey responses were as follows:

- “How quickly they can learn an instrument, particularly for their age”
- “The value they place on being in the school band is high”
- “No significant changes noted”
- “Discussions involving musicianship between students and staff”
- “Engagement in music”
- “Opportunity to learn an instrument otherwise unable”
- “Sense of well-being, success, positive experiences”
- “Students are comfortable performing in front of others”
- “More professional”
- “Engaged and highly motivated music students”
- “Confidence and peer relationships”
- “Confidence in all areas of school life”
Primary Student Survey

Primary students between years 3 and 6 participating in a Conservatorium program were asked to complete a survey. Surveys were completed by 105 students across the Association network of regional Conservatoriums. The average age of primary students who completed the survey was 10 years. Of this group, 37 were male (35 percent) and 68 female (65 percent). Of these students, 68 (65 percent) attended Conservatorium tuition at school and 37 (35 percent) attended a Conservatorium campus.

Social and Emotional Wellbeing

Student surveys sought to test the social and emotional wellbeing of students, including their emotional, social and cognitive wellbeing, aligning with the Department of Education’s Wellbeing Framework.

Social wellbeing

Primary students were asked a number of questions to gauge their views on how well they engage with other students, make friends, interact with their school class and adults. Survey results show that these students hold strong positive views in their ability to interact and relate with others.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am able to make new friends</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I work well with others</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like talking with other children</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can talk in front of my class</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can talk to grown ups</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Students were also asked if participation in a Conservatorium lesson had assisted them to make new friends. Of these students, 43 percent made new friends through their Conservatorium program all or most of the time, a further 42 percent made new friends this way some of the time and the remaining 16 said never. This indicates that participation in Conservatorium programs is having a positive impact on primary students’ social wellbeing by establishing new friendships and networks.

**Emotional wellbeing**

Primary students were asked questions about how they feel. Students were asked to rate emotions on a scale including never, some of the time, most of the time and all of the time. The emotions tested were:

- I feel calm
- I feel excited
- I feel confident
- I feel proud of myself
- I feel happy
- I feel nervous
- I feel worried
- I feel frustrated
- I feel angry
A high percentage of primary students rated positive emotions in the upper half of the scale, experiencing these emotions all or most of the time.

When asked to rate how often they experienced negative emotions, only a small percentage of these students identified as experiencing these emotions all or some of the time. This suggests that these students are largely experiencing positive emotions all or most of the time, also suggesting high levels of overall emotional wellbeing.
Primary students were also surveyed on the emotional impacts of being involved in a Conservatorium program. Students were asked how their Conservatorium tuition made them feel on a number of different emotional metrics. Survey results highlighted that Conservatorium programs are having widespread positive emotional impacts and low levels of negative emotional impacts.

Students were then asked to nominate any other feelings caused by their participation in a Conservatorium program. Only a small percentage of students responded with additional feelings. These were:

- “Wonderful”
- “Musical”
- “Day-dreamy”
- “I don’t know”
- “Confusing”
- “Not sure”

**Cognitive wellbeing**

Students were also asked their view on their current abilities at school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I do well in my school classes</th>
<th>Primary students participating in Conservatorium programs report doing well in their classes. 96 percent of these students doing well in classes all or most of the time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I behave well in my school classes</td>
<td>Similarly, 96 percent of these students report good behaviour in class, with 62 percent reporting good behaviour all of the time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When my school classes are difficult I keep trying until I succeed</td>
<td>91 percent of students reported trying until they succeed all or most of the time</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students were then asked to nominate from a set list of subjects, the areas of school in which they feel they do well. Primary student survey results show relatively strong results for core learning areas, such as
maths, reading and spelling, whilst science received a moderate response. Medium to very strong results were recorded for sport and arts subjects.

Students were also given the opportunity to advise of other school subjects where they felt they do well. Students provided 23 responses including:

- Acting and Drama
- Athletics
- Being outside
- Computers
- Debating, public speaking
- Drama
- Legal Studies
- Singing
- Technology
- Writing
- Electronics
- English
- Free time
- French
- Human society and its environment
- Helping others
Primary students were asked a number of questions to gauge how they feel they are doing in their Conservatorium program. Survey results were mixed with strong indicators that students enjoy their music tuition, but find certain aspects more challenging.

When asked if their music lesson was hard, 80 percent of students indicated that they feel their Conservatorium music class is never hard or only hard some of the time. Interestingly, 20 percent feel that their class is hard most of the time.

Students were also asked if they felt that they were getting better at music. A 96 percent positive response rate highlights that Conservatorium tuition is seen by primary students as having positive cognitive impacts in their increased music abilities.

Primary student surveys asked if participation in a Conservatorium program had a positive or negative impact in other areas of their education. Interestingly, 67 percent of primary students felt that participation in a Conservatorium program had assisted them in other school classes.
**Extra-curricular activities**

Primary students were asked if they participated in extra-curricular activities. Students were asked to indicate up to three extra-curricular activities that they undertake. This question was non-compulsory and the answers were coded by type.

The majority of responses (60 percent) indicated participation in an organised sporting activity, 11 percent of responses indicated a music activity, 9 percent of responses indicated dance activities and 7 percent attendance at church activities.
Secondary Student Survey

Secondary students, between years 7 and 12 participating in a Conservatorium program were asked to complete a survey. Secondary student surveys were completed by 86 students across the Association network of regional Conservatoriums. The average age of secondary students who completed the survey was 15 years. Of this group, 39 were male (45 percent) and 47 female (55 percent). Of these students, 7 (8 percent) attended Conservatorium tuition at school and 79 (92 percent) attended a Conservatorium campus.

Social and Emotional Wellbeing

Student surveys sought to test the social and emotional wellbeing of students, including their social, emotional and cognitive wellbeing, aligning with the Department of Education’s Wellbeing Framework.

Social wellbeing

Secondary students were asked a number of questions to gauge their views on how well they engage with other students, make friends, interact with their school class and adults. Survey results show that these students hold strong positive views in their ability to interact and relate with others.

| I am able to make new friends | 86 percent of secondary students reported being able to make new friends all or most of the time |
| I work well with others | 91 percent of secondary students also reported being able to work well with others |
| I like talking with other children | 87 percent of these students indicated that they like talking with other students |
| I can talk in front of my class | 79 percent of students reported that can talk in front of their class |
| I can talk to grown ups | 98 percent of secondary students are able to talk to grown ups |
Secondary students were also asked if participation in a Conservatorium lesson had assisted them to make new friends. Of these students, 51 percent made new friends through their Conservatorium program all or most of the time, a further 30 percent made new friends this way some of the time and the remaining 19 said never. This indicates that participation in Conservatorium programs is having a strong positive impact on secondary students’ social wellbeing by establishing new friendships and networks.

Emotional wellbeing

Secondary students were asked questions about how they feel. Students were asked to rate emotions on a scale including never, some of the time, most of the time and all of the time. The emotions tested were:

- I feel calm
- I feel excited
- I feel confident
- I feel proud of myself
- I feel happy
- I feel nervous
- I feel worried
- I feel frustrated
- I feel angry
A high percentage of primary students rated positive emotions in the upper half of the scale, experiencing these emotions all or most of the time. Interestingly, secondary students indicated lower levels of positive emotions in the upper half of the scale than primary students.

When asked to rate how often they experienced negative emotions, only a small percentage of these students identified as experiencing these emotions all or some of the time. Notably, however, secondary students have elevated levels of nervousness when compared with primary students. Overall, however, the data suggests that these students are largely experiencing positive emotions all or most of the time, also suggesting high levels of overall emotional wellbeing.
Secondary students were also surveyed on the emotional impacts of being involved in a Conservatorium program. Students were asked how their Conservatorium tuition made them feel on a number of different emotional metrics. Survey results highlighted that Conservatorium programs are having widespread positive emotional impacts and low levels of negative emotional impacts.

![Bar chart showing emotional impacts.]

Students were then asked to nominate any other feelings caused by their participation in a Conservatorium program. Only a small percentage of students responded with additional feelings. These were:

- “Bored”
- “Content”
- “Don’t know”
- “Driven”
- “Inspired, teachers”
- “Invigorated”
- “Satisfied”
- “Stupid when I can’t get it”

**Cognitive wellbeing**

Students were also asked their view on their current abilities at school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I do well in my school classes</th>
<th>Secondary students participating in Conservatorium programs report doing well in their classes. 98 percent of these students doing well in classes all or most of the time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I behave well in my school classes</td>
<td>95 percent of Secondary students report good behaviour in class, with 56 percent reporting good behaviour all of the time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When my school classes are difficult I keep trying until I succeed</td>
<td>93 percent of students reported trying until they succeed all or most of the time</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students were then asked to nominate from a set list of subjects, the areas of school in which they feel they do well. Secondary student survey results show moderate results for core learning areas, such as...
maths, English and science. Music was viewed by 94 percent of these students as an area in which they do well, whereas social science, art, sport, languages and social activities had modest to low responses.

Students were also given the opportunity to advise of other school subjects where they felt they do well. Students provided 23 responses including:

- Cadets
- Cooking
- Dance
- Design and Technology
- Drama
- Economics
- EOS
- Geography
- History
- Technology
- ICT
- IST (computers)
- IT Graphics
- Lead of sound crew
- PD/H/PE (All theory)
- PDM, film making
- Religion
- Soccer
- Textiles
Secondary students were also asked a number of questions to gauge how they feel they are doing in their Conservatorium program. Survey results were mixed with strong indicators that students enjoy their music tuition, but find aspects certain aspects more challenging.

When asked if their music lesson was hard, 73 percent of students indicated that they feel their Conservatorium music class is never hard or only hard some of the time. The remaining secondary students advised that feel that their Conservatorium class is hard most of the time (23 percent) or all of the time (3 percent).

Students were also asked if they felt that they were getting better at music. A 98 percent positive response rate highlights that Conservatorium tuition is seen by secondary students as having positive cognitive impacts in their increased music abilities.
Secondary student surveys asked if participation in a Conservatorium program had a positive or negative impact in other areas of their education. Interestingly, 74 percent of primary students felt that participation in a Conservatorium program had assisted them in other school classes. This is significantly higher than the 64 percent positive response recorded in primary student surveys.

### Extra-curricular activities

Secondary students were asked if they participated in extra-curricular activities. Students were asked to indicate up to three extra-curricular activities that they undertake. This question was non-compulsory and the answers were coded by type.

The two leading activities nominated by students were sport and music, which accounted for 38 percent and 26 percent of recorded responses, respectively. Lower levels of participation in other activities were recorded, including youth groups, theatre, church, dancing and other.
Conclusion

The Evaluation of Regional Music Conservatorium Programs for School Students sought to evaluate the Association’s achievements against KPIs in the NSW Department of Education Regional Conservatorium Grants Program (RCGP) and assess the impacts and operations of Conservatorium services to school age students. The evaluation comprised of an analysis of Departmental data and other benchmark documents and two phases of fieldwork, including qualitative interviews and quantitative surveys.

The Interim Report developed a number of conclusions and future considerations from qualitative data, which may inform the Association’s deliberations over potential changes to operations. These conclusions can be viewed in the Appendix. The conclusions of this Final Report are the definitive evaluation results.

Data provided by the Department highlights that the Association’s achievement against RCGP KPIs has been mixed, achieving 5 out of the 15 RCGP KPIs. The analysis of Equivalent Teaching Hours (ETH) also highlights a change in the mix of tuition streams, with falls in individual tuition ETH, but strong growth in shared tuition.

A review of the Association’s achievements against their Strategic Plan (2010) has highlighted that whilst elements of the Strategic Plan have been achieved, the Plan has not been entirely successful for a number of reasons. Despite these issues, it was found that the Association is developing and becoming more unified organisationally.

Importantly, Phase 3 survey results have demonstrated that the Association’s network of regional Conservatoriums are delivering high quality music tuition services, both in schools and on Conservatorium campuses, extending into the community through quality student performances. Conservatoriums enjoy very strong reputations in their respective communities, attended by equally high levels of satisfaction from Conservatorium stakeholders, including students, parents and schools.

Conservatorium programs and tuition are having significant positive impacts on students in terms of their social and emotional wellbeing and their music education, with smaller positive impacts being experienced by students in other areas of their education. Further, Conservatorium programs are assisting schools to reach their educational goals and engage with their local communities.

Conservatoriums are seen as having significant operational strengths, although survey feedback has highlighted operational improvements that could assist Conservatoriums to provide better services. A good proportion of this feedback related to poor communications with parents and schools. Further work on improving communications and certain other operational aspects will see Conservatoriums more fully meeting the needs of their stakeholders.

The main broad themes tested across the parent, school and student survey cohorts were:

- Value of music education
- Reputation of Conservatoriums
- Satisfaction with Conservatorium services
- Operational strengths and areas for improvement
- Student impacts
- School impacts

Individual survey findings on these metrics are discussed below.
### Value of music education
Music education is valued by parents and school staff as a very important aspect of student education. Music education is seen as important to both academic development and social and emotional wellbeing. Parents rated the value of music education as highly as 9.2 out of 10.

### Reputation of Conservatoriums
NSW regional Conservatoriums are viewed as providers of high quality music tuition. Conservatoriums are known for quality music tuition and skilled music teaching staff. Parents and teachers described Conservatoriums using words such as, professional, excellent, friendly, quality and flexible.

The strong reputation of the Conservatorium was confirmed in survey results with parents rating the reputation of Conservatoriums as 8.8 out of 10, and school staff providing a rating of 9.2 out of 10.

### Satisfaction with Conservatorium services
Conservatoriums experience high levels of satisfaction from parents and schools staff. Parents provided Conservatoriums with a satisfaction rating of 8.6 out of 10, whereas school staff gave an 8.7 out of 10 satisfaction rating. Parents and school staff also viewed student satisfaction with Conservatorium tuition at similar levels.

Whilst students were not asked to rate their satisfaction specifically, students attributed strong positive feelings and attributions towards their Conservatorium tuition and their Conservatorium teachers.

### Operational strengths
A number of operational strengths have been highlighted by Conservatorium stakeholders with the delivery of Conservatorium services in schools and on campus.

The three main reported strengths of Conservatorium services were:
- Conservatorium teachers, who are viewed as skilled musicians and who develop, engage and inspire their students
- Quality tuition, which speaks to the high quality and consistent level of services provided by Conservatoriums
- Variety and accessibility of Conservatorium services, which includes the flexibility, inclusiveness, variety of options and the ease of access of Conservatorium services
### Operational areas for improvement

A number of operational areas for improvement have been highlighted by Conservatorium stakeholders with the delivery of Conservatorium services in schools and on campus. The three main reported weaknesses of Conservatorium services were:

- Communications, including better communicating children’s tuition progress and organisational aspects such as missed lessons, cancellations, events and concerts, requirements and costs
- Variety of services, relating to a perceived lack of range in tuition services, performance opportunities and availability of lesson times
- Venue and facilities, mostly relating to Conservatorium campuses, but also including school accommodation issues

### Student impacts

Conservatorium programs have been found to have strong positive impacts on students in the three wellbeing domains identified in the NSW Department of Education Wellbeing Framework.

- Emotional wellbeing, including increased confidence and self-esteem, sense of identity and belonging, positive emotional experiences and positive changes in behaviour. Students also reported direct impacts of Conservatorium tuition, indicating that Conservatorium tuition is increasing levels of happiness, pride, confidence, calm and excitement
- Cognitive wellbeing, including significant increase in music education and ability, attended by moderate to low increases in other education areas, and increased life skills
- Social wellbeing, including increase socialisation and positive relationships, and specific evidence that participation in Conservatorium programs are assisting students to establish new friendships and networks

### School impacts

Conservatorium programs have assisted schools to provide students with new opportunities, increase the quality of music performances and meet education and creative goals. These programs are also assisting some schools to manage social issues and engage with their students and communities. Overall, school staff identified that Conservatorium programs are have strong impacts in managing student wellbeing.
Recommendations

The evaluation has highlighted a range of issues that require action. WRI provides the following recommendations.

1. Extending Conservatorium Programs

Evaluation data highlights a range of positive program impacts, including benefits to musical and other education, in addition to significant wellbeing impacts. Despite this, the uptake of Conservatorium services is limited (particularly in some areas) compared to the population of school aged children who make up the target ‘market’ for Conservatorium services. This is evidenced by Association performance against funding guideline KPIs.

To increase the number of students receiving Conservatorium tuition and the number of schools utilising these services, Conservatoriums will need to undertake measures to drive participation. Given the significant positive impacts that the evaluation has attributed to being involved in Conservatorium tuition, it would seem that this would be to the benefit of all relevant stakeholders, including schools, students, parents and Conservatoriums.

Recommendation 1.1: That Conservatoriums undertake more efforts to understand the demand for services – increasing services where possible

Evaluation feedback suggests that there is untapped demand for more Conservatorium services from parents and schools. For parents, the second most common area for improvement highlighted in surveys (18 percent) related to the variety of services available. Greater availability was discussed by parents in terms of range of instrumental and group tuition, more performance opportunities, more availability of lesson times and a greater variety of tuition in different musical styles.

On the other hand, schools were not always even aware of the full range of services offered by Conservatoriums and some schools were interested in how current Conservatorium services could be built on and progressed. By properly understanding the current demand for services, Conservatoriums will be better placed to grow services in areas with sufficient demand.

Recommendation 1.2: That Conservatoriums engage with schools so they are aware of all the beneficial impacts of Conservatorium services

The results of the evaluation show very clear positive impacts on student wellbeing. Further, the evaluation has highlighted that schools are utilising Conservatorium music programs in a variety of ways and experiencing a range of outcomes, including the use of Conservatorium services to assist disadvantaged students, increase engagement with school parents, improve the school’s public image, increase school resilience and increase student wellbeing. By understanding school needs and educating schools as to the range of impacts and uses of Conservatorium services, Conservatoriums may be able to drive the use of their services to assist schools to deal with social, behavioural and community engagement issues. A potential method for promoting the benefits of Conservatorium tuition is the development of marketing materials, including case studies of Conservatorium tuition success stories at the community, school and individual levels.
Recommendation 1.3: That the Department work with Conservatoriums to best manage the communication of the benefits of Conservatorium services to schools

The current funding guideline KPIs require that Conservatoriums increase the number of schools and students that they are working with. At the same time, the Department, as a significant gatekeeper for access into schools, does not appear to provide much assistance to Conservatoriums hoping to increase their tuition in schools. This places Conservatoriums in the difficult position of having an obligation to provide services without guaranteed access.

It can also be the case that schools are not active partners with their local Conservatorium. Evaluation activities highlighted that some Principals appear disengaged with music as a school subject or the Conservatorium program. Principal disengagement was experienced in the evaluation through a lack of engagement with the evaluation process, as witnessed in the difficulties in getting to speak with schools in Phase 1 and 2 of the evaluation phase.

Indeed, in excess of 34 schools were asked to participate in Phase 2 of the evaluation, with only 18 schools completing the survey. It should also be noted, however, that schools appear to have difficulties in managing and scheduling the large number of activities and demands placed on schools.

As the major stakeholder in NSW public schools and a significant funding body for Conservatoriums, it would appear to be to the Department’s benefit to assist better communications between schools and Conservatoriums. Greater engagement between schools and Conservatoriums would allow for better education and wellbeing outcomes for students and more effective use to be made of Association funding.

The Department could assist better communications by facilitating Conservatorium communications to relevant sources, such as regional arts coordinators, school newsletters, the SchoolBiz newsletter and other relevant school influencers. Furthermore, the Department could implement current plans to create an online portal for schools interested in accessing Conservatorium services, providing all relevant information on services, policies and contacts.

Recommendation 1.4: That Conservatoriums place a priority focus on delivering group lessons in schools

The feedback across Phase 1 qualitative interviews with Conservatorium staff, parents and school staff, suggests that there is a general consensus that group programs are a successful and engaging way to teach students. It also appears that group programs are likely to avoid many of the operational problems raised in interviews, whilst retaining most of the benefits highlighted for Conservatorium programs.

Reported benefits of group tuition include:

- Lower cost per student, which can potentially increase the participation of students from disadvantaged communities and backgrounds
- Potentially greater participation from target equity groups
- Fewer issues highlighted in providing individual lessons, including problems over lesson duration, lesson accommodation and issues with students getting to the correct rooms on time and without disruption to school and class routines
- Greater transparency of Conservatorium teaching and interpersonal abilities
- Potential for more students to engage in performance opportunities
More access and opportunity for professional development for school teachers participating in music group activities

Evidence that suggests group work is particularly good for engaging primary students (who form a large percentage of Conservatorium clientele in schools)

The benefits of more fully utilising group tuition, particularly in schools, would also require that Conservatoriums ensure that teachers taking these groups were adept at behavioural management, particularly in a group context.

2. Resourcing

Whilst the benefits of Conservatorium tuition to schools and students were largely agreed on by evaluation participants, the uptake of these services in schools and the ability of Conservatoriums to provide these services are limited by resourcing constraints. Evaluation feedback from Conservatoriums highlighted that they are currently experiencing difficulties in managing service delivery within existing budgets, based on the current number of students and the number of schools they are operating in. Extending the reach of Conservatorium services into schools would provide an additional challenge.

Recommendation 2.1: That Conservatoriums and schools be better resourced to provide Conservatorium tuition to students in schools and on campus

Increased funding can assist Conservatoriums and schools in a number of ways, including but not limited to:

More funding for schools to pay for Conservatorium services in schools. Anecdotal evidence gathered through qualitative interviews highlighted that some public schools would utilise Conservatorium services more if funding was available to enable the provision of Conservatorium tuition in schools. Comments to this effect were volunteered by Principals in a number of interviews. This may provide evidence to suggest a wider school demand for Conservatorium services if appropriate budgets were in place to secure these services.

Provide Conservatoriums and schools with more instruments to utilise in school programs. Anecdotal evidence, gathered in Phase 2 qualitative interviews, highlighted that there are issues with schools having sufficient access to musical instruments to offer anything but the most basic music education. With access to more instruments, schools and Conservatoriums are able to offer more sophisticated music tuition, with potential to increase participation and student enjoyment. This could assist in attracting and retaining a larger number of students utilising Conservatorium tuition.

Upgrades to Conservatorium campus facilities (including administration systems). Feedback from the quantitative (Phase 3) parent surveys also found that Conservatorium campuses were in need of significant work to upgrade their premises. Conservatorium venue and facilities was highlighted by approximately 15 percent of parents as an area for improvement. This feedback related to the physical premises and amenities, including feedback on toilets, air conditioning, peeling paint, musty odours, limited performance space and parking. There was also substantial
feedback in qualitative and quantitative interviews that Conservatorium administration systems required significant updating.

- Quantitative surveying provided specific mentions of administration systems and billing issues, with one piece of feedback stating that the administration system at their local Conservatorium was “out of the dark ages”. Qualitative evidence also suggested that administration systems needed updating, with many parents discussing billing and communication issues that could be resolved with better administration systems. Qualitative feedback from a number of schools also found that the process for signing students up for individual tuition was cumbersome. It was further suggested in one school teacher interview that this process should be online.

- More competitive employment packages to attract and retain staff. An issue raised in interviews with Conservatorium staff was that Conservatoriums can struggle to attract and retain appropriately qualified staff. This is due to their inability to offer suitably attractive employment packages. Issues include holiday pay, sick pay, travel allowances and lack of full-time work. The travel issue is also a significant issue in terms of the ability of Conservatoriums to reach more remote schools.

**Recommendation 2.2: That the Association assist Conservatoriums to use videoconferencing as a teaching tool and assist with technical issues**

Better utilisation of Videoconferencing has the potential to assist Conservatoriums reach a wider number of schools and students, and has the capacity to reduce travel costs and access issues for more remote schools. However, there was a notable contrast in its uptake by Conservatoriums.

Some Conservatoriums were sceptical about its capacity to be used as teaching tool and had experienced technical difficulties in using the technology. A small number of Conservatorium HOAs, however, were strong supporters. The limited feedback received from parents in qualitative interviews was less supportive of the use of videoconferencing for teaching.

It appears that there is strong potential that Conservatoriums could utilise this medium to a greater extent in the future. It would appear that increased usage of videoconferencing could be highly beneficial for Conservatoriums, given the concerns raised over the cost of travel and the difficulties in getting Conservatorium staff to remote schools.

However, it appears that in order for this to be achieved, significant work would have to be undertaken to convince Conservatorium staff and parents that this was a useful and effective tool for teaching and then teach them how to best utilise the medium.

3. **Strategic Alignment**

The Association is the peak body for regional Conservatoriums, playing a key role in negotiating funding and managing advocacy. A clear message that came from the evaluation was that Conservatoriums were not necessarily working to the same ends and goals as the Association.
This was evidenced by a relatively low overall level of engagement by Conservatoriums in the evaluation. Whilst some specific Conservatoriums were engaged in the process, it was clear that there are varying levels of commitment to and engagement with key Association projects.

This lack of engagement with the Association is supported by evaluation interviews regarding the 2010 Strategic Plan, which highlighted a lack of engagement in the Association’s strategic document. Indeed, an observation from an Association Executive Committee member discussing the 2010 Strategic Plan was that ‘most people would not know that the Association had a strategic plan’ and that few Conservatoriums had integrated it into their planning. This was seen as a result of a Strategic Plan that did not engage the Association network very well and a low ‘ownership’ of the plan by the network.

**Recommendation 3.1: That Conservatorium strategic plans align with the Association 2016 Strategic Plan**

Given that the Association is the peak body for regional Conservatoriums with increasing organisational responsibilities, there appears to be a need for a clearer alignment of goals between the Association and its member Conservatoriums. On this basis, it is recommended that individual Conservatoriums align their strategic goals with those of the Association. This will foster greater engagement and cooperation between Conservatoriums and the Association. Not only will it be in the interest of each Conservatorium to provide more active input into the Association strategic goals, but will also provide for a more cohesive organisation, with clearer objectives and increased capacity to measure performance.

**4. Strategic Communications**

The evaluation highlights that there are a range of negative operational issues being experienced in delivering Conservatorium tuition in schools and on campus. Many of these operational issues come down to poor communication. The communication issues being experienced are centred on a lack of information on Conservatorium services, policies and operations, and the management of relationships with key Conservatorium stakeholders.

**Recommendation 4.1: That the Association implement a range of strategic communication documents to be used by Conservatoriums to manage key relationships**

Strategic communication documents for key stakeholders can serve as a tool to initiate greater communication, understand needs, set expectations and provide information. These documents can be reviewed periodically to ensure that stakeholders are fully informed and have appropriate feedback mechanisms. Strategic communication documents can be tailored to provide relevant information and set expectations with all Conservatorium stakeholders, including schools, parents, Conservatorium teachers and Conservatorium administration staff. This would require a number of different documents, as discussed below.

**4.1.1 Teaching Agreements (Teachers)**

Evaluation feedback highlights that there are some issues being experienced with Conservatorium teaching staff. In school and parent interviews, the issues were mostly related to teaching staff interpersonal and teaching skills. This feedback highlighted that some teachers’ behaviour was resulting in reputational damage for Conservatoriums and was working to the detriment of their students. In the context of
interviews with members of the Association’s Executive Committee, it was also illustrated that there have been issues with human resource type issues.

On this basis, it is recommended that the Association develop Teaching Agreements to provide information and a guideline on minimum standards for certain issues. These could include issues such as:

- Guidelines for communicating with children
- Managing communications with parents
- Responding to feedback
- Communicating billing and lesson issues
- Standards of dress and appearance
- Managing relationships in schools

Teaching agreements could also potentially be a single point of information and agreement to manage all other relevant policies and employment agreements. For example, they could be utilised to include all relevant human resource policies, and child safety policies and procedures.

4.1.2 Service Charter (Conservatorium Administration)
There have been a substantial number of issues raised over aspects of Conservatorium administration. Approximately 10 percent of survey responses highlighted negative aspects of Conservatorium administration and administration staff behaviour. Areas for improvement highlighted include administrative staff behaviour and attitudes, administrative systems and technology, administration staff communication skills and professionalism.

A Service Charter can provide for more consistent standards of service by detailing service guidelines and standards of behaviour. A Charter could also be used to standardise administrative systems, technologies and methods/guidelines for reporting. This may also have positive impacts on the standardisation of reporting under the RCPG guidelines.

4.1.3 School Plans (Schools)
Qualitative interviews highlighted poor communication between schools and Conservatoriums. This included unengaged school Principals, a lack of school knowledge of Conservatorium services and operational issues going unmanaged. There was also evidence to suggest that Conservatoriums did not fully understand the needs of schools.

Implementing a School Plan can provide an opportunity to drive better communication, provide clear information and establish better understanding. A School Plan would require each Conservatorium to have an in-depth discussion with school Principals to fully understand the needs of the school in terms of music education and the ability to manage social and wellbeing issues. This document would ideally provide a full list of relevant Conservatorium services, policies and contacts, so that schools had a single point of reference for all matters relating to Conservatorium services in their school.
Furthermore, a School Plan could provide a starting point to develop relationships between schools and Conservatoriums. As noted in Phase 1 interviews, where these relationships have been managed well, schools and Conservatoriums have developed strong partnerships with Conservatoriums playing a key role in assisting schools reach their music education aspirations. By having a clearer understanding of the role of a Conservatorium in a school, and an opportunity to discuss how that role may be developed, there is a greater chance of creating a strong partnership and increasing the use of Conservatorium services.

### 4.1.4 Learning Plans (Parents and students)

Evaluation feedback found there are two significant issues in managing communications between Conservatoriums and parents/students relating to students’ music tuition. These were managing the expectations and direction of student’s music tuition, and managing organisational and administrative issues. Of the quantitative survey feedback, 22 percent of parent responses highlighted communication as an area for improvement.

With regard to the expectations and direction of students’ music tuition, there were substantial differences in the amount of input parents wanted to have in the goals of their child’s Conservatorium tuition. In some cases, parents were heavily involved in their children’s tuition and had strong views on the direction and goals of tuition. In other cases, parents appeared happy to have little involvement, as long as the children were enjoying themselves.

In terms of managing administrative and operational issues, better communications were needed on a range of issues including:

- Billing
- Missed lessons
- Cancellations
- Events and concerts
- Requirements and costs

A Learning Plan would allow parents and students to document their goals and assist Conservatoriums and teachers to understand and reach these goals. It would also be a tool to encourage dialogue and provide relevant information on services, policies and procedures. Specifically, this document would clearly state policies around missed lessons, make-up lessons, lessons cancelled by teachers, payment methods and conditions, and could perhaps detail how communications would be undertaken.

### 4.1.5 Capturing complaints and feedback

In conjunction with better communications, Conservatoriums will need to put in place a better mechanism for capturing and managing complaints and feedback. Ideally this would allow stakeholders to provide feedback on any issues arising from their engagement with a Conservatorium in a discreet and anonymous (if needed) way. It is suggested that complaints be handled with due regard to best practice complaint handling guidelines, such as the Commonwealth Ombudsman ‘Better practice guide to complaint handling’.
Appendix 1 – Achievement of KPIs and changes to ETH

Graph data relating to Association achievements against the 15 KPI under the Regional Conservatorium Grants Program (RCGP) Guidelines and information relating to changes in Association ETH streams have been included below.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)
Equivalent Teaching Hours (ETH)

**Individual lessons - one-on-one individual tuition, either vocal or instrumental**

**Early childhood music - designated early childhood or pre-instrumental classes**

**Shared lessons - one tutor delivering music tuition to two to five students simultaneously**

**Ensemble groups (small) - a rehearsing music ensemble with three to eight members that has a performance outcome as its purpose**

**Class tuition - class-based music activities such as musicianship classes, large group instrumental classes (but not ensembles), music appreciation classes and music therapy classes**

**Ensemble groups (medium) - a rehearsing music ensemble with nine to 20 members that has a performance outcome as its purpose**
Appendix 2 – NSW Regional Conservatorium compliance with BOSTES Curriculum

27 January 2015

Mr Alistair Maclean
Acting General Manager
Western Research Institute
William Street
BATHURST NSW 2795

Re: NSW Regional Conservatorium compliance with BOSTES Curriculum

Dear Alistair,

NSW Regional Conservatoriums support the *NSW Board of Studies Teaching & Educational Standards, Creative Arts, Music* syllabus though aligned teaching of school-age children.

In keeping with the BOSTES syllabus principles, regional conservatoriums promote and facilitate the development of knowledge and understanding of core musical activities through the study and experience of musical concepts, a wide range of repertoire and a sequential and planned process of teaching and learning.

The skills, values and attitudes involved in performing, organising sound and listening are identified by conservatorium teachers and experienced by students through the concepts of duration, pitch, dynamics, tone colour, and structure. While conservatorium teachers may vary their focus when commencing a program (in or out of the school environment) to best suit the student or cohort, the sequential and comprehensive curriculum-referenced approach is maintained as central to the Association of NSW Regional Conservatorium philosophy of effective teaching and learning, consistent with the BOSTES model.

Yours sincerely

Graham Sattler
Vice-President, external affairs
ANSWRC
Appendix 3 – Interim Conclusions

The Interim Report, delivered to the Association in November 2015, included a number of interim conclusions and areas for future consideration. These conclusions were based on the qualitative evidence found at that stage of evaluation and specific to individuals and Conservatoriums included in qualitative interviews. Whilst Phase 3 conclusions are the definitive results of the evaluation, interim conclusions and future considerations have been included here for completeness and may inform the Association’s deliberations over operations.

Interim conclusions and future considerations

The evaluation activities undertaken to date have provided evidence of four very different Conservatoriums, providing services to very different communities. All Conservatoriums are highly valued by their communities and are delivering significant positive impacts for their students, schools and wider communities.

Positive impacts are being reported for students in terms of musical ability, confidence, discipline and creativity. Further positive impacts included the ability of students to socialise and work in groups as well as developmental benefits and financial benefits.

The most significant benefits arising from participation in Conservatorium music programs were in the area of general wellbeing. These include increased confidence and self-esteem, increased socialisation and positive relationships, increased focus, control and discipline, more positive emotional experiences, a greater sense of identity and belonging, positive behavioural impacts, and developmental benefits for students with disabilities.

In addition to the impacts on students, Conservatorium programs were found to have significant and broad ranging impacts on the schools with which they were engaged and the wider community.

The participating Conservatoriums are all running successful operations and enjoy solid reputations; however, a few key factors have been identified as being central to the level of success enjoyed:

- Where Conservatoriums are providing the right range of services and quality staff, with administrative backing and a strong focus on client communications, it is clear that they are able to deliver strong music education and wellbeing outcomes for their students, grow their services and form strong community partnerships.

- Where the focus on managing service delivery is not so strong, there has been evidence of less satisfactory outcomes for schools and students. In some cases, this has led to a deterioration in client relationships and has caused some level of reputational damage. Furthermore, in these cases, there is evidence that some schools are questioning the future continuation of Conservatorium services.

- Based on the feedback raised to date, a number of key success factors have been identified to building stronger client relationships, providing more professional services and, potentially growing Conservatorium clientele.

School relationship management

Conservatoriums have been found to be capable of forming strong relationships with schools that assure them of ongoing support and patronage. Where this has been achieved, Principals and teaching staff
talked of the importance of Conservatorium services to their schools and students. A number of key elements have been identified in promoting stronger relationships with schools, all of which revolve around communication. In fact, better communications are at the core of most of the problems and issues that have been uncovered during this phase of the evaluation. Communications can be improved in a number ways:

**School Principals**

Whilst it may be obvious, it is worth noting the importance of the Principal in setting the goals, priorities and operations of schools, and their role in the management of external service providers who wish to access schools. Managing relationships with Principals is key to understanding the needs of the school and to the ongoing success of Conservatorium programs in schools. Despite general agreement on the importance of music education, the priority of, and commitment to, music at each school varied markedly. Broadly speaking, interviews found that lower levels of Principal engagement with Conservatoriums corresponded with a lower level of commitment to these programs. Where evidence of strong relationships was found, feedback suggested that Conservatorium programs were seen to be a key part of school music offerings.

**Communicating Conservatorium services**

Many schools are unsure of the full range of services and capabilities offered by Conservatoriums and there appeared to be a general lack of awareness of Conservatorium policies related to school services. Interviews suggest that greater emphasis should be placed on communicating Conservatorium services, policies and program operating issues; and discussing school service expectations and needs, particularly when first engaging with schools. With schools that are already working with Conservatoriums, these issues should be revisited periodically to ensure that they are working correctly and that all parties have a common understanding. Furthermore, it is evident that there is untapped demand for Conservatorium services at certain schools. Conservatoriums would benefit from explaining their full range of services and beginning a discussion about how schools could benefit from these programs, including the “next steps” in their programs.

**Managing operating issues**

Operational issues were raised in most school interviews, often relating to the operation of individual tuition and the physical process of students leaving class for lessons, finding the right room for their music lesson and getting the full lesson that has been paid for, with minimal disruption to student and school routines. It was clear that these issues have been managed better in some schools than in others. Better monitoring and communication over these operations would likely prevent issues arising, and can assist in resolving or managing these issues. Indeed, interviews strongly suggest that in situations where there has been evidence of good communications, there were substantially fewer problems.

Better communication with Principals has been raised as one way of managing these issues. However, Principals are often busy individuals, who can be difficult to contact and may not always have time to devote to day to day operational issues. In these circumstances, it was found to be beneficial to have schools nominate a key staff member who is available to negotiate issues as they arise and forestall any operating issues. Whilst there has been evidence that this is happening to a degree, it is clear that communications have not been strong enough at certain schools.
Where the above issues have been managed well, the relationship between school and Conservatorium can be transformed beyond that of a school and external service provider, to that of a valued partnership. In these circumstances, Conservatories were not only seen to enhance the educational offerings of the school, but to provide something important and integral to the school which was assumed to be an ongoing part of the school.

In some cases, this has led to an extension of the services provided, beyond music tuition. In one example, the Conservatorium had been asked to assist a school with the recruitment of a school music director, and in another, a role for the Conservatorium in developing a musical curriculum had been contemplated. In other instances, strong partnerships have resulted in long and steady relationships. One school has been working with their local Conservatorium for over 10 years, providing the Conservatorium with a strong flow of students (approximately 118 individual student lessons per week). Where Conservatories were able to develop these partnerships, it was clear that they would benefit from continued support and patronage, and would reap associated benefits in reputation.

**Parent relationship management**

A corollary to managing relationships with schools is the need to manage relationships with parents. The potential benefit to Conservatories is to be found in retaining and growing student numbers and a more positive reputation. Interviews highlighted the benefit of satisfied parents with some parents enrolling their children in Conservatorium courses as early as age 2/3 and continuing their music education with the Conservatorium services for 10+ years.

Feedback from parents found that better communication could inform parent expectations relating to lessons and other Conservatorium services, provide a clearer articulation of Conservatorium policies (such as lesson cancellations, ‘make-up’ lessons, payment for missed lessons, etc), provide information about instrument care, ensure that parents are adequately informed about children’s music tuition and other relevant information.

A further area for greater communication would be for Conservatories to better understand the services that parents want for their children. Interview feedback highlighted a demand for a number of services that local Conservatories were not providing. Better understanding of service demand could potentially result in more teaching hours for Conservatories.

**Conservatorium staff issues**

Regional Conservatoriums employ many skilled, dedicated and professional staff. Despite this, it is clear that staff and staff management is a key risk for Conservatoriums.

It has been noted above that the personality and professionalism of Conservatorium teaching staff is critical to organisational success. Situations where Conservatoriums have had poorly performing staff have, in some cases, led to poor educational outcomes, students stopping tuition and impacted on Conservatorium reputations with parents and schools. Interviews with Conservatorium personnel also raised broader human resources issues. These have included teacher holiday entitlements, vexatious claims and other workplace concerns.
Whilst no specific instances were reported by schools or parents, there is potential for even worse outcomes when staffing is considered in terms of child protection concerns. In fact, Conservatorium HOA (Head of Agency) interviews noted some rare instances where Conservatorium staff had been stood down over child protection issues. This area has been a key focus of the Association in recent times, and much progress has been made regarding the development of appropriate policies, providing access to legal advice and assistance with child protection and legal compliance issues.

Notwithstanding the efforts being made, the evidence points to the need for greater focus on staff management and controls. It also reinforces a point made in an interview with an Association Executive Committee member that the role of Conservatorium HOAs has changed over the years, from a musical and creative director, to more of a professional CEO role. Whilst the Association has been making efforts to tackle these issues, at the Conservatorium level, more work appears necessary to manage staffing issues.

Increase the range of Conservatorium services

Conservatorium provides services based on demand and the ability to source appropriately qualified teachers; however, it appears that there is scope to widen the offering in each region based on local needs. Across the four target regions, many parents sought an expansion in the range of services offered including a wider range of instruments, more bands, music theory and composition. As mentioned, this demand has the potential to increase the amount of teaching hours achieved in a Conservatorium, but will require Conservatoriums to engage parents to understand what part of their services could be expanded profitably.

Group lessons

The feedback across interviews with Conservatorium staff, parents and school staff, suggests that there is a general consensus that group programs are a successful and engaging way to teach students. It also appears that group programs also avoid many of the operational problems raised in interviews whilst retaining most of the benefits highlighted for Conservatorium programs.

Reported benefits of group tuition include:

- Lower cost per student, which can potentially increase the participation of students from disadvantaged communities and backgrounds
- Potentially greater participation from target equity groups
- Fewer issues highlighted in providing individual lessons, including problems over lesson duration, lesson accommodation and issues with students getting to the correct rooms on time and without disruption to school and class routines
- Greater transparency of Conservatorium teaching and interpersonal abilities
- Potential for more students to engage in performance opportunities
- More access and opportunity for professional development for school teachers participating in music group activities
- Evidence that suggests group work is particularly good for engaging primary students (who form a large percentage of Conservatorium clientele in schools)
The benefits of more fully utilising group tuition, particularly in schools, would also require that Conservatoriums ensure that teachers taking these groups were adept at behavioural management, particularly in a group context.

Notwithstanding the very positive achievements delivered in supporting members with human resources issues, the network can be better supported to address the issues raised above. Going forward, this will require a greater engagement of members in executing the new Strategic Plan for the Association. The mechanisms being put in place to support action across the network should see the whole of the network take ownership of the new plan. This will enable them to maximise their opportunities and the support they are able to provide to their communities.
Western Research Institute

WRI is a regional development research organisation located in Bathurst, New South Wales. WRI holds a wealth of knowledge on employment, business development and investment issues affecting regional Australia. It has worked with Commonwealth, State and Local Governments and industry groups on numerous investment and development programs in regional areas. WRI has strong credentials in business and commercial market consulting and applied economic modelling including input-output analysis, shift-share, agribusiness and regional socio-economic surveys and analysis.

Mr Alistair Maclennan – Acting General Manager

BA Political Economy, First Class Honours (UNE)

Alistair is currently leading the team at WRI, managing overall research output and developing the organisation’s business and profile. Having served in a variety of parliamentary, public service and private sector roles, Alistair brings a wealth of research experience to WRI. Alistair has well developed skills in data analysis, economics and business, and has a wide understanding of government. In addition, Alistair also has experience in policy development in the energy sector, particularly relating to the retail electricity market for residential customers, where he engaged with industry, government agencies and NGOs to inform policy. In various positions with the Queensland Parliament, Alistair provided research for Ministers, members of parliament, and assisted parliamentary committees undertake inquiries and engage with the public. Alistair’s experience in engaging with clients, stakeholders and the public assists WRI to fully understand its client’s needs and provide tailored research. Alistair is currently furthering his skills, studying accountancy with CPA Australia.

Ms Danielle Ranshaw – Senior Consultant

BEd&Fin UNSW

Danielle is an experienced researcher, having worked with WRI for seven years in roles ranging from survey development, data analysis, in-depth interview, stakeholder consultation, focus group facilitation, project management and client presentation. She joined WRI having several years’ experience as a project manager within the information technology sector and a few years of experience working in academic support program development at Charles Sturt University. Additionally, Danielle has extensive experience in business process analysis, performance planning and review, report writing and project planning. Danielle is currently a member of the Australasian Evaluation Society and has considerable experience in developing monitoring and evaluation frameworks, having completed both large scale and small evaluations for organisations in the Central West of NSW. She is also enrolled in postgraduate study related to community engagement work.

Ms Wai Matthews – Research Officer

BBus (Fin/Eco) CSU

With a background in Business Administration and Bookkeeping, Wai brings to WRI strong experience and knowledge in local business operations, management and finance. Wai has great interest in economic issues affecting regional areas which led to her attaining an internship with the NSW Department of Industry as an Economic Analyst. As an intern, Wai has gained a wealth of knowledge and experience in data analytics and reporting as well as a good understanding of government. Wai will undertake Post Graduate study in Applied Statistics to further her skills.
Ms Jenni Greig – Research Officer
BPsych (CSU)
Jenni is a social researcher with over a decade of experience. Jenni has a background in Psychology, and has been part of research teams investigating a wide range of aspects of life in regional and rural Australia, including drivers of participation in environmental incentive programs; communicating with farmers and other landholders; and the aged care sector. Jenni submitted her PhD thesis in August on social impact assessment in regional communities. She has considerable experience in qualitative and quantitative research design, data collection and analysis, as well as project administration. Jenni has also been lecturing in Psychology at Charles Sturt University since 2007.

Ms Dale Curran - Executive Officer
BA (ANU)
Dale is responsible for all administrative processes at WRI including executive support, finance, management of the Board of Directors and maintenance of policies. She has worked in a variety of roles at WRI, including Fieldwork Supervisor and Research Assistant, and has worked on several community and business surveys. Dale’s skills and experience in data collection contribute to WRI’s projects, bringing strong skills in data collection, particularly questionnaire development, data entry and telephone and face to face interviewing techniques. Dale brings a high level of organisational skill to her role as Executive Officer.

Ms Elspeth Morris - Administration Officer
Dip Bus-Mgt, Adv Dip Hosp-Mgt
Joining WRI in a maternity relief role, Elspeth brings with her over 20 years of workplace experience in hospitality, banking and administration roles including:

- Development of social media policy and profiles
- Develop document templates and document register maintenance, policy development and collaboration on risk management analyses
- Publishing of key operational materials, as well as branding and marketing guidelines and materials.
- Elspeth’s formal qualifications include Dual Diplomas in Hospitality Management and a Diploma in Management (Business). Her most recent experience relates to Executive Support. Elspeth is also experienced in fleet reporting and management, general office management, general administrative duties and supervision and training of administration staff.