

Music Education in Specialist Schools

An evaluation of Musica Viva's Musician in the Classroom Program

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 **VICTORIA
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Building Better Learning

MUSIC EDUCATION IN SPECIALIST SCHOOLS

AN EVALUATION OF MUSICA VIVA'S MUSICIAN IN
THE CLASSROOM PROGRAM

APRIL 2016

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We acknowledge the Elders, their families and forebears of both clans the Boonwurrung and Wurundjeri tribes of the Kulin Nation, who are the Traditional Custodians of Melbourne land for many centuries. We acknowledge that the land on which we work is the place of age old ceremonies of celebration, initiation and renewal and that the Kulin Nation people's continuous living culture has played a significant and unique role in the life of this region.

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About

The Victoria Institute

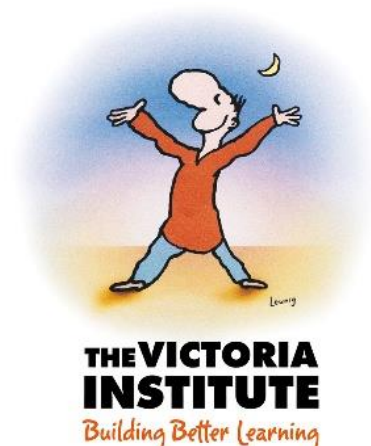
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Abbreviations

- CRC** - Convention on the Rights of the Child
- CRPD** - Convention on the Rights of Persons with a Disability
- DDA** – Disability Discrimination Act
- DET** – Department of Education and Training (Victoria)
- DSfE** – Disability Standards for Education
- FTE** – Full Time Equivalent
- MITC** – Musician in the Classroom
- MV** – Musica Viva
- MVIS** – Musica Viva in Schools
- PD** – Professional Development
- PSD** – Program for Students with Disabilities
- VCAL** – Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning
- VCF-10** - Victorian Curriculum Foundation-10
- VELS** – Victorian Essential Learning Standards

Executive Summary

Introduction

Musica Viva (MV) was founded in 1945 and is Australia's longest running independent professional performing arts association. Each year MV offers a range of programs in metropolitan and regional communities across the country. These vary to include an International Concert Season featuring overseas artist performing national tours, touring programs providing live music in regional areas, and the Musica Viva in Schools (MVIS) program. This report focuses on one aspect of the MVIS, the Musician in the Classroom (MITC) program.

Purpose

This report was initiated by Musica Viva to investigate the impact of its MITC program in Melbourne, Victoria. More specifically, focus was directed to the delivery of the MITC program in three Victorian government education settings for dis/abled students. The research targeted people's experiences with the MITC program within these three specialist schools.

Methods

The research sought to gain insight from a variety of individuals closely connected to the MITC program. Participants included MV staff and program teachers, school-based staff including senior administration, classroom teachers, and students participating in the MITC program. Several sources of information were obtained including face-to-face interviews, staff surveys, classroom observations and student picture drawing. Secondary data sources such as government data and policy have also been included.

Findings

The qualitative responses sourced for this report were resounding in their support of the MITC program. The data converged on three central themes: quality, accessibility and sustainability. The MITC provides access and exposure to quality music education and enables sustainable growth in a number of important areas including personal (e.g. motor skills, physical and social wellbeing) and social (i.e. relational and school community) development.

Recommendations for Musica Viva

1. Musica Viva should continue to advocate for the provision of quality music education in specialist schools. Such efforts should simultaneously engage relevant government departments and officials, schools and their staff, as well as the communities in which students with dis/abilities live. Advocacy needs to include discussion regarding financial responsibility and support.
2. Musica Viva should continue to provide expert advice to schools and teachers regarding music education for students with dis/abilities. The MITC program is a resource developed from several years of quality music education in specialist schools and consultancy in the area would be highly valued in the education sector. Direct marketing to specialist schools of MVIS and the MITC program should look to engage Principal networks and specialist teacher forums.
3. Musica Viva should develop a suite of professional development or learning modules for school-based staff in relation to music education with students with dis/abilities. These intensive half or full-day modules would target specialist schools offering a bespoke service based on school specific (i.e. staff and students) needs.
4. Musica Viva should recognise the importance of having trained music educators leading the MITC. This has not been previously explicated as an important principal for ensuring program quality. The ongoing employment of qualified music educators will contribute to maintaining the quality of the program.
5. Musica Viva should address with schools and their staff the specific objectives and goals for delivering the MITC program prior to the beginning of each residency (if contracted for the standard 10 week period) or at the beginning of each school term (for longer residencies). Such discussion would cover a variety of logistics including potential financial contribution by the school and involvement of staff in program delivery. Explicit planning would help to improve and direct what records are kept in relation to MITC program achievements.
6. Following from Recommendation 5, Musica Viva should develop a MITC program finalisation procedure to assist with assessment of impact and provide guidance to schools regarding sustaining learning in music education.
7. Musica Viva should examine connections between the MITC program, the soon to be introduced Victorian Curriculum Foundation-10 (VCF-10), school-based assessment and student Individual Learning Plans. Explicating the relationship between teaching, learning and assessment would assist in formalising the standing of the MITC program as an academic program with social and community benefits.
8. Musica Viva should audit schools use of the whiteboard resources made available as part of MVIS and the MITC program. At present, the utility of these resources is haphazard and knowledge of their application uncertain.

9. Musica Viva should support further research and evaluation of the MITC program. The current evaluation received sufficient response from school staff. In depth investigation of parent and school community perspectives would contribute to documenting the impact of the MITC beyond the classroom.





INTRODUCTION

This report presents analyses derived from a qualitative study of the MITC program delivered into three Victorian government schools for dis/abled students in Term 4, 2015. The participating schools were Furlong Park School for Deaf Children, Rosamond School and Mornington Special Developmental School. MV's Victorian State Manager, Helenka King, initiated the evaluation.

The report draws on and is informed by research and scholarship undertaken in the area of dis/ability studies in education (Goodley, 2014; Slee, 2011). Central to perspectives advanced from this activity is a purposeful resistance of ableism in contemporary society. Ableism, like other commonly held pervasive social attitudes and judgements (e.g. racism or sexism), engages the concept of disability from specific perspectives. Often, a deficit-based understanding of people with impairment/s emanates from expectations of who should be considered *normal* in contemporary life. Professional knowledge, sourced from disciplines like medicine, psychiatry and psychology, contribute to informing these wider community expectations guiding our actions along the way. This kind of knowledge disseminates through our social institutions (e.g. schools) and cultural practices inevitably enabling or disabling members of the community. In deploying the terms dis/ability or dis/abled student, this report seeks to redress the dominance of deficit-based perspectives by asserting the public value inherent in recognition of diverse and divergent abilities.

The research aim was to examine the impact of MV's MITC program. More specifically, the research was initiated to report on the delivery of the MITC program into three state government schools in Melbourne that cater exclusively for students with impairments. Music education for students enrolled in specialist schools – a term used by the Victorian government in reference to educational settings dedicated to dis/abled students – varies considerably (Education & Training Committee, 2013). The research investigated ways in which the MITC program, as outlined in MV's Vision Statement, inspires 'personal fulfilment and cultural vibrancy' (Musica Viva, 2014).

Finally, the theme of inclusive education, a largely contested ideology in modern day schooling, is one that will be touched upon throughout the report. However, because the setting in which the research was undertaken involved specialist schools, extended deliberations on the complexities of inclusive education practice would be misplaced. The assessment of the MITC program reported here provides a review of current delivery and projects several recommendations for future application.

Method

The outline for the research was drawn around questioning potential impacts of the MITC program. The three evaluation schools involved do not collect quantitative data regarding assessments of student performance in the MITC program. As such, impact was operationalised in qualitative terms. This included obtaining data from the following sources:

- Interviews with key MV staff
 - Helenka King (Victorian State Manager)
 - Karen Kyriakou (MITC teacher)
 - Jason Day (MITC teacher)
- Surveys with school staff
 - Classroom teachers
 - Teaching Assistants
 - Senior staff e.g. Principal, Deputy Principal, Head of Year
- Surveys with parents/carers
- Classroom observation
- Student picture drawing

Secondary data sources such as government data and policy were also included.

Permission to proceed with evaluation was received by Victoria University's Human Ethics committee (HRE15-115) and the Department of Education and Training (DET; 2015_002745). Following approval, Regional DET Directors were notified of the proposed research and school Principals were contacted. After receiving permission to conduct the research from each Principal, a school-based contact was assigned. Via each school-based contact, information sheets and consent forms for potential participants were distributed and returned. Participation in the research was voluntary and informed consent was received. All school-based participant's responses were collected under the assurance of anonymity and as such, individual school staff and students have not been named. Permission was granted to name each school involved in the evaluation and to identify MV staff.

The interviews and surveys were analysed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clark, 2006). A systematic process of interpretation, producing themes from illustrative excerpts, guides this form of qualitative inquiry. In the present context, the derived themes help to situate the broader analysis that in turn leads to the recommendations delivered. Several student drawings are presented through the text without analytic interpretation. Some pictures include teacher descriptions. Notes generated from classroom observations have been used to contextualise the interview and survey data.

1 SERVICING STUDENTS WITH DIS/ABILITY

1.1 Legislation & Policy

The rights of students with dis/ability are addressed by international organisations, federal and State governments. Internationally, Article 24 of the *Convention on the Rights of Persons with a Disability (CRPD*; Uniter Nations, 2006) recognises the right of all people who experience disability to engage fully in quality education. The right to education that is inclusive is also articulated in the *Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC*; UNICEF, 1989).

The Australian Government formally ratified the *CRPD* in 2008. Prior to this, Australia had legislated the *Disability Discrimination Act (DDA*; Commonwealth of Australia, 1992). The *DDA*'s application to educational provision was formalised in the *Disability Standards for Education (DSfE*; Commonwealth of Australia, 2005) and the latest review of this was held in 2015 (Urbis, 2015). The *DSfE* specify legal obligations under the *DDA* including the rights of students with dis/ability to access and engage in quality education as students not living with dis/ability do. The *DSfE* mandates schools to ensure reasonable adjustments are made to assist students with dis/ability to participate in education without discrimination.

The State Government of Victoria operates within a legislative and policy context that supports the inclusion and participation of people with dis/ability in the wider community. Under State legislation, Victorian public sector bodies such as the Department of Education and Training (DET) must commit to the *Victorian State Disability Plan 2012-2016* (State of Victoria, 2012). As part of this commitment, DET provides the Program for Students with Disabilities (PSD). This is a targeted funding program for Victorian government schools providing resources for students with moderate to severe dis/ability (e.g. physical impairment, hearing impairment, intellectual impairment, visual impairment, severe behaviour disorder, Autism Spectrum Disorder, and/or severe language disorder). DET states that resources supplied under the PSD are made available so that each school can meet its obligations regarding the *DDA* (State of Victoria, 2015).

1.2 Specialist schools in Victoria

At the February 2015 census, the Victorian government was operating 80 specialist schools. The majority of these schools cater for students presenting with multiple dis/abilities. There are a small number of schools dedicated to servicing student presenting with specific dis/ability (e.g. Furlong Park School for Deaf Children).

The Tables below outline Full Time Equivalent (FTE) student enrolment according to signification of dis/ability.

Table 1. Historical trend in numbers of government schools and students

Year	Schools	Primary	Secondary	Specialist	Total
2011	1539	309 092.6	221 728.4	9 989.0	540 810
2012	1537	315 029.8	219 754.6	10 342.3	545 126.7
2013	1529	323 086.3	219 168.8	11 048.4	553 303.5
2014	1526	332 016.0	219 542.7	11 550.5	563 109.2
2015	1528	340 844.4	221 458.1	12 076.1	574 378.6

Data retrieved from <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/departments/Pages/factsandfigures.aspx>

Table 2. Number (FTE) of students with dis/abilities in government schools

Year	Regular schools	Specialist schools	Total	% of total student cohort
2011	11 525 (55%)	9 358 (45%)	20 883	3.9
2012	11 875 (55%)	9 721 (45%)	21 596	4.0
2013	12 034 (54%)	10 247 (46%)	22 281	4.0
2014	12 218 (53%)	10 704 (47%)	22 922	4.1
2015	12 671 (53%)	11 264 (47%)	23 936	4.2

Data retrieved from <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/departments/Pages/factsandfigures.aspx>

Analysis of the data presented above provides important information regarding specialist schools in Victoria:

- Specialist school enrolment rose by 17% between 2011-2015. This compares to a 9% rise in Primary and -0.12% decrease in Secondary school enrolment.
- In 2015, 47% of students with dis/abilities were enrolled in specialist schools. Since 2011, students with dis/abilities have enrolled in specialist schools at a greater rate than students with dis/abilities enrolled in regular schools.

1.3 Arts Curriculum for students with dis/ability

At the time of writing, Victorian government schools are transitioning from AusVELS to the Victorian Curriculum Foundation-10 (VCF-10). The VCF-10 is to be employed across all State schools by the beginning of the 2017 school year. AusVELS and VCF-10 documents set out a series of content descriptions and associated achievement standards enabling educators to plan, monitor, assess and report on student learning. It is important to note that the standards as discussed relate to levels of achievement and not rigid year-level benchmarks. Education authorities, following legislative direction (discussed above), expect that most students with dis/ability will be able to engage with their school curriculum provided reasonable adjustments are made. For students with significant dis/ability (e.g. profound intellectual impairment), additional curriculum provisions are made to support learning moving across four levels (A-D) toward the Foundation level.

Music education, along with Dance, Drama, Media and Visual Communication, falls within the Arts learning area. Under AusVELS, all schools in Victoria are expected to deliver music education from Foundation to Year 4. Music education then becomes optional from Years 5-10.

In November 2013, the Victoria Government's Education and Training Committee handed down its report into the provision of music education in schools (Education & Training Committee, 2013). This recent report provided a range of findings regarding music education in the State including:

- Little substantive improvement had been recorded in the quality and provision of music education in Victoria over the preceding twenty years;
- Individual benefits of music education include personal and social development, enhanced engagement and wellbeing, and concurrent benefits in other subject areas;
- Music education can help build school standing and promote cohesive communities;
- Significant variability exists in the quality of music education provision between schools across the State;
- Significant numbers of primary school students do not have access to quality music education programs; and
- Students with dis/abilities, indigenous students, students from financially disadvantaged backgrounds and students from regional and rural communities face greater challenges accessing quality music education programs.

A key recommendation from the report suggested the government, in consultation with schools, their communities and relevant stakeholders, develop and implement a deliberate strategy for music education in Victoria. The government's response was restrained: 'Rather than developing a new strategy for school music education, a guide to developing a music education program accompanied by a promotion plan, reinforcing support and resources available to schools will be prepared' (Victorian Government, nd.). To date, no State-wide music education plan has been developed for use in Victoria.



2 MUSICA VIVA

2.1 Development of MITC

The Musician in the Classroom (MITC) program belongs to a suite of options offered in the Musica Viva in Schools (MVIS) prospectus. The history of MITC evolved from other MV programs being offered to schools in Victoria. Prior to targeting specialist schools, MV had undertaken musician residencies servicing schools in low socio-economic areas as well as rural and regional centres. The MITC program, dedicated to working in specialist schools, developed as an initiative of Esther Benjamin, a previous philanthropy manager at MV Victoria. Victoria State Manager Helenka King notes that the one to one pairing of financial sponsorship with particular projects is not always pre-planned. Reflecting on the history of MITC in specialist schools, Helenka said: *'I think it was very individually driven. I don't think there was a particular strategy. I think it was just fortuitous'.*

Access and exposure to quality music performance continues to be central to MV's mission and options made available to schools, aside from MITC, include ensemble groups, short-term (10 week or one school term) residencies, professional development sessions and/or resource materials for classroom teachers. MV's funding remains dependent on philanthropy and private donor support. The capacity to sustain positive impact, particularly as these pertain to social and educational outcomes, is an increasingly relevant consideration for MV and the MITC program. The current financial operating model carries implications for medium to long-term planning within schools and challenges MV's ongoing ambitions for the program. This point will be returned to below.

MV deployed Karen Kyriakou to a specialist school in regional Victoria in 2006 as part of a short-term one-off residency. This engagement would change future developments for both Karen and MITC. Karen recalls:

...when I met those kids, and they came in for music, like are you kidding, kids lying on stretchers! You know, stretcher beds! But you know, you put a maraca in their hand and physically do the shaking for them, and their little eyes would like light up, and they loved it. I thought like: Life changing minute. It was really hard to go back to my private school and think that anything I was doing made any difference.

Two years later, Furlong Park began its relationship with Karen and MV. Their engagement through MITC has continued since.

2.2 Staffing MITC

In 2015 the MITC program serviced three specialist schools in Melbourne. Karen had responsibility for Furlong Park and Rosamond School. Jason Day was the MITC at Mornington Special Developmental School. Each school had access to the MITC program one day a week.

Karen and Jason started with MV as ensemble players. They each have tertiary qualifications in education and prior experience as instrumental music teachers. The importance of having formal education qualification was recognised by Helenka:

I heard for instance of an ensemble that went to a special school in Victoria and asked them all to close their eyes and think about some aspect of the music. Well, the children don't want to close their eyes, some of them because they get frightened. They see the darkness. They don't understand what's going on.

Placing performers or musicians in schools is not necessarily misguided. What is at stake in this work is the purpose of the exercise. As Karen commented: *'There was no requirement from Musica Viva that we be music teachers to do this, which I think is an error. It's just that I am a music teacher, so I have a bias about the delivering of a holistic educational program'*. Jason also recognised the difference: *'...it's as simple as that – that musicians that think that they are great teachers because they're great performers is not always right'*.

What does MV staff believe to be important regarding successful delivery of MITC? Before answering the question it should be noted that teaching in specialist schools, in contrast to regular schools, can necessitate changes to ways in which educators practice. Karen commented: *'So I think the first group I'd worked with, I probably didn't do them very much justice, because I just did not understand what it was I needed to do. Coming in with my private school expectations about what success was'*. She went on to say: *'I had to really shift what achievement was and what success was'*. Attending to levels of achievement connects with the discussion presented in Section 1.3 regarding current curricular and assessment standards used in Victoria (AusVELS). Further examination of the relationship between MITC and formal education practice (e.g. assessment) is presented later in this report.

As qualified educators, Karen and Jason recognise the importance of being critically aware of their own practice, a point regularly raised in research regarding quality teaching (for e.g., Ryan & Bourke, 2013). Showing authentic interest in their students and being able to remain flexible in response to an individual's learning needs are considered central to successful practice.

Being prepared to accept that if you're explaining something and it's not working then you have to change what you're saying and how you say it. It's your responsibility as the teacher to be the person that gets the message across, it's not their fault if they don't understand you. (Karen)

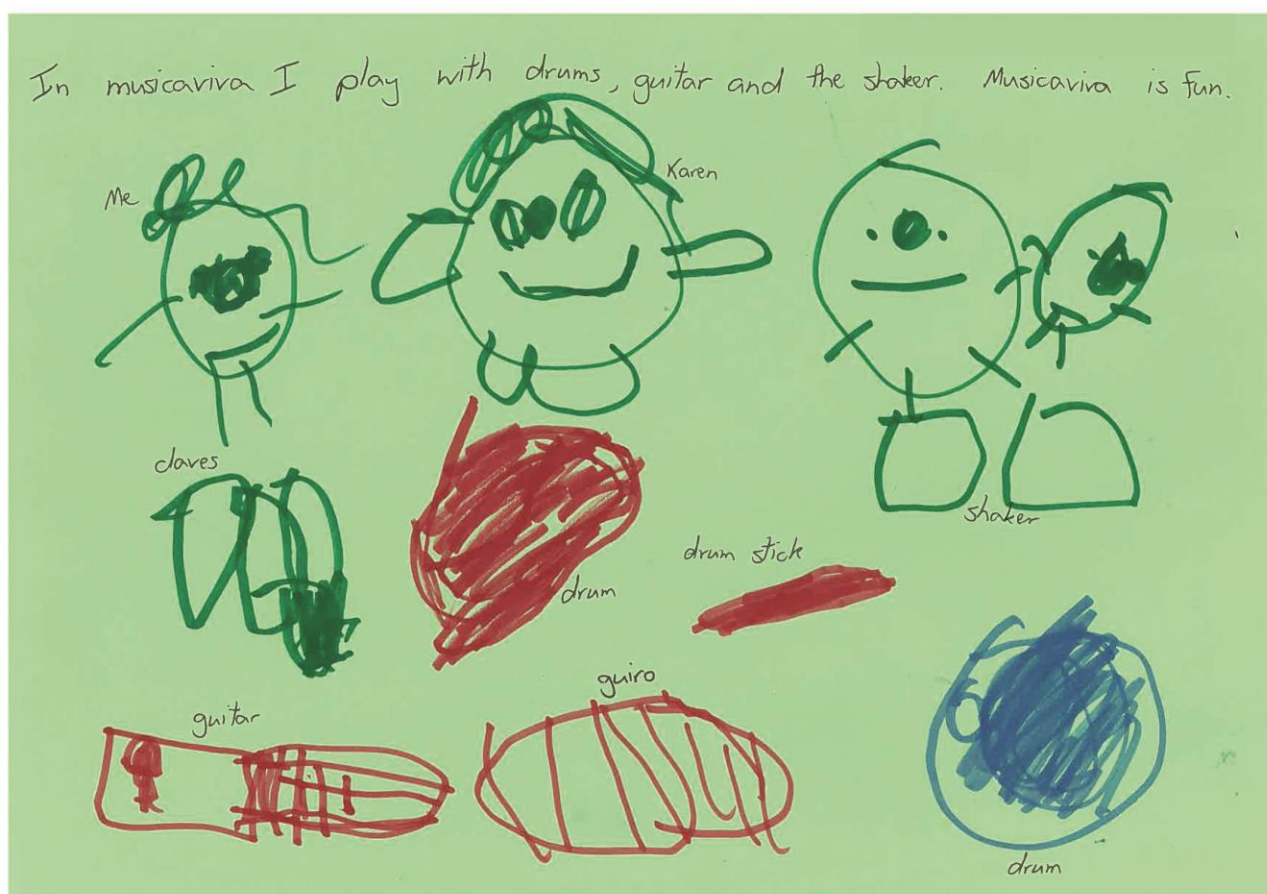
You just really need to have an awareness of how the kids learn and the different methods that you really should be trying to employ. If you don't have an awareness of those types of things then you're just teaching the way that you were taught as an instrumental musician. So you'd teach the way your piano teacher taught you and they weren't necessarily a qualified teacher either! (Jason)

2.3 Relationship between MITC and schools

An appropriate way to describe how relationships between the MITC program and schools proceed is through improvisation. This mode of operation is not surprising given the uncertainties surrounding financing discussed in the Section 2.1. It is also a reasonable description given that school's needs can be/are different and this again underscores the importance of MITC staff flexibility and adaptability.

Each of the three specialist schools involved in this evaluation have been engaged with MV and MITC for over 12 months. Two of the three schools have been involved for more than four years. Helenka acknowledged that to date, MV had not been consistently explicit about the expectations accompanying MITC's delivery. She said: *'We bring in an invaluable service and product and it's quite a lot of money so we've got mutual expectations which is respect and participation and so on'*. However, the limited amount of discussion between MV and schools around MITC may produce a paradoxical affect:

I don't feel I have to promote it to schools, but what I do need to do is, if we're successful, is go to the school and engage the school in what's going to happen and why it's good and get them on board which hasn't happened to date. (Helenka)



2.4 Delivery of MITC in schools

The improvised nature of relationships flows into how delivery of MITC takes place at each school. Karen and Jason reported that they now have planning time factored into their time commitments to MITC but this is minimal and not fully understood by all stakeholders. Karen recalled: *‘When I first started, I had to fight for planning time, they didn’t accept that I needed planning time, and the argument from upstairs was well you’ve done it once now, so surely you don’t need to do it again’*.

The pre-delivery scoping and lesson-planning examples cited above are indicative of a larger concern surrounding the MITC and this is fundamentally to do with its identity. Is MITC a performance-oriented package, similar to other options available from MV, or is MITC a music education program? In describing his approach to lesson-planning Jason said: *‘I pretty much work autonomously to develop the teaching plan and what my outcomes should be’*. When asked about the guidance given to him prior to going into his school (i.e. along lines of performance or music education) he stated: *‘It was never presented that way to me when I took this role. It was very clearly: “This is Musica Viva’s gig. This is our placement, our program”*’. The identity disjuncture, implicitly sitting between performance orientation and education, plays out in other examples.

2.4.1 MITC involvement with school-based staff

School-based engagement with MITC is affected by the way in which government relates to programs of its kind. When asked how she experienced the Education Department’s relationship with MITC, Karen responded: *‘It’s outrageous! They consider it - because it’s being paid philanthropically, they consider it consulting’*. This circumstance, it must be highlighted, perpetuates an uncertain identity for the program and is carried forward by both government and MV:

Technically I’m not in the school community in terms of the payment and some of the other work, which they ask me to do, which they probably shouldn’t, but I do it anyway.
(Karen)

It was very specific that I don’t need to engage in any kind of collaboration with the curriculum in the school and if I have any problems my port of call is never the school, it’s always Musica Viva. (Jason)

The schools involved in this evaluation each commit their staff to delivery of MITC in different ways. Rosamond have classroom teachers and teacher’s aides attend their sessions. At Furlong, teacher’s aides are present until the time of the school concert. It is well established that support for programming from the school’s administration is crucial to its success at a school (Thapa et al., 2013). In discussing her experience at Rosamond, Karen noted:

Kate [Principal] was fantastic, and she really, you know, insisted that the teachers would come with me. They were there for my support, not to undermine or to reshape my classroom, and they would [...] bring in their experience of their kids as well.

This support affects ways in which classroom-based staff engage with the program and this differs depending on school culture and individual staff. Karen sees a difference between the schools she services:

Furlong, the teachers are more hands off, a couple of them are fantastic but some are a bit more hands-off. They're all in their own way fantastic, for the record. At Rosamond though, the teachers come in and then you'll just get that little word at the door saying "Oh, such and such just had a bit of a funny little morning, so maybe...". Or a little you know, "This kid's, we're really trying to not give them any jobs today".

This kind of engagement with teachers cannot be simply attributed to individuals. Karen admitted this saying:

I often get feedback from the teachers: "Does he want a smaller instrument? Would that be better if he had the different drum?", or something. Sometimes, they're just happy - yeah it depends on who and when. Yeah, that's not the main - I don't really have that much time, which is a shame.

Of the three schools involved in the evaluation of the MITC, Mornington is the school that has engaged the program for the shortest period of time. Jason recalls how it launched:

At first – just administratively, money came through from Sydney. Melbourne was told what to do with it: "Go and find a school". They found this school, they sort of – it seemed that Musica Viva just approached the school and said "We want to put this into your school" and it sort of started from there.

Unlike Furlong Park and Rosamond, Mornington had a fulltime teaching staff member interested in music that attended, with each class's teacher's aide, all MITC sessions in 2015.

So I think the first time there was any real consultation about what is this that we're going to do was between me and the existing music teacher and we just sat down and sort of: "Well we have to decide our roles here because you're currently taking music classes and I'm now the Musician in the Classroom and what's your program been like and what would you like to achieve" and all that kind of stuff. So she had that consultation with me but the school generally, the staff did not have an awareness of the direction we were taking. (Jason)

The potential to engage with school-based staff, whether at the beginning of the program or over the course of delivery, is always going to be difficult. Timetables for staff in today's schools are increasingly filled with tasks and responsibilities belonging to the classroom and beyond (e.g. school yard duties or report writing). An option that would address the conflicted identity of MITC and simultaneously embed the program within education practice at a school would be to formalise MITC's relationship with curriculum and assessment at each school.

2.4.2 MITC involvement with school curriculum

In Section 2.1 mention was made of the classroom resources MV supplies to schools. These resources present one means by which MITC could connect to school curriculum. When asked whether these are used by teachers in their classrooms Jason said: *'I'm actually unaware of that. I think it would be limited in this case because, like I was saying, these resources would go to the music teacher'*. The uptake of the MV resources or aspects of MITC teaching in classrooms depends on a number of factors. The issue of time availability, both for MITC staff and school-based teachers, has been discussed above. Also recall that not all teaching staff attend the sessions as they are currently delivered and few staff, if any, would have training

in music education. Jason did acknowledge that *'there's scope to have just more of a cross referencing, I suppose, of what we're doing in music that can carry over into their classes if they want to use the resources'*. In the absence of formal discussion regarding how the resources might be used, it would seem these are presently underutilised by school-based staff.

According to Karen, the prospect for curricular crossover, i.e. teachers employing parts of what is being taught and learnt in MITC to student's everyday classroom, already occurs at one of her schools. Karen reported:

...some of the teachers are very inclined to do follow up anyway and take the songs back. Like the two junior teachers at Rosamond - if they find a song they know I've taken it from YouTube or wherever, they'll go and play it in their classrooms when kids ask for it.

Formal connection to the school curriculum is further undermined by the way MITC is viewed in certain sectors. As Karen pointed out: *'The Education Department doesn't even count it as teaching. So I don't have to answer to the VELS. But I would tick all of the boxes'*. Karen's and Jason's qualifications as trained music teachers assist them to bring knowledge of AusVELS to MITC even though this is not a formal requirement of delivery. Acknowledging this, Jason argued for the strength of the program he teaches:

I wouldn't like to have a lot of cross curriculum input that would potentially water down what I was doing musically. And yet, if I could work that into the strengths that the school could have and that the kids would get a lot out of it, then you'd definitely do it.

2.4.3 MITC involvement with school-based assessment

...the longer that you have those students the better it is clearly. And certainly, the sense of going from the first year of learning into the second year, there's definitely the reinforcing of what they're doing and then you can start to see those skills. (Jason)

Formal assessment of student learning in MITC does not currently take place. As intimated by Jason above (and discussed at further length in Section 3), those working with the students can and do anecdotally report what they see to be the benefits of participating in the program. Karen similarly reports:

I think I'm making assessments on the kids all of the time. But they're not recorded assessments, and maybe that is a problem. But I don't know that giving a number to a skill is actually going to help anybody in the case of music. In terms of assessment, you know, I look at how they've improved, can they do things that they couldn't do at the start of the year, are they trying, have they ticked the boxes in terms of contributed to a class composition or leadership thing in the group, or given me an idea, or played a rhythm.

Karen put the case forward that arts-based assessment can be a flawed practice:

I object sometimes to assessment of the arts because it's not what the arts were ever about. And the objective in these projects is about a person's connection, development of themselves, development of musical skills in a way that is appropriate for them and their abilities. And what would I be measuring against with these students? I don't know, I feel very uncomfortable about the idea of if I had to give a number evaluation against a

skill to those kids - that it would just be - it would be unfair. Because what am I measuring against?

Earlier Karen commented on how she came to re-evaluate her understanding of student achievement after her first experience of teaching students with disabilities. Beyond assessment in the arts, academic debate continues to highlight the complexities involved in education assessment practice with students with dis/abilities (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2012; Sireci, 2009). Nevertheless, without any recorded assessment of student achievement in MITC, reporting on the benefits of the program remains anecdotal and circumscribed.



I enjoy music with
Jason & Karen

2.5 Benefits of MITC

Previous research clearly sets out benefits to students with disabilities participating in music education (Cheng, Ockelford & Welch, 2009; Jones, 2015; Ockelford, Welch & Zimmermann, 2002). Helenka, Karen and Jason highlighted a number of these:

We have seen that this program helps in a number of ways in some academic awareness, but certainly in teamwork, confidence, neurological advances that we can actually see the improvement in most of the students to make them more participatory and enabled. (Helenka)

It's got effects on things like fine and gross motor skills. Of course it's got implications for physical wellbeing and movement and stuff that they do in the program. (Karen)

Socially it's very good, in this environment particularly so and I think that self-expression is a really important thing in, well for everybody in special needs – finding an outlet and how to express yourself. There's, on top of that, I guess, goes the sense that a lot of the students in these schools are struggling with communication in a more basic way or are non-verbal and music-making is a different outlet and comes from a different part of the brain and so there's those type of benefits. (Jason)

Section 3 presents school-based staff reports on benefits for students involved in the MITC.

Karen, Helenka and Jason spoke about the potential for professional learning from MITC involvement for school-based staff. As Karen pointed out, this can be gained in the form of broadened teaching strategies and also via an expanded understanding of their students:

At the very, very basic level they get a whole bunch of repertoire that is successful for them to use in their own classrooms in their own way. They also get to see their kids achieve in ways that they may not have known before.

Helenka observed that involvement in MITC helped to engage students in learning thereby encouraging teachers to develop greater outcomes for students. She said:

Their students are more engaged, so it enables them to do more and have more outcomes for their students and I think it also- I don't know how to put that- encourages some of the teachers who may be less encouraged to see the potential of the children.

Given the almost exclusive absence of formal music education qualification with school-based staff, Karen recognised the importance of having teachers involved who are willing to be part of a collective learning process. She says:

You've got to be somebody that has to be prepared to learn, and that's not all teachers, prepared to be vulnerable, and it's definitely not all teachers. Because the kids are confronting and they're talking to you, and you have no idea what's going on, and you need to ask for help all of the time.

The prospect of and openness to collective and collaborative learning is a clear advantage of MITC. Simultaneously the program helps to build student and staff capabilities within a context of life-long learning. Martha Nussbaum, the American philosopher whose work has been dedicated to elaborating a capabilities approach to human development, emphasised this point: 'Education (in schools, in the family, in programs for both child and adult development run by nongovernmental organisations) forms people's existing capacities into developed internal capabilities of many kinds. This formation is valuable in itself and a source of lifelong satisfaction' (2011, p. 152).

Being part of a process or activity that benefits those involved and showcases its learning outcomes is, according to Karen, Jason and Helenka, one of the most important aspects of MITC. Across each of the schools, MITC works to support an end of school year concert where students perform songs and dance they have learnt throughout the year. Karen elaborates: 'Some of the children that refused to perform, like

say at Rosamond, refused to perform, now they see that the concert is something that we all just do. It's not just stand up on a stage and be humiliated, it's what we're all doing, we're all doing it together'.

The reported impact of these concerts has been phenomenal. Helenka explicitly connected MV's mission around providing greater accessibility to music with the work being done at each of the specialist schools. This work links issues of accessibility with social inclusion and is realised through participating in the annual concert for the school community. Helenka stated:

We can give the students greater opportunity to be part of society...we improve their participation and their enjoyment of life...[MITC] can give families an awareness, if they need it, that their children have potential...it's about families being more confident in their children and the children being more confident and enabled to participate.

Karen too recognised the impact of the student's performance at the annual concert. She relates witnessing these performances back to the question of assessment raised in Section 2.4.3. She says:

The administrators of both the schools and the Musica Viva team see the end of year concert as the assessment. I think they see it, you can look at the learning that's taken place, look what these kids can do. Furlong is - I mean the fact that that blows the teachers away: "We didn't know our kids could do this". At Rosamond, I mean I got that too. That they couldn't believe that the kids were able to do some of the things that they were doing!

Jason also sees the opportunity for performance as one that provides novel experiences for students and parents alike. He recalled: 'The very first concert that I was involved in I had a parent that was in tears because they had no idea that their kid could or would sing a song'. As a teacher on the MITC program, he sees the annual concert as a focal point for his teaching and the student's learning:

I want to have those opportunities for the kids to perform as much as possible. I think that this year it gives me the chance to integrate what we're doing into their annual concert rather than looking for the smaller performance opportunities so that's going to be good, certainly good just to showcase all the things that we're doing in the lessons. Prior to MITC at Mornington previous concerts would probably be more general like singing along with a backing track or something whereas the kids are playing all these instruments now and consistently creating their own music.

Karen sees the concert performance as a natural extension of each student's right to succeed regardless of what others in society might think about dis/ability. She said:

It's important, it's important to me, it's important to the parents, it's important to your kid. Whether you know it or not yet, that you deserve to walk on a stage and know that music is important, especially when you're deaf and people are going to tell you for the rest of your life that it's not important and you can't do it.

2.6 Future applications

Karen, Jason and Helenka were asked about their vision for the future of MITC. A certain circularity was immediately apparent from their responses. A key phrase used in considering the future of MITC concerns program sustainability but this concept is quickly countered by the realisation that there is no long-term financial support currently in place. As Karen noted: *'We haven't made it very sustainable yet, we're not training enough people. But in doing so, we don't have any more funding, so we don't have any grants. What would we be training them for?'*

The possibility of developing new funding models was an aspect of programming Helenka already considered. She said:

We're now at that point of growth. It's really just a question of resources. If we could approach say 20 philanthropic, and I'm looking at funding and said, these are the 10 schools we want to fund, we'd be reasonably and maybe over 70 per cent success rate in getting it. But it's getting to that point simply with time and the resources that Musica Viva has in doing that. I can pick the schools, but I've got to find the money and currently we don't have the resources to do that. But one of the things I'm doing, hopefully over the next year or two, is trying to build up a syndicate system and approach, say for donors to get to subscribe \$5,000 each year to fund a school.

If the MITC program cannot source funding in the ways it has to date, MV would need to look to government and schools to take on responsibility for continuing the program. Such a prospect is immediately troubling given the absence of strategic planning around music education in Victoria (see Section 1.3). Compounding this issue is the continuation of contemporary education policy that sees programming and budget considerations being devolved to schools and their Principals. At present, it would seem any discussion concerning government sponsorship of the MITC program is redundant. As Helenka pointed out: *'There's certainly a conversation to be had with them about how they see it going in the future and start getting it in their heads. They think it's fantastic, but they also think it's fantastic because they don't have to pay for it'.*

In the meantime, MV is committed to improving the delivery and outcomes of MITC in specialist schools. Explicating program expectations through collaborative planning with school staff is one area that is starting to be addressed. Looking forward to 2016, Jason reported that prior to the beginning of the school year he was going to engage staff at Mornington in professional development (PD) around the program. He said:

This is the first time that within this program at all that we've run one of these PDs and that was one of the things that we talked about quite a lot was just setting up the expectation of the staff before we get there so that they're aware of why we think these classes work and why music's important.

Going forward, Karen also recognised the potential in having greater rigour connected to the program. Formalising some or all of the aspects discussed above ultimately benefits those the program is intended to serve.

These kids are capable of learning, and they're capable of a lot more than our society expects of them too, and why not approach it with rigour? They achieve when you do. Impose these set of values, educational values on them, that they will be learning these things, and they do. Not at the speed that we want sometimes, not at the technical prowess that we want sometimes, but they will learn, and they grow in it, and that's been so obvious. (Karen)

My thoughts about musica
VIVA I like musica VIVA because
its fun and we play fun instruments
Like recorder and ukelele and
we pre pre concert ^{or for} and abancis
to come to our school



3 SCHOOLS AND THE MITC PROGRAM

3.1 Participating school profiles

The schools involved in the evaluation are Government-administered schools. Each school is dedicated to servicing particular dis/abilities though students often present with multiple conditions (e.g. hearing impairment and Autism). The Table below presents information regarding enrolment and staffing.

Table 3. 2015 My School data three evaluation schools

	Enrolment range	Enrolment		Staff (FTE*)	
		Boys	Girls	Teaching	Non-teaching
Furlong Park School for Deaf Children	Early Years** to Primary	37	33	13.1	9
Rosamond School	Primary to Post-Compulsory*** (VCAL****)	79	42	21.4	17.3
Mornington Special Developmental School	Early Years to Post-Compulsory (VCAL)	29	12	8.6	10.9

* Full Time Equivalent

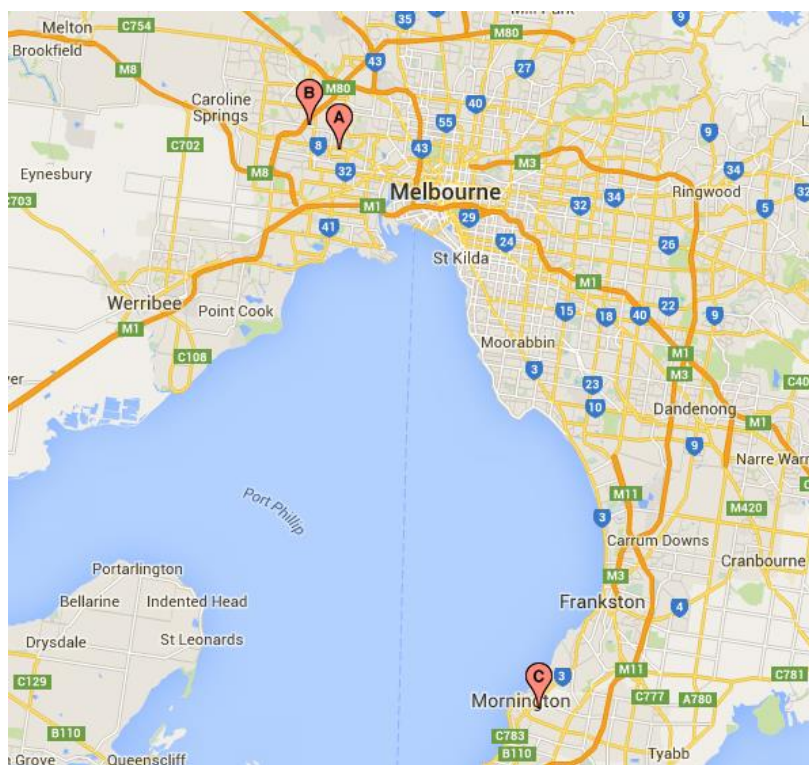
** Early Years 3 to 5 year old students

*** Post-Compulsory 16 to 18 year old students

**** Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning

The map on the following page shows the geographic location of each school in the city of Melbourne.

Figure 1. Participating schools map



- A. Rosamond Special School**
276 Ballarat Road, Braybrook,
VIC, 3019
- B. Furlong Park School for Deaf Children**
58-84 Furlong Rd, Sunshine North,
VIC3020
- C. Morrongton Special Developmental
School**
40 Robertson Dr, Morrongton VIC 3931

3.2 Survey results

The survey response rates from each school varied. This result could have been determined by how the MITC program is applied at each site. A school such as Rosamond directs its MITC resource to classes involving younger students (i.e. Primary school age). In such a case, school staff working into later school years may have seen response to the survey unnecessary.

It is important to note that across the three schools, only one parent responded to the survey. The involvement and response of parents and carers in the evaluation was sought via information sent home with students from each school.

A copy of the survey appears in Appendix 1.

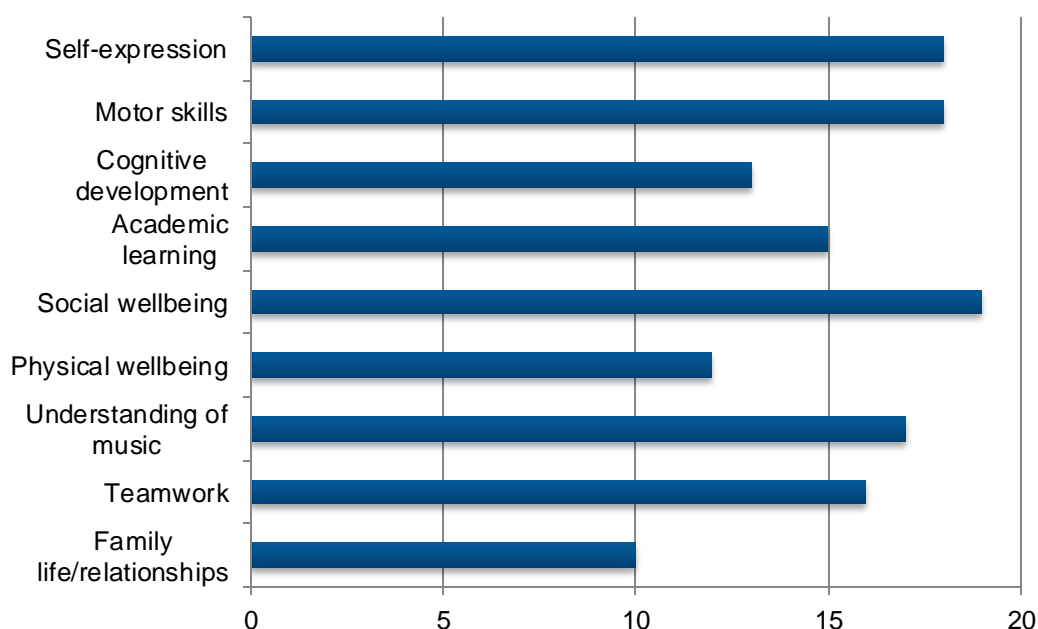
Table 4. Survey response and role

	Classroom Teacher	Teacher Aide	Other
Furlong Park School for Deaf Children	4	0	1 (Principal)
Rosamond School	5	0	0
Mornington Special Developmental School	4	4	1 (Music Teacher) 1 (Parent)

3.3 Benefits

Survey respondents reported a range of perceived benefits for students, school-based staff and school communities emanating from involvement in the MITC program. The survey allowed respondents to select from a list of suggested areas of development and to reply via short qualitative answers. Figure 2 shows the total number of responses to the listed potential benefits.

Figure 2. Attributed student developments from participation in MITC



The qualitative and descriptive nature of the short answers allowed respondents greater capacity to provide individual perspectives on the benefits of the MITC program. These are discussed under the topics made available in the survey.

Self-expression

This topic has the potential to manifest in numerous ways. As one parent reported: *'I guess the fact that he talks at home about it is enough to let me know it is good'*. Not only is involvement in the MITC program seen to be newsworthy within one's own family. One teacher from Rosamond commented that developments in student self-expression could be seen in class with students: *'Sharing their own thoughts and ideas in front of the class [and] verbally engaging with other students and staff using a loud clear voice'*.

Developments in personal and social confidence were recognised in several staff responses. The following statement is significant in that it clearly recognises that musical experience can be meaningful for everyone, regardless of dis/ability.

Every child has developed in this area. From our Autistic children who 4 years ago could not sit in the music room without earmuffs to deaden the sound, to the ADHD child who could not sit still for longer than 2 minutes, to the child who had very low self-esteem and body issues. We now have confident and expressive children who CHOOSE to have music supported activities and choose to present dance, rhythm and signing to other audiences. WOW!!! (Rosamond; uppercase in original)

Motor skills

The majority of teachers reported observing gross and fine motor skill development with their students. Examples received in the surveys explain how the teachers attributed such development to receiving music education.

It helps with motor (fine and gross) and understanding rhythm has assisted in my teaching of syllables during literacy also. In a recent class, I was astounded when a student (who is usually only listening to the music and not participating due to being very low ability) started hitting the drums and xylophone IN TIME!!! This student has difficulty with fine and gross motor skills. I was amazed. (Rosamond; uppercase in original)

A few of my students found it quite difficult to follow a sequence of movements at the beginning of the year and they have now improved. For example, one student was able to touch her head but then got lost in the following movements. She can now follow a sequence of at least three body parts! (Rosamond)

Every child has improved in this area. From our Autistic children who four years ago could not sit in the music room without earmuffs to deaden the sound, to the ADHD child who could not sit still for longer than two minutes, to the child who had very low self-esteem and body issues. We now have confident and expressive children who CHOOSE to have music supported activities and choose to present dance, rhythm and singing to other audiences. WOW!!! (Furlong Park; uppercase in original)

Cognitive development

Survey respondents reported developments in student's cognitive capacity, particularly in areas of attention and memory. Several responses highlighted how learning rhythms generated further benefits across the curriculum. For example: *'Rhythm has assisted in our syllable teaching which has improved reading and writing'* (Rosamond).

Academic learning

As with cognitive development, benefits to general cross-curricular academic learning were reported by survey respondents. The following responses highlight benefits to students as well as to teachers informing them how they may better classroom engagement.

Karen completed a song "Bingo" which integrated literacy. A lot of the time, maths is integrated in the sessions. For example, stamping four times, clapping eight times, etc. Some students need work with 1-1 correspondence so this all certainly helps. (Rosamond)

Karen has an excellent ability to cater for the different skill levels and learning abilities of all students. Great to have discussions with Karen regarding expectations and modification for classes especially those with additional needs and she takes on board and supports their individualised learning. (Furlong Park)

Social wellbeing

This attributed benefit scored highest of all potential benefits listed on the survey. The majority of respondents commented on the high level of engagement students displayed whilst attending the MITC program. Respondents reported that from this students seemed more confident and socially proficient.

Students engage in the yard singing songs together or practicing dance moves. Quiet students wanting to sing to class and be lead singer in songs and other verbal activities. (Rosamond)

Working with their class to perform at the concert as well as in the program allows them to develop social skills and learn to listen and respond. Simple things like appropriately holding someone's hand (when moving around in a circle) contributes to their social skills, interaction and wellbeing. (Rosamond)

The students have been more engaged than ever in their music lessons and even our most difficult students have participated well. Some of our juniors don't join in with dance or group work but they did the best I have seen this year. (Mornington)

Physical wellbeing

As one Teacher's Aide commented, the MITC program is '(p)hysically demanding for some students [yet] they were able to extend their capabilities. Students grew in confidence each week and were not so self-doubting as they were in the beginning of the year' (Mornington). Another teacher from Rosamond noted that students are involved in physical exercise when they participate in dance activities and move their arms playing instruments. And at Furlong Park, growing self-confidence was said to contribute to 'better co-ordination skills, rhythms and movements'.

Understanding of music

The survey responses reported above make a strong case for cross-curricular gains made from access to quality music education. Teachers also commented on specific benefits stemming from learning about music.

Students have a much better understanding of music. They enjoy tapping their fingers, singing the songs and doing the movements even when leaving Musica Viva. The learning associated with my young students is about hearing a beat, creating a beat (using body percussion or instruments) and movement. (Rosamond)

My students use the language learned during music classes. Za, za, ti, ti, ta. They can also now read music (some better than they read written language) and have learned and can explain about sound and how instruments use vibration to make sound. (Rosamond)

As reported in the responses cited above, the prospect of music education for students with dis/ability carries considerable potential. Two teachers from Furlong Park School for Deaf Children provided unique insight into the possibilities involved with music education for their students. As part of the MITC program one teacher stated: *'This year in particular, the older students benefitted from meeting a deaf musician and explaining why he chose music as his chosen career'*. She went on to say:

We can do anything we wish to strive for, and this is a message we are sending to our children. There will never be limitations as long as we don't let it be. (Furlong Park)

Children have shown increasing confidence and competence with following number patterns and letters that represent the music sounds for them. They also understand the start and finish of a musical piece, appreciate that there are faster and slower sections, louder and softer – all quite difficult concepts for a Deaf person, in particular Deaf child. (Furlong Park)

Teamwork

In contrast to instrumental music teaching where an individual student or small group are tutored, the MITC is delivered to classes of varied sizes ranging from six to fourteen. According to staff at the three schools, student participation in these classes contributes to promoting productive social relationships.

Many students have gained confidence and are more willing to have a go with the activities. Teamwork and social development has been enhanced as they encourage each other and celebrate each other's achievements. (Mornington)

This has improved dramatically even over the last two years. The school implemented a cross-age buddy program and this, combined with our Dance (six months in 2015) and Music program (six years) have all worked together to increase student confidence and willingness to work as a team together. (Furlong Park)

The music concert helped them to work as a team. They are a class who can be very disjointed at times and they pulled together and supported each other. They were proud of their achievements and wanted everyone to succeed also. (Rosamond)

Family life/relationships

With the support of Musica Viva, each of the schools involved in the evaluation present an end of year music performance. This is an opportunity for the students and school-based staff to showcase what has been achieved through music education. It is also, as several respondents noted, one way for families and the broader school community to witness the student's talent and abilities.

Every year I hear parents feeling very happy after the concert and they enjoy watching their children grow and learn. (Furlong Park)

They wanted to put together the best concert they could to show their families their learning. They were proud and supportive of each other. (Rosamond)

All students benefit from the concert and the pride their parents show when seeing their deaf child performing on stage. The concert is the only occasion on the school calendar that attracts most parents. (Furlong Park)

The training for the concert and the benefits of the performance for both the child and their family is obvious. Parents often see their child in a different light and see confident children enthusiastically performing on stage. The children look forward to the concert, which is a testament to the impact of this experience, and many parents buy several copies of the concert video to give to family and friends. (Furlong Park)

Parents come up to me after the music concert and share their gratitude of the children's joyful performance. This year saw the largest number of audience members and the numbers grow each year as the message gets out between the families that the performance is a wonderful demonstration of their child's ABILITIES rather than always focussing on their child's DISABILITIES. (Furlong Park; uppercase in original)

3.4 Improvements for MITC

The survey offered respondents the opportunity to suggest improvements to the MITC program. Only three respondents listed specific suggestions. The first requested more singing in the classes. The second requested the availability of ready-made activities teachers could take back for use in their classrooms. The final point related to MV's MITC staff continuing their own professional learning around working with students with dis/abilities.

Several respondents explicitly stated they could see no place where improvement to the program should be made. One teacher from Mornington wrote: '*Improvement...MORE SESSIONS PLEASE!*' (uppercase in original)



4 CONCLUSION

The qualitative responses sourced for this report were resounding in their support of the MITC program. In particular, school-based staff consistently expressed high regard for the professionalism and quality of music education brought to their schools by Karen Kyriakou and Jason Day. Quality is one of three themes presented to summarise the research.

Quality

The quality of the MITC program is confirmed in the school-based staff reports. Karen and Jason were judged by their professional peers as providing a high quality program for learning encouraging a variety of academic, social, relational and community benefits. The importance of having qualified music educators delivering the MITC program is clearly signalled in the high regard with which they are held and the recognisable benefits related to their work.

Accessibility

Exposure and access to quality music experience is central to MV's mission. As indicated in Section 1, exposure and access to quality education is central to contemporary legislation, policy and practice in schools particularly involving students with dis/abilities. The 2013 Victorian Government Education and Training Committee Inquiry into music education (see Section 1.3) acknowledged that negligible improvement had been made by schools in recent decades and this circumstance is compounded for certain populations such as students with dis/abilities. Benefits stemming from access to quality music education are not limited to music alone. As reported by school-based staff, exposure to music education plays a significant role in enabling development and growth in a variety of important academic and social areas.

Sustainability

Potential impacts of the MITC program are further enhanced by extended contact with schools and their communities. The prospect for extended contact is challenging given the financial uncertainties resourcing the program. Given the absence of State government leadership involving music education in Victoria, continued provision of the MITC program to specialist schools will require ongoing negotiation between MV, schools and private funding sources. Evidence cited in this evaluation supports the contention that music education in specialist school communities produces tangible and sustainable outcomes.

I like Music because I like the Ukelele.



I like Music because I to
mum side yes.



5 ONE SENTENCE CHALLENGE

The final question of the survey reported in Section 3 challenged respondents to summarise the impact of the MITC program for their students and school community. The responses are presented below.

Furlong Park School for Deaf Children

This program supports the development of ALL children in many and varied ways through a variety of sense and provides all with a sense of confidence and achievement.

Who said Deaf children can't appreciate music?

The program is the only consistent opportunity for the children to use listening for specific purposes such as working out rhythms.

The band performances are generally suitable for most students and provide a richness to the experiences of our students.

That being Deaf has no limitations – we can do anything even with the loss of hearing!



Rosamond School

Musica Viva is one of the highlights of our students' week!!!

Musica Viva provides my students with an exciting and interesting opportunity to practice a range of skills in a fun and supportive environment through a variety of songs, dances and musical instruments.

Musica Viva promoted happiness, confidence and equality in my class.

A fun, engaging and hands on subject that supports learning in a wide variety of areas while learning about music which is a large part of their lives.

Musica Viva gives my students enjoyment and opportunities to explore music through songs and instruments.



Mornington Special Developmental School

Our students who normally wouldn't prefer music are loving it.

There is no wrong or right – listen, follow and enjoy what they can do.

Enriched their musical appreciation with music I would not have included in my program.

The students are coming out of their shells and are learning more when music is involved.

Amazing!!

The lessons have been exciting, engaging and developing of student's musical ability.

It has meant that all students of all ability levels can have access to quality music education.

Develops confidence, teamwork and self-expression.

Enables students to engage in a challenging yet creative process.

Being introduced and enjoying their music, wanting to be part of a "band" is a great tribute to the music providers.

The students have thoroughly enjoyed the program, gaining experience with a variety of different instruments and music genres.

Our students really look forward to their lessons and have developed their confidence and ability to work together to produce music and dance that they recognise as "real".



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Appendix 1

Musician in the Classroom Evaluation

Survey (School staff/Parent or Guardian)

1. What involvement have you had with the Musician in the Classroom Program?
2. What have been your impressions of the program?
 - Greatest benefits?
 - Room for improvement?
3. Have you encountered any developments regarding the following with students/your son, daughter or ward that you attribute (in part or directly) to the program?
 - Self-expression
 - Motor skills
 - Cognitive development
 - Academic learning
 - Social wellbeing
 - Physical wellbeing
 - Understanding of music
 - Team work
 - Family life/relationships
4. If you could sum up in one sentence what the program means to your students/son, daughter or ward, you might say?

