Implementing the Australian Curriculum in Music: an initial study assessing its praxial potential in secondary schools in Canberra

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Originality statement

I certify that this thesis is my own work and all sources used have been acknowledged.

This thesis does not exceed 100,000 words in length, exclusive of acknowledgements, abstract, footnotes, tables, reference list, and appendices.

Signed:

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Abstract

This thesis explores the design, development, and implementation of the Australian Curriculum in Music in secondary schools in Canberra. Music has long been an area of contention within curricula, but it remains present in the Australian Curriculum. There is a lacuna of detailed analysis of secondary music teachers and courses in relation to the Australian Curriculum, so addressing this may allow for a better understanding of how teachers implement the Curriculum in their classrooms.

Using an original analytical framework derived from literature surrounding music education, I have assessed the Curriculum for any issues in design, development, or implementation. This analysis ranges from inception to publication, and serves as the context against which a small sample of interviews with secondary music teachers will be explored. The final phase of this thesis analyses and compares coursework documents that capture a detailed snapshot of the potentially vast range of individual interpretations of the Curriculum. Combined, the three sections of this thesis reveal the benefits and shortcomings of the Australian Curriculum in Music, examine some of the systemic issues in music education and teacher training, and highlight the importance of teacher expertise in delivering secondary music education.

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Introduction

In 2005, the *National Review of School Music Education* was published after a year-long investigation. It gave a critical overview of the state of music education in Australia, and also provided detailed examples of music teacher practice from twenty-two schools (Department of Education, Science and Training, pp. 173–236). One such example was Ballarat High School, located in regional Victoria, that was included within the sample because it provided "an alternative approach to teaching music" (p. 178). It offered instrumental music classes and extra-curricular ensembles, with music running as a compulsory subject in Year 7, and an elective subject in the remaining years of school. The key focus of the music teacher was that music classes should be practically-based: that "music is a performing art and [students] should be playing it and enjoying it" (p. 179). In addition, the teacher indicated that the model of achievement used was student-based: all of the pieces of music that students studied were individually arranged, with the further possibility of alteration to allow for all to participate: "if they have to play a chord, instead of playing the full notes, we split it down to two notes and if that's too hard we split it down to one note…" (p. 179).

The school principal was supportive of school music, directing a significant amount of funding towards a purpose-built music facility. She recognised that music was a valuable subject in its own right, as well as its broader benefits.

> The underlying philosophy is that music in the classroom is about *doing*…what better way to engage kids in music…All the social skills that we try to teach kids all come together in that room, it's about working as a team…learning to wait patiently…taking responsibility for equipment, your role [or] part in the piece (p. 179, emphasis added).

She also acknowledged the importance of being proactive in maintaining the standard of music education at her school. She recognised the amount of energy that the music teacher used in the classroom and avoided timetabling them full days of classes to avoid burnout. She discussed concerns and issues around music with her staff as they arose and stated that "we have something really good and if we aren't careful it could just slip away because no one is paying attention" (p. 179). As a result, almost half of the student body were engaged with some form of music within the school, and students noted that despite the school's focus on sport, the links between sport and music performance were made clear and supported each other (p. 179). According to both the principal and the students, music was

included in every facet of school life: "the school doesn't do anything without music" (p. 179).

This success story, however, was an anomalous case that contrasted with the national norms in music education in many significant ways. On the whole, music education nationally was assessed by the authors of the *Review* as being at a "critical point where prompt action is needed to right the inequalities in school music" (p. v). They indicated that many students did not get effective or substantial music education "because of the lack of equity of access; lack of quality of provision; and the poor status of music in many schools" (p. v). The importance of the *Review* was enhanced by the fact that it received a total of 5936 submissions from various parties invested in music education (p. 255), a number later referred to by Senator Mitch Fifield as "a record for the number of submissions received by a government enquiry" (Fifield 2006). It suggested immediate action to:

- Improve the equity of access, participation and engagement in school music for all students;

- Improve teacher pre-service and in-service education;

- Improve curriculum support services (advisory, instrumental music, vocal music and music technology);

- Support productive partnerships and networking with music organisations, musicians, the music industry and the Australian community;

- Improve music education in schools through supportive principals and school leadership, adequately educated specialist teachers, increased time in the timetable, adequate facilities and equipment;

- Improve levels of accountability; and

- Improve the overall status of music in schools (Department of Education, Science and Training 2005, pp. v–vi).

In response to these recommendations, the then-Federal Education Minister, Brendan Nelson, stated that "the results of the inquiry in my view are disturbing at best" (*The Sydney Morning Herald* 2005). In the same article the then-Federal Arts Minister, Rod Kemp, also commented on the review and defined the state of Australian music education as being in a "crisis" (2005).[1] The Federal Government announced a summit in 2006 and a total of $900,000 in funding to address the issues (2005), but twelve months after the *Review*'s publication "very little had been implemented" (Lierse 2006). It was published at the end of

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[1] This is despite the authors of the *Review* suggesting that crisis was too strong a term (Department of Education, Science and Training 2005, p. 144).

the academic year in November 2005, allowing little time for any action to be taken in that year. Furthermore, Nelson transferred to the Defence portfolio in 2006. Despite the response generated by the *Review*, and the promises made by the Government, momentum for change was lost.

An attendee of the 2006 National Music Education Workshop, Tina Broad, summarised two discussion points about the *Review* that would contribute to strengthening music education: "The issue of music's place in the curriculum needs to be resolved and school leadership needs to be more effective in supporting music learning;" and "What we need most is great teachers—lots more" (Broad 2006, p. 29). Therefore, responsibility for the improvement of school music can be linked to three key areas: curriculum documents, school leaders, and teacher training. This highlighted that it was not the responsibility of any one area to strengthen music education alone: rather, it would take a collaborative approach by the authors of curriculum documents, school leaders, and tertiary institutions responsible pre-service teacher training.

This was the context in which development of the Australian Curriculum commenced in 2008, three years after the publication of the 2005 *Review*. Although music is just a single subject within the Australian Curriculum, its development presented an opportunity to act on the suggestions made in the *Review*, which is listed as a reference in many of the developmental documents for the Australian Curriculum in Music (hereafter ACM). The ACM was developed over a four-year period, from 2009–2012, and some jurisdictions began to implement it in 2015. Despite this, my research shows that little has been done to address any of the recommendations listed in the *Review*: the present state of school music education in Canberra indicates little growth or development since 2005. Some jurisdictions, such as New South Wales and Victoria, held out on implementing the ACM (NSW Education Standards Authority n.d., Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority n.d.), meaning that its status as the national curriculum was also undermined.

In 2017, two years after the earliest implementation of the ACM, music education expert Alexander Crooke offered a damning critique of school music education, indicating scant evidence of improvement in the twelve years since the *Review* (2017). According to Crooke, the overwhelming evidence supporting school music education was being ignored and "many schools have cupboards full of musical instruments gathering dust" (2017). He

identified several important issues. In primary schools, generalist classroom teachers were often tasked with the responsibility of teaching music but did not have the requisite training to do so adequately. Evidently, the 2005 recommendation to improve pre-service training had not been acted upon, and there is little evidence to suggest that in-service teacher training has been improved either. The curriculum itself was increasingly crowded, and the overwhelming focus on standardised testing in literacy and numeracy had "significantly reduced teachers' abilities to focus on provision in other areas" (2017). This crowding made an increase in time allocated to music difficult to realise. A vast range of extra-curricular activities also took time away from students' participation in music, further reducing time for musical study. Employing specialist teachers in primary schools went some way to rectifying the issues with generalist teachers, but this was not always a financially sustainable solution, and schools were often forced to choose between specialist programs, such as different arts subjects and languages. To compensate, some schools delivered an exposure model where students participated in brief and infrequent experiences in different art forms, but this model, according to Crooke, "undermines the stability of music provision, which requires extended, deep engagement" to achieve the results and benefits of music education indicated by extensive and thorough research (2017). Again, this model ignored the 2005 recommendation for increased time in music education. Crooke argued that all of these issues are symptomatic of a lack of value placed on music and the arts within schools, despite the recommendations of the *Review*. He suggested that music needed to be valued in the same way as mathematics or English, and this needed to be indicated within education policy and curricula: there was a need to "place music within the core of the educational experience, rather than an added extra" (2017).

There are further contextual factors to consider. The first of these is the overwhelming emphasis on Western music styles in music education—particularly Western art music (Schippers and Campbell 2012).[2] Cultural diversity in music education is an important contemporary focus (Schippers 2010, Joseph 2011, Nethsinghe 2012) but is difficult to deliver in practice (Hess 2018). As Australia is a multicultural country, all styles of music are

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[2] Schippers and Campbell are conscious of an increasing presence of multicultural or intercultural music in school curricula, but are critical of the "naïve idea that the complexities of music across the world can be represented by simply including (Western) notation and transcriptions of songs from various cultures into music curricula" (p. 87).

equally relevant. Therefore, the capacity of the ACM to include non-Western music needs to be considered along with its ability to account for Western styles. At present, Western concepts of music are considered universal by many Australian music educators, as evidenced by the feedback that teachers supplied throughout the ACM development process (ACARA 2011b, 2012d). Virtually all instances of teacher response included some reference to exclusively Western approaches to music, such as the separation of performing and composing or the reference to music notation as a score, suggesting that these were relevant to all musical experiences. This illustrated a disconnect between teacher's understandings of music and the purpose of music within the curriculum. Finally, I am conscious of an underlying sense that music education advocacy and research are, in part, preaching to the choir (pun intended): written by musicians and music educators for musicians and music educators. Therefore, the message that is being sent needs to be targeted to a broader audience if the position of music education in schools is to be strengthened. Indicating logical inconsistencies within the music curriculum itself may go some way to increasing the persuasiveness of arguments for music in the curriculum.

My background and experiences place me in a privileged position to explore music in the Australian Curriculum, and in particular the experiences of secondary music teachers. I am a formally trained Western classical musician, having completed a Bachelor of Music in classical guitar performance. This background means that I share an insiders' perspective on tertiary processes of music education with many secondary music teachers in Australia, and several of the research participants attended the Australian National University School of Music prior to my enrolment. This shared background was useful when meeting the participating teachers as it served as an icebreaker. Furthermore, two of the interview participants also shared a background in classical guitar performance, providing another point of similarity which, I believe, encouraged the teachers to be more open and honest in their interviews than they would have otherwise been.

To address all of the issues identified so far, this thesis explores the design and development of the Australian Curriculum in Music, and its subsequent implementation in a small sample of Canberra secondary schools. For the purpose of clarity, I define *secondary* education to be Years 7–10, or ages 12–16. The thesis is an analysis of secondary school music education through the lens of what it theoretically should be (Elliott and Silverman

2014, Reimer 2003), and not what it necessarily is. It considers music education at three levels of discourse: curriculum, teacher response to curriculum, and the implementation of the curriculum. Therefore, there are three key research questions:

1. Can the ACM align with a praxial framework of best practice in music education?

2. How did secondary teachers react to the introduction of the ACM?

3. How have secondary teachers responded to the ACM for use in their own classrooms?

The analysis of the curriculum encompasses policy documents that precede the design of the ACM, the developmental documents for the ACM, and the ACM itself. The analysis of teacher response included interviews that took place at four secondary schools in Canberra, and the subsequent transcription and analysis of these interviews. The examination of implementation is conducted through comparison of course documents to the ACM. The scope of this thesis is limited to the Australian Capital Territory (hereafter ACT), partly through necessity, and partly because it is a small enough jurisdiction to enable detailed conclusions.

I triangulated my data and analysis through three main research tasks. The first of these was curriculum analysis; the second was interview analysis; and the third was course analysis. Uniting these three disparate tasks is an underlying, original analytical framework derived from literature surrounding music education that I have termed the *praxial characteristics of music education*. This framework is derived from the praxial philosophy of music education—a practice-led approach to music education that centralises music as a "human activity" (Elliott 1995) and emphasises the importance of appropriateness to cultural and stylistic contexts—but it also incorporates perspectives from other (competing) philosophical approaches, as well as concepts of curriculum. Using this framework, I have assessed the ACM for any issues in design and development. Its scope ranges from the inception of the national curriculum (2008) to the present. Following this, I interviewed seven secondary music teachers across four Canberra schools, exploring their responses and opinions about the ACM while taking their personal and professional histories in music education into account. Finally, having completed an analysis of the ACM itself, and understanding how the teachers consider the ACM, I then compared a selected range of

course documents against the ACM with the intention of highlighting issues or inconsistencies between the two levels of discourse. In addition, these documents were also analysed against the praxial characteristics, thereby indicating some of the issues in the understanding that teachers have of music education and what could be done to remedy them. In combination, these sections of the thesis capture a detailed snapshot of the potentially vast range of individual interpretations of the ACM throughout the ACT.

Music has long been an area of contention in Australian school curricula (Department of Education, Science and Training 2005) and it defies the standardised nature of other subjects, but its status as a subject within the Australian Curriculum implies that education policymakers believe that it carries some value to all students. Therefore, the present state of music education is puzzling. I am not the only researcher to explore music education since the publication of the ACM, however, there is a lacuna of detailed analysis pertaining to secondary music education. This is not to say that primary school music—Foundation (F)– Year 6, or ages 4–12—is a saturated field, as there are many issues within it that require further attention. Some of these issues will be introduced in Chapter Four of this thesis. However, while understanding the issues within primary school music is undoubtedly important, the lack of musical expertise in the primary school space makes any exclusively *musical* issues within the ACM unclear. It is difficult to determine what the problems with the content of the curriculum are when the majority of generalist primary teachers are incapable of understanding it or lack the confidence to deliver it (Butler 2015, pp. 31–36).

By contrast, secondary music education carries the assumption of teachers having musical expertise, so any curricular issues or inconsistencies are more readily apparent. In addition to this, the ACM was introduced in its earliest form in 2015 and, as of September 2019, there have been no substantial reviews or changes to it since its first published edition. I believe it is timely to at least review the ACM, especially due to the passing of Richard Gill in October 2018, and the fortuitous broadcast of *Don't Stop the Music* (Australian Broadcasting Corporation 2018a) in November 2018, that have prompted discussion and debate about the presence of music in schools, and the right of all Australian students to have access to a high-quality music education. This has evidently had some influence on Australian arts policy: for example, in the lead-up to the 2019 Federal election, the Australian Labor Party published its "Soundtrack Australia" policy promising $28.45

million in funding across the music industry over three years, with $13.2 million directed towards youth music programs or music teaching awards (Australian Labor Party 2019).

Finally, the responsibility for the delivery of the ACM lies in the hands of teachers. Therefore, an analysis of the curriculum is not complete without at least some understanding of how teachers actually interpret it. Teachers' practice has historically been an overlooked aspect of research in the education system (Hargreaves 1994, p. 4), and student outcomes in standardised numeracy and literacy tests have become the focus of national education discourse. Students' lives outside of school are also overlooked too. However, teachers are acknowledged in education policy as the most influential element towards students' in-school attainment (Department of Education and Training 2017). If music education is to be strengthened nationally, understanding how a variety of teachers use the ACM is undoubtedly an important component.

Despite the bleak picture of Australian music education given so far, there are schools that deliver strong music programs such as the Ballarat example from the *Review*. This example illustrates some of the characteristics that are generally seen as positive in music education literature: the program was student-centred, students learned through active music making, and the program was designed to teach students *about* music and *through* music. These are fundamental components of the praxial philosophy of music education, which allows for comprehensive and inclusive engagement with music from any culture and is the most recent statement of best practice in music education (Elliott and Silverman 2014).[3] Because of this, I have adapted the praxial philosophy to produce an analytical framework for this research.

The first key objective of this study is determining if the ACM can align with a praxial framework for best practice in music education, which will be expanded on in considerable detail in Chapter Two. The praxial framework will be used to determine how well the ACM matches with a contemporary understanding of best practice in music education, or whether it adopts elements of outdated approaches such as *music education as aesthetic education* (hereafter MEAE).

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[3] The term *best practice* is itself a nuanced concept that I do not use uncritically. Its definition, usage, and implications for the present thesis will be explored in Chapter Two.

The next objective of this research follows on from the first: once an understanding of the nature of the ACM document is determined, I then seek to understand how teachers are using it to inform their classroom music programs in secondary schools. As the ACT was one of the first jurisdictions to commence their implementation of the Australian Curriculum, Canberra proved to be an ideal location to base this study: at the time of data collection, all Canberra schools were implementing the ACM. However, it is worth noting that there is likely to be variation in methods of implementation between jurisdictions. Secondary schools are the focus because the variability of teacher expertise is less of a concern than it is in primary schools—all secondary music teachers are trained music specialists. The importance of teachers in implementing a curriculum cannot be overstated: the Australian Curriculum itself refers to this importance (ACARA n.d.-m, version 8.3), and as previously noted by Broad, "what we need most is great teachers" (2006, p. 29). Basil Bernstein's concept of the discursive gap (2000) is a formal theory about how and why teachers interpret curricula. The discursive gap informs the overall structure of the thesis and will be discussed in detail in the literature review.

To determine how teachers are using the ACM, there are two key questions I have asked: how did teachers react to the ACM, and how did they respond to it? These are interrelated questions that are addressed individually within the thesis. The background of each teacher is explored first, because it provides the overall context for the teachers' response: why did they react and respond in the ways that they did? Next, I explore the reactions offered by teachers, which (very simplistically) explores what the teachers liked about the ACM, what they did not like, and why. Finally, the interpretations of the ACM are articulated through the interviewees describing their programs, and through course documentation. The analysis of course documents is the final component of this thesis.

There are a number of reasons why this research is important. Firstly, and most importantly, there has not been a comprehensive review of Australian school music education since 2005. An update on the state of Australian school music education is timely, especially considering the opinions of experts such as Crooke (2017), Gill (2012), and Anita Collins (2016).[4] As the ACM is now the basis of school music education in all states, this

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[4] Richard Gill expressed a negative opinion on the development of the ACM after his involvement in its drafting. These perspectives will be explored in Chapter Three. Anita Collins continues to advocate for the benefits of

thesis seeks to determine the extent to which the ACM has, or has not, strengthened Australian music education in Canberra. The thesis is *not* the comprehensive review of music education that is needed, but despite its focus on the ACT its methodology could be expanded to inform such a review.

Although there is a significant body of literature that explores music education and classroom practice in Australia and internationally (see the literature review, below), there have been few targeted studies that examine the role of the music curriculum in the Australian context, or indeed internationally. Forrest and Watson's study (2012) is the closest Australian equivalent and is an analysis of the effects of different types of curriculum organisation on teacher practice. However, it looks at the state and territory curriculum documents that preceded the ACM: its conclusions could be extrapolated to the new curriculum framework, but they do not reflect it directly. Internationally, Yu and Leung (2019) conducted a similarly intentioned study to my own, which is the only other example of analysis into the interrelations between curriculum and teacher practice in the *International Journal of Music Education* since 2010. Therefore, given the prevalence of national curriculum frameworks in a variety of countries, such as the United States, Australia, Finland, the United Kingdom, and China (Hess 2018, Joseph and Southcott 2012, Kallio 2017, Kokotsaki and Newton 2015, Yu and Leung 2019), the present thesis is situated within an important gap in the literature.

By rigorously interrogating the ACM against a praxial framework, I will also explore possible limitations of the praxial philosophy. Importantly, this thesis has the added benefit of applying the praxial philosophy to a real-world scenario—a lack of which is often a shortcoming of many philosophical frameworks—thereby filling a gap in the literature. Huib Schippers (2010) stated that "the flow from advanced philosophical and policy frameworks into the practical realms of teacher training and finally into the classroom may be the greatest challenge" (p. 39), while Elliott (2012) claimed that "many music educators are unaware of [music education philosophy's] existence, not to mention its nature and values"

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music education and was the featured music expert on the Australian Broadcasting Corporation's *Don't Stop the Music* documentary series (2018a). In 2016 she highlighted that generalist teachers are struggling with the "impossible expectation" (p. 1) of arts learning, preventing the successful realisation of music and other arts subjects.

(p. 65).[5] By examining the potential for real-world application of abstract philosophical ideas, I determine whether or not the theoretical requirements of the praxial philosophy are actually practicable, or whether they are unrealistic in practice. In turn, this analysis questions the philosophical underpinnings of the ACM: has it been designed in such a way as to align with a concept of best practice, and are there any inconsistencies within it that are philosophically and pedagogically untenable?

As a formally trained Western classical musician, I value the role of music in general education and believe that it carries benefits beyond the immediate subject. However, I am also aware that much music education advocacy that focuses on extra-musical benefits, such as improved cognitive function (Reimer 1999), undermines the value placed on the study of music for the sake of understanding and enjoying music.[6] Conversely, claims of the inherent benefits of music education are also untenable, because they are not grounded in authoritative research and are often based on Eurocentric concepts of music (Bowman 2012, pp. 34–35). It is imperative to find some sort of middle ground on all fronts, and it is my hope that this thesis can contribute to such a compromise by conducting a detailed study into the practice of highly trained, experienced music teachers.

To understand these interrelated objectives and benefits, it is first necessary to contextualise the ACM within the broader Australian Curriculum. This situates the ACM within the broader curriculum discourse. Following this, I explore the literature that has been used to inform my research framework. Finally, I will outline the structure of the thesis.

What is the Australian Curriculum?

The purpose of the Australian Curriculum is to give students a foundation in the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that they need to constructively function in Australian society (ACARA 2012e, p. 10). Therefore, the curriculum can be interpreted as being generalist: it is designed

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[5] In making this statement, Schippers referred to Melissa Cain's 2008 PhD thesis "Philosophy, Policy, Practice: Visions and Realities of Cultural Diversity in Selected Primary Music Classrooms in Brisbane and Singapore." Elliott's statement is reflected by Yu and Leung (2019), who stated that most Chinese music teachers were unaware of the philosophical framework their curriculum was promoting.

[6] In this article, Bennett Reimer critiqued one of the most noted benefits of music education, the "Mozart effect." For a deeper understanding of similar extra-musical benefits in Australian education policy, see Crooke, Smyth, and McFerran (2016).

to lay the foundations that enable students to specialise in areas of interest after they have completed schooling.

> The Australian Curriculum helps prepare all young Australians to become competent and contributing members of the community. *It builds firm and meaningful foundation skills* as well as *providing the basis for developing expertise* for the increasing number of students who move on to specialised advanced studies in academic disciplines, professions and technical trades (ACARA 2012e, p. 10, emphasis added).

Therefore, the role of any individual subject within the Australian Curriculum is not to provide students with a specialist understanding of any one aspect of a discipline, but a general understanding of the discipline as a whole. This is an important point when considering the role of music in a national curriculum framework and will be referred to in later chapters. The music discipline as a whole includes Western music (including Western art music) and the music of other cultures.[7]

The Australian Curriculum consists of eight Learning Areas (see Table 1), across which there are at least sixteen subjects at the secondary level. These subjects are just a single element of the Australian Curriculum, and it also contains two other dimensions: three Cross-Curriculum Priorities, and seven General Capabilities. The Australian Curriculum describes itself as a three-dimensional curriculum, and the Learning Areas/subjects are the lenses through which the other two dimensions are explored (ACARA n.d.-v, version 8.3). The Cross-Curriculum Priorities are given primacy due to the timely nature of their content, and the fact that they are specifically Australian: they deal with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures, Asia and Australia's Engagement with Asia, and Sustainability (ACARA n.d.-e, version 8.3). They were identified as national priorities at the earliest stage of curriculum development in the 2008 *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* (Ministerial Council on Education, hereafter *Melbourne Declaration*). By contrast, the General Capabilities are examples of generic educational goals that all students are expected to benefit from, and although these are evidently deemed to be relevant to

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[7] I draw this distinction here due to the fact that Western art music has historically been the style of music chosen for study in the classroom. This phenomenon is explored more thoroughly throughout the thesis. In referring to Western styles of music, I am not simply referring to music from Western Europe, although this music is certainly encompassed by the term. Rather, I am referring to *Western* in a historical sense: music that stems from "a society that is developed, industrialised, urbanised, capitalist, secular, and modern" (Hall 1995, p. 186) and reflects Eurocentric ideals and concepts about music. Elements of this distinction will also be explored in more detail, but exploring the concept of *Western* further goes beyond the scope of the present thesis.

Australian students, they are not unique to the Australian student experience (ACARA n.d.-h, version 8.3). Both of these dimensions of the Australian Curriculum are intended to be integrated within the different Learning Areas and subjects. In combination, the Learning Areas, General Capabilities, and Cross-Curriculum Priorities contribute to "develop successful learners, confident and creative individuals, and active and informed citizens" (ACARA n.d.-g, version 8.3).

Learning Areas/subjects

The eight Learning Areas within the Australian Curriculum were implemented in order of their supposed importance.[8] The first phase Learning Areas/subjects were English, Science, Mathematics, and History (ACT Curriculum Advisory Group 2016, p. 7).[9] The second phase Learning Areas/subjects were Geography and the Arts, of which music is a part (p. 8). In the ACT, teachers could begin implementing these second-phase Learning Areas from 2015 onwards. Finally, the remaining Learning Areas and subjects that form the third phase of implementation were Health and Physical Education, the remaining Humanities and Social Sciences subjects (Civics and Citizenship, and Economics and Business), Technologies, and Languages (p. 9).[10] For clarity, and to understand the interrelations between Learning Areas and subjects, I have presented the organisation of the Australian Curriculum in Table 1, which includes the phase of the subject, and the first year in which it was fully implemented in Canberra. For the most part, detailed information about these different Learning Areas and subjects is beyond the scope of the present thesis. They all follow a similar structure of presentation within the curriculum: there is an overview that consists of the rationale for the Learning Area, its aims, and how it is structured; and this is then followed by detailed descriptions of how the subject is to be taught in the various years of schooling. However, it is of note that the majority of the second- and third-phase subjects adopt a two-year banding approach to curriculum organisation.

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[8] The information presented in Table 1 is relevant for the ACT, but the sequence remains the same across different jurisdictions.

[9] History is a subject within the overarching Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS) Learning Area.

[10] There is an optional Work Studies subject that falls outside the scope of the base Australian Curriculum: "Work Studies Years 9–10 is an applied learning curriculum that adapts discipline-based learning to work contexts. This requires a variation in the approach to curriculum design and content descriptions and elaborations, as they need to be active. It also allows for a cross-curriculum disciplinary mode of delivery" (ACARA n.d.-n, version 8.3).

Of the phase two and three subjects, only three are organised in a way where every individual year of schooling is accounted for. These are the subjects within the Humanities and Social Sciences: Geography, Civics and Citizenship, and Economics and Business (ACARA 2016a). All other subjects that are second- or third-phase are organised by way of two-year bands of learning: content is described in relation to the groups of Foundation (F)–Year 2, Years 3–4, Years 5–6, Years 7–8, and Years 9–10. Evidently, there was not as much priority placed on delivering them as quickly, or in as much detail, as the first phase subjects. This may be in part because they are not part of the traditional academic side of the curriculum, and also because they are not part of the repertoire of standardised Australian testing: the National Assessment Program—Literacy and Numeracy (hereafter NAPLAN).[11] Ascertaining the reasons for this is outside the scope of the present thesis, but it does suggest a hierarchy of importance—pedagogical or otherwise—in the Australian Curriculum.

Learning Area	Subject	Phase	First year of full implementation in ACT
English		1	2014
Mathematics		1	2014
Science		1	2014
Humanities and Social Sciences	History	1	2014
	Geography	2	2017
	Civics and Citizenship	3	2019
	Economics and Business		
Arts	Dance	2	2017
	Drama		
	Media Arts		
	Music		
	Visual Arts		
Technologies	Design and Technologies	3	2019
	Digital Technologies		
Languages[12]		3	2018
Health and Physical Education		3	2018

Table 1: Implementation schedule of the Australian Curriculum in the ACT. I have defined the "first full year of implementation" as the first year in which the Australian Curriculum content was no longer optional (ACT Curriculum Advisory Group 2016).

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[11] Robyn Ewing (2010) describes an "uneasy relationship between the Arts and education" (p. 5) in Australian education and lists several reasons why such tension exists, including "the continued dominance of traditional academic curricula as the main passport for entering tertiary education" (p. 5). The assumptions surrounding a *traditional academic curriculum* will be explored in Chapter Two.

[12] There are sixteen languages within the Australian Curriculum, which makes their presentation in Table 1 impractical. These languages are: Arabic, Auslan, Chinese, Framework for Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Languages, Framework for Classical Languages, French, German, Hindi, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Modern Greek, Spanish, Turkish, and Vietnamese (ACARA 2016b).

As noted, the Learning Areas and subjects are only a single dimension of the curriculum, and act as a lens through which students can engage with the other two. The Cross-Curriculum Priorities and General Capabilities are always implemented within the framework of an overarching Learning Area or subject, and all teachers are expected to integrate them thoroughly. Therefore, they have a strong and persistent influence on how teachers interpret and implement the ACM.

Cross-Curriculum Priorities and General Capabilities

The Cross-Curriculum Priorities (hereafter Priorities) were identified as areas of national significance in the earliest stages of curriculum design (Ministerial Council on Education 2008). The Priorities have a "strong but varying presence depending on their relevance to the Learning Area," and are encouraged to be implemented in every subject (ACARA n.d.-e, version 8.3). The ways in which teachers have approached the implementation of the Priorities is the focus of Chapter Nine, as there are some particular challenges that the Priorities present in relation to music. For concision, I refer to these as the Indigenous Priority, the Asian Priority, and Sustainability.

The Indigenous Priority is directly related to the numerous issues surrounding the Indigenous populations of Australia. These issues can be traced back to the initial European settlement of Australia, and the subsequent persecution of Indigenous peoples and cultures (Australian Human Rights Commission 1997).[13] The years preceding the publication of the *Melbourne Declaration* were particularly dramatic in relation to these issues: the Howard government staged an intervention in the Northern Territory of Australia in 2007, and the Rudd government issued an official Apology to the Stolen Generations in 2008. Both the intervention and the Apology occurred within the wider context of recognising the significant imbalances, or gaps, between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. This resulted in the Closing the Gap initiative of 2008 (Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet 2018). One of the targets identified was Indigenous education, where there

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[13] In *Bringing them home: Report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their families*, relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous are described as follows: "Violent battles over rights to land, food and water sources characterised race relations in the nineteenth century" (p. 22); and "The violence and disease associated with colonisation was characterised, in the language of social Darwinism, as a natural process of 'survival of the fittest'" (p. 23).

continue to be significant imbalances between the school attendance, literacy and numeracy, and Year 12 attainment of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.[14] This target was identified in March 2008 and the *Melbourne Declaration* was published in December of that year, in which the concept of an Indigenous Priority in education was first introduced. Within the Australian Curriculum, the Indigenous Priority is intended to reduce educational gaps by addressing "…two distinct needs in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education:"

- That Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are able to see themselves, their identities and their cultures reflected in the curriculum of each of the learning areas, can fully participate in the curriculum and can build their self-esteem.

- That the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures Cross Curriculum Priority is designed for all students to engage in reconciliation, respect and recognition of the world's oldest continuous living cultures (ACARA n.d.-a, version 8.3).

It is concerning to note that as of 2019, Australia has failed to close the gaps in Indigenous education generally. Chapter Nine explores this Priority in relation to music, and highlights some of the reasons why this target has not been met in the area of music education.

The Asian Priority is deemed to be highly relevant to Australian students for a variety of reasons: the twenty-first century has been referred to as the Asian Century by some who predict that Asian countries will become the primary economic powers in the world;[15] Australia is geographically close to Asia; South-East Asia, Australia, and New Zealand are collectively referred to as the Asia-Pacific region; and economically, Australia is a primary producer of many resources that Asian countries use to produce their goods, energy, and infrastructure, as well as food and livestock (ACARA n.d.-c, version 8.3, Ministerial Council on Education 2008, Australian Government 2012). Despite the variety of reasons that are provided for the inclusion of this Priority, economic justification is the most commonly used in the Australian Curriculum (ACARA n.d.-c). Furthermore, little is made of the significant diasporas of Asian communities that have settled in Australia throughout the nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first centuries, and even less is made of the contributions that these

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[14] The Closing the Gap targets for education, set for completion in 2018 unless otherwise stated, are as follows: "close the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous school attendance…," "halve the gap for Indigenous children in reading, writing and numeracy…," and "halve the gap for Indigenous Australians aged 20–24 in Year 12 attainment or equivalent attainment rates (by 2020)" (Australian Government 2019, pp. 62–91).

[15] In 2012, former Prime Minister Julia Gillard stated that "Predicting the future is fraught with risk, but the greater risk is failing to plan for our destiny … Whatever else this century brings, it will bring Asia's rise" (Australian Government 2012). This paper was scrapped by the subsequent Abbott Government in 2013.

groups have made to Australian society more broadly. While the economic primacy of Asia is of undoubted importance, these other areas are just as important for justifying this Priority, particularly in relation to music education.

The Sustainability Priority is usually the final Priority to be listed and defined in most sources. Perhaps this reflects the difficult nature of integrating sustainability into an educational context, despite its obvious international importance. It is defined as "the ongoing capacity of Earth to maintain all life," and while this does not exclude concepts such as cultural sustainability, it certainly implies an environmental priority (ACARA n.d.-z, version 8.3).[16] Sustainability is an issue of the utmost importance within contemporary society, with continuing debates surrounding climate change still influencing political and economic decisions despite the national stance that human-influenced climate change is a clear threat (Parliament of Australia 2010). The ultimate focus of this Priority is for students to develop "the knowledge, skills, values and world views necessary for people to act in ways that contribute to more sustainable patterns of living" (ACARA n.d.-z). This provides teachers with a large scope for interpretation, although its importance is undermined as it is the final of the three Priorities to be listed and its definition is the least detailed.

The General Capabilities (hereafter Capabilities) are areas of personal skill and ability that have been deemed necessary for all students to develop. They are in line with the benefits posited by traditional approaches to curriculum design, as they encompass the skills that are defined as being relevant to all students for their lives beyond school (Elliott and Silverman 2014, pp. 395–402, O'Neill 2010). There are seven Capabilities: literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology (ICT) capability, critical and creative thinking, ethical understanding, personal and social capability, and intercultural understanding. Much like the Priorities, they are intended to be taught through the different Learning Areas, and they are also intended to be adapted in a way that is relevant to the respective Learning Area (ACARA n.d.-h, version 8.3). The intention is for the Capabilities to be explored and integrated wherever possible, with the stipulation that they need to be present in every Learning Area: "Teachers are expected to teach and assess General Capabilities to the extent

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[16] Sustainability is described as follows: "Actions to improve sustainability are individual and collective endeavours shared across local and global communities. They necessitate a renewed and balanced approach to the way humans interact with each other and the environment" (ACARA n.d.-z, version 8.3).

that they are incorporated within Learning Area content" (n.d.-h). General Capabilities are indicated within content descriptions (see Chapter Five), and as seen in Chapter Nine, teachers found implementing the Capabilities easier than the Priorities.

As well as being examples of the utilitarian benefits of education, the first three Capabilities—literacy, numeracy, and ICT capability—are also the clearest. Indeed, two of them are the focus of the aforementioned NAPLAN tests, which are used to measure student achievement and skill across literacy and numeracy. As NAPLAN serves as the focal point of any statements of national educational achievement, the priority placed on these Capabilities is evident. ICT capability is not currently measured through any standardised testing but is of obvious importance given the prevalence of technology in Australian schools and the workplace (Hayes 2007, White 2008). The other four Capabilities do not refer to utilitarian or academic skills and development, and instead refer to other personal competencies that can still be seen to have benefit to the students' everyday lives after school. Critical and creative thinking and intercultural understanding are often referred to in music education advocacy and are referred to by music course outlines from different schools.[17] Therefore, their integration into the implementation of the Arts is an important consideration.

Literature review

There is a wide variety of background literature from different areas of scholarship that supports this thesis. In addition, Chapter Two functions in part as a literature review of the work of two authors within the field of music education philosophy, so the present section can be considered a general overview. There are four broad areas of relevant literature: curriculum documents, music education literature, music education philosophy, and literature pertaining to curriculum design. Aside from the curriculum documents, all of these areas are broad and can be defined as essentially contested concepts: there is little in the

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[17] Wayne Bowman is critical of music education advocacy: "arguments designed to persuade others of the importance and integrity of current practices. This strategy addresses symptoms rather than the cause of music education's plight" (Bowman 2012, p. 36). He states that "claims that take the form 'music does X' seldom stand up to scrutiny because music itself…does nothing…instead of undertaking to who others the error of their ways…we must accept that people's perceptions of music education and their reluctance to support it often stem from shortcomings of our own: from failures to change with changing times" (p. 36).

way of consensus of opinion among academic circles.[18] Consequently, it is impossible to account for all viewpoints and ideologies about these areas of literature within the present context.

Curriculum documents

A key source of information for this thesis is the Australian Curriculum itself. The documents that trace the development of the ACM are explored in Chapter Three, but these are exclusively concerned with music and the Arts. The Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (hereafter ACARA) have published a significant amount of developmental documentation for every single Learning Area in the Australian Curriculum on their website. ACARA were also easy to deal with when individual documents were missing from the online publications and sent documents to me directly. Of particular benefit were infographics that illustrate how each Learning Area in the Australian Curriculum was developed, and various tables indicating implementation sequences and procedures. There is far too much information on ACARA's website to categorically list it all, but it is a vital resource for any researcher interested in Australian Curriculum development.[19]

The Australian Curriculum is now published entirely online (ACARA n.d.-k, version 8.3). Although I began this thesis with earlier versions of the ACM, comparison between the different versions revealed that music and the Arts have not received any significant amendments. Therefore, I have completed this thesis using the most recently published online versions. Each Learning Area and subject receives its own section, much like the individual sections in the paper versions. In addition, the Australian Curriculum website provides detailed information about the Priorities, Capabilities, student diversity, work samples, and curriculum activity that has proven valuable to contextualise the position of music within the broader Australian Curriculum.

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[18] Gallie (1956) suggested five conditions of essential contestedness (pp. 171–172). His writing is dense and difficult to decipher, but there is one condition that is entirely unambiguous: "…that each party recognises the fact that its own use of it is contested by those of other parties, and that each party must have at least some appreciation of the different criteria in the light of which the other parties claim to be applying the concept in question" (p. 171).

[19] In addition to documentation pertaining to each Learning Area, this website has also published the 2008 *Melbourne Declaration* (Ministerial Council on Education) which can be considered to be the starting point of Australian Curriculum development.

In addition to the developmental documents surrounding the Australian Curriculum, and the Australian Curriculum itself, I have also drawn on several other curriculum frameworks that are directly relevant to the present study. Of the seven interviewees, six had experience with the previous ACT state curriculum framework, *Every Chance to Learn* (ACT Government).[20] This is a useful document to consider when contextualising education in the ACT broadly, because according to one of the interview participants, the ACT has not had a prescriptive curriculum and has only ever dealt in broad curriculum frameworks such as *Every Chance to Learn*. Therefore, while some specific details may have changed, *Every Chance to Learn* is representative of the nature of curriculum within the ACT for a significant amount of time: a broad framework of "essential learning" concepts instead of specific outcomes (Forrest and Watson 2012). Understanding it allowed me to qualify how and why teachers approached the ACM in the way that they did.

One school within the present research sample is beholden to two additional curriculum frameworks. School Four offers the International Baccalaureate (hereafter IB) for its primary and senior secondary students, and the New South Wales High School Certificate (hereafter HSC) for senior secondary as well. As such, it has been necessary to consider how music is positioned within these two frameworks (Board of Studies NSW 2009, International Baccalaureate 2015). Generally, music is far more prescriptive within these documents than it is within the ACM, making the implications for their delivery of the ACM particularly interesting in comparison to those teachers well-versed with *Every Chance to Learn*.

Music education

Although there are links between music education and music education philosophy, I distinguish between the two areas. In this thesis, music education literature refers to policy documents, teacher training resources, academic texts, or any other type of document that informs teacher action or the status of music in education through the application of pre-existing ideas and drawing upon real-world examples. Evidently, many of the ideas used in such documents stem from music education philosophy. The issue with philosophical texts is that they are often abstract intellectual exercises, and therefore lack any real meaning until

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[20] No publication date is given for *Every Chance to Learn*. However, it is likely that it was initially published in late 2007 or early 2008: it was the "culmination of four years of collaboration and hard work through a curriculum renewal process that commenced in 2004" (p. 5) and was implemented from 2008 onwards (p. 4).

they are applied to real-world situations. By contrast, I suggest that the literature I have classified as covering *music education* is practical in nature, in that it is intended for immediate practical application. Music education philosophy will be explored subsequently.

I have already referred to the *National Review* (Department of Education, Science and Training 2005), which is a central resource to contextualise Australian school music education. The damning nature of its findings were influential in the immediate aftermath of its publication, but it is apparent that it has had little ongoing influence in the status of music in Australian schools. A large-scale review of Australian school music education is presently overdue. In a similar vein, the *National Education and the Arts Statement* (Ministerial Council on Education and Cultural Ministers Council 2006) is also outdated, and although it issued a call to action through arts education, there has been little apparent benefit stemming from its publication.[21] I do not believe that it is a coincidence that the standardised national literacy and numeracy tests—NAPLAN—were also officially implemented in 2008. Indeed, it is fair to say that the majority of educational policy since the mid-2000s has been concerned with student achievement in literacy and numeracy (Ministerial Council on Education 2008, Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations 2011, Department of Education and Training 2018). This is not to say that there is a dearth of music education research—far from it—but just that it is a niche area that is far from the public consciousness.

In terms of Australian literature, the Australian Society of Music Education (ASME) publishes the *Australian Journal of Music Education*. This journal contains a wide variety of articles written by leading music education experts, but I suspect that such organisations are publishing in an echo chamber, so while the journal is a valuable resource for music educators, its reach does not extend far beyond this limited audience.[22] The same issues affect other internationally-based journals: for example, the *International Journal of Music*

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[21] The statement said "We now need to mobilise our arts and education systems to reap the full benefits of creativity in our lives as individuals and communities, making us a creative and innovative nation" (Ministerial Council on Education and Cultural Ministers Council 2006, p. 4). Some of the recommendations made by this statement have been realised and implemented, most notably in the Australian Curriculum through explicit reference to partnerships between the arts sector and schools (2006, p. 5, ACARA n.d.-m, version 8.3). However, I would suggest that there has been no apparent strengthening of music (or Arts) education nationally since its publication.

[22] I use *music educators* to denote all who participate in music education, including academics and lecturers, classroom teachers and private teachers, and community music facilitators. When referring to classroom teachers specifically, I use *music teachers*.

Education, and the *Music Educators Journal*.[23] All are valuable publications that facilitate ongoing dialogue between music educators and academics, but it is apparent that their reach and influence on government educational policy is limited at best. For example, in the case of the ACM, there are 37 listed references in its bibliography (ACARA 2011a), and despite the plethora of journal articles available, only six are referenced directly (pp. 15–16).

Similarly, academic books about music education contain a considerable amount of useful information but attract a limited audience. I referred to the *Oxford Handbook of Music Education* (Welch and McPherson 2012a, hereafter OHME) extensively in the research process. The OHME explores music education through various lenses, presenting a comprehensive overview of the many issues surrounding music education within an international context.[24] There is a degree of crossover between broader music education literature and music education philosophy, especially when considering the "role of music in people's lives" (Welch and McPherson 2012b, p. 5), but there is a wealth of information with practical implications included within the book too. Indeed, the chapter entitled "Teaching, learning and curriculum content" (Philpott and Wright 2012), which falls under the broader category of secondary music education, was particularly influential in the design of this thesis, for it was here that I first became aware of Bernstein's *discursive gap* theory (discussed in detail in relation to curriculum). As with academic journals, the limited scope of the audience for such publications undermines the reach of such valuable information to government (and therefore policy), and to music teachers.

Finally, music education in schools is a topic that has been addressed by other Australian PhD researchers. I draw attention to two PhD theses that I have referenced in this work, although both cover slightly different ground and there are many more (see Power 2014, and Stevens 2010, 2011): Peter Butler's thesis explores primary school music, and works to devise a model of teacher training to increase the confidence of generalist teachers in music (2015); and Irina Petrova's thesis is a comparative analysis of school music in Australia, the

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[23] The *Australian Journal of Music Education* and the *International Journal of Music Education* are related. The Australian Society of Music Education is the "only affiliate organisation of the International Society of Music Education," which in turn is based within UNESCO's Music Council (Australian Society of Music Education n.d.).
[24] International context may be slightly misleading: while the handbook does indeed include the work of authors from a variety of countries, the majority are from Western countries. Therefore, the views about music are primarily Western. Even in chapters that address contributions of ethnomusicology or cultural diversity, the authors are from Western countries. This is a shortcoming of the music academy, and it is unfortunate that it permeates music education too.

United Kingdom, and Russia (2012). Butler targeted primary music, and Petrova had a broader international scope, but both accepted the relevant overarching curriculum frameworks without question within their research design. The present thesis focuses on secondary school music—Years 7–10—in the ACT and analyses the ACM, situating it within a unique position in Australian music education research.

Implementing music in secondary schools

According to Philpott and Wright (2012), secondary school music carries a set of assumptions in its implementation (pp. 441–442). The authors' proposed characteristics are important in the context of the present thesis because they are focusing on "school *curriculum* music" (p. 442, emphasis in original), which is my focus as well. Therefore, each school within the present sample should align with Philpott and Wright's five "certain characteristics" (p. 441) of secondary school music:

1. That the music curriculum in this age range is part of compulsory schooling until the age of 14 or thereabouts and becomes an elective subject between the ages of 14 and 18.

2. That, unlike previous age phases, within the 12–18 age range there is likely to be specialist input from a music teacher who has been "trained."

3. That there is likely to be some type of "official" curriculum in one guise or another either national, regional, or implicit within "standards" for the subject.

4. That music will be timetabled, organised and resourced as a specialist subject.

5. That music education in this age phase will lead to specialist courses and examinations (most usually post-14) (pp. 441–442).

While most music programs in the sample do align to this overall picture of secondary school music education, there is naturally a degree of variance between schools. There are two characteristics that are varied most often in the interview sample: that music is compulsory until the age of 14, and that music is timetabled and resourced as a specialist subject. The interviewed teachers provided a variety of reasons about how and why they organised their programs in the ways that they did, but it is useful to also consider some well-documented barriers for the implementation of music in Australian schools to situate my own findings in the broader Australian context.

Crooke and McFerran (2015) identified eight challenges or barriers to the successful implementation of music in schools: the "burden on schools, staff challenges, program

relevance, convincing the school community, lack of appropriate resources, unsupportive leadership, sustaining a program, and competing models of education" (p. 29). These barriers are present due to the "theoretical" (p. 27) support that music curricula can provide to schools and teachers: for example, music is included within the ACM, but there is "little practical support" (p. 27) available for those who actually implement it. This situation is symptomatic of an educational policy position that "[continues] to favour competitive schooling models that deprive most schools of the necessary support and resources to provide music" (p. 26). Evidently, there is considerable tension between Philpott and Wright's stated characteristics for secondary music and their viability in an environment of limited practical support. These tensions will be examined in the following chapters of this thesis.

Cultural diversity in music education

Cultural diversity in the Australian music education context has an extensive body of literature (for example, Schippers 2010, Rowley and Dunbar-Hall 2013, and Joseph 2016) and, while not the initial focus of the present study, emerged as an important area of analysis for the ACM and for the practice of music teachers. I do not seek to interrogate the concept of multiculturalism as it is beyond the scope of the present study. However, I do need to specify which definition/s of the term I am using, as there are several. Furthermore, there are significant differences between *multiculturalism* and *interculturalism* in music education, despite the former term commonly being used to indicate both concepts.

Multiculturalism pertaining to music education can be approached in different ways, but there are commonalities between the different approaches. All approaches to multiculturalism in music education can be commonly understood as "the teaching of music from diverse cultural origins" and "the teaching of music from diverse cultural backgrounds" (Herbert and Karlsen 2010, p. 6), and can also be defined as "an approach to instruction that incorporates diverse music cultures as an integral part of music learning and performance that is not driven by focus on a particular culture or period" (Moore 2009, p. 237, in Mansikka, Westvall, and Heimonen 2018, p. 62). Particular approaches then emerge from the generic definition. Mansikka, Westvall, and Heimonen (2018) identified three approaches to multiculturalism in music education: additive, inclusive, and critical (p. 71).

Additive multiculturalism adds multicultural experiences onto an established, centralised music curriculum. *Inclusive multiculturalism* dispenses with a centralised curriculum and is student-centred instead, basing music study on each individual students' cultural background. Finally, *critical multiculturalism* encourages students to question established practices and cultural forms.

Schippers' significant contribution to cultural diversity in music education (2006, 2007, 2010) is central to contemporary discourse on the subject. Of particular use in the present thesis is his analytical tool of "key factors in identifying cultural differences between teaching/learning experiences" (2007). Supporting Schippers' broad approach to cultural diversity, other Australian contributors have explored particular instances of multiculturalism in music. Most significantly in the context of the present thesis, authors such as Peter Dunbar-Hall (2001, 2002a) and Brydie-Leigh Bartleet (2011, Bartleet et al. 2014) have examined the presence of Indigenous Australian music within curricula and the classroom, which is of particular relevance given the ACM's Indigenous Priority.

Within the present thesis I approach multiculturalism in two ways. Firstly, when analysing the ACM, I am assessing the curriculum's capacity to be multicultural in any sense. This is not assessing the multiculturalism of the ACM per se, but rather its potential to enable teachers to implement it in multicultural ways. Therefore, the curriculum analysis is simply concerned with the potential for the inclusion of diverse music cultures and backgrounds. The second site for multicultural analysis is in the practice of music teachers. Here, I am analysing teachers' attempts to teach multiculturally by broadly understanding which approach (or approaches) they have taken. Multiculturalism is an emergent consideration within this thesis, although it is intrinsically linked to music education philosophy. Its emergent nature means that any conclusions I have drawn are preliminary and would benefit from further consideration. Further research specifically targeting multiculturalism in Australian music education is required.

Enacting change in music education
Driving change in music education has been explored by others. Randles (2013) proposed a theory of change for music education to aid other researchers in amending music programs. His approach was conceptual and did not address any specific instances of change in music

education, thus aligning it with a theoretical program theory of change that exists as a series of causal statements that can be used to direct change in a program (Jones and Rosenberg 2018). As well as developing a conceptual model, Randles drew three conclusions:

> The future can be bright if we recognise that (1) *change is articulated locally,* (2) change is the product of imagination in conjunction with a lot of hard work and (3) *change is the result of the work of people whose histories and culture impact the community,* divisions of labour, rules, tools and signs as they relate to the process (Randles 2013, p. 483, emphasis added).

The emphasised points are relevant to the present thesis. Assessing the degree to which the ACM has changed the delivery of music education is articulated locally, which I interpret to mean within individual schools. Furthermore, teachers are the people whose histories and cultures impact the community, and I interpret community to mean students in this instance. Therefore, utilising a qualitative research framework that targeted the reactions and responses of teachers within their own schools allows the effectiveness of the ACM in enacting change locally and within the community to be assessed.

Music education philosophy

As noted, the praxial philosophy of music education will be used as a framework to analyse the ACM. There are several reasons for this. It is part of the broader field of music education philosophy (hereafter MEP), which is concerned with determining best practice in music education. It is a relatively underdeveloped field, with two key contributors whose perspectives continue to inform virtually all discourse surrounding the field. In addition, there is evidence to suggest that many music educators are completely unaware of the existence of MEP (Elliott 2012, p. 65, Yu and Leung 2019). Justification for using the praxial philosophy in the present thesis comes from two main sources: firstly, the developmental documents of the ACM list the first edition of the key praxial text as a central reference; and secondly, Bennett Reimer (1932–2013, the author of the first authoritative attempt at MEP) stated that all philosophies are products of their time, need to be updated to reflect contemporary practice, and that MEP is a reflection of best thought in the field at the time (Reimer 1970). As the most recent and comprehensive attempt at music education philosophy, David J. Elliott and Marissa Silverman's 2014 edition of *Music Matters* is used as the foundation of this analysis: it can be considered a current statement of best practice in

music education. Because this area of literature is so central to the present thesis but requires interrogation, it is explored more fully in Chapter Two.

Despite their centrality, these authors are not alone. In the mid-twentieth century, noted American philosopher Susanne Langer's work in aesthetics influenced the direction of Reimer's work.[25] Inevitably, the focus on aesthetics also introduced the ideas of noted historical philosophers, such as Immanuel Kant and Georg Hegel, into the dialogue surrounding music education.[26] Furthermore, the abstract consideration of aesthetics leads directly into the key difference between general music education literature, and specific MEP literature: where music education literature attempts to strengthen the position of music in education through espousing its benefits (both scientific and aesthetic), MEP attempts to do the same thing by questioning the very nature of music. More simply, I suggest that music education literature accepts some common definition of *music*, while MEP questions such definitions. Through doing this, the field is virtually synonymous with the philosophy of music, and it is unsurprising that many leading authors in MEP have also made significant contributions to music philosophy.

Wayne Bowman is a key contributor to MEP, and he has authored key texts in relation to music philosophy (in particular, *Philosophical Perspectives on Music*, 1998). He also contributed significantly to the development of the praxial philosophy of music education by questioning elements of Elliott's original thesis (2005a, b), particularly his reliance on performance (see Chapter Eight) and his approach to engaging with all possible kinds of music (see Chapter Two). In addition, he was responsible for a chapter in the OHME, which was concerned with the place of music within education (2012), and was a co-editor of the *Oxford Handbook of Philosophy in Music Education* (2012), which will be discussed below.

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[25] Reimer notes Langer's *Feeling and Form* (1957) as a particular influence, describing it as a "monumental" (2003, p. 45) contribution to the *music education as aesthetic education* literature (see Chapter Two).

[26] Pertaining to music, Kant (1724–1824) "insisted that the only thing relevant to determining the beauty of an *object* is its appearance, but within the appearance, the *form,* the *design*:…in music, not the timbre of the individual sounds but the *formal* relationships among them" (Audi 1995, p. 9, emphasis added). Hegel's *Lectures on Aesthetics* (published posthumously in 1835) were central to the development of aesthetics and set art as the focus of aesthetics rather than natural beauty (Scruton 2011, p. 82). According to Houlgate (2016), Hegel's most important contribution to aesthetics were his claims that "art's task is the presentation of beauty and that beauty is a matter of content as well as form." Although further interrogation of these historical perspectives on aesthetics goes beyond the scope of the present thesis, they emphasise key points that will emerge as important in later chapters: namely, the consideration of art as *object*, and the *formal relationships* between sounds that are the focus of aesthetic appreciation.

The OHME chapter takes a philosophical perspective on some of the issues that music education faces but does not go so far as to suggest its own philosophical framework. Indeed, Bowman appears to capture a sense of synergism between different pre-existing philosophical frameworks, acknowledging the strengths of different approaches while also indicating fallacies or weaknesses. This includes the praxial philosophy. It would be impossible to capture the full essence of his work within this literature review, but a key idea he proposed within the OHME chapter is that if music is not being supported within general education, then academics, philosophers and teachers concerned about music should reflexively appraise the arguments they put forward as to the value of music in education (Bowman 2012).

Delving more deeply into the philosophy of music reveals links between MEP and academia. Prior to the 1980s, musicology was largely concerned with the formal analysis of structural components of music through the lens of the canon of Western art music (Rice 2014).[27] Incidentally, MEP prior to the 1980s was concerned with teaching students about the abstract appreciation of music's aesthetic qualities—it considered music education as aesthetic education.[28] This concept of music education is appropriate when considering Western art music, but is not always an appropriate framework to consider other styles of music. As the (not so) new musicology gained traction towards the end of the twentieth century, so too did approaches to music education that focused less on abstraction and appreciation, and more on situating music within its historical, social and cultural contexts. This shift in focus is illustrative of the change in perspective brought to music by ethnomusicology: that there are, in fact, no universals in music, and each instance of music is situated within its own context (Schippers and Campbell 2012, pp. 88–89). This, in turn, is reflective of academics and philosophers questioning the very nature of music, and simply not accepting that all music can be defined as works, represented visually through a notated score, and brought to bear by a glorified composer (Goehr 1992, Talbot 2000).[29]

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[27] This is a simplification. According to Rice, nineteenth-century musicology (pioneered by Guido Adler, 1855–1941) was divided into two branches: historical and systematic. Systematic musicology was then divided into further sub-categories, including comparative musicology (a precursor to ethnomusicology). Comparative musicologists compared "primitive music" of others to Western art music, based on the supposition that all world musics "share a universal music history culminating in European art music" (Rice 2014, pp. 16–17).

[28] This will be explored in Chapter Two, as it is central to Reimer's initial thesis.

[29] Other authors reveal that this is not an approach that works for all Western art music either: Richard Taruskin's seminal *Text and Act* (1995) and Nick Wilson's *The Art of Re-Enchantment: Making Early Music in the*

Where does this leave us? Elliott and Reimer's dialogue is the subject of analysis in Chapter Two, so I now look to the work of other contributors. However, it is difficult to find significant MEP texts where these two have *not* contributed. A key volume is Elliott's edited book *Praxial Music Education: Reflections and Dialogues* (2005), in which a variety of authors question, apply and expand upon Elliott's original 1995 thesis—aside from writing the introduction, Elliott had no original contribution to this book.[30] Contributors include the aforementioned Bowman, as well as Thomas A. Regleski, who is another key figure in the development of the praxial philosophy of music education. Within the realm of the praxial philosophy, Regleski and Elliott often appear to be in dialogue. However, it is Elliott's work that has become dominant, with Regleski situating his work in comparison to Elliott's (Regelski 2005, p. 219). Another example of a text with contributors other than Reimer and Elliott is aforementioned *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy in Music Education* (2012), edited by Bowman and Ana Lucía Frega.[31] This volume makes a concentrated attempt to include work from a diverse range of viewpoints and consequently incorporates work by more women and a number of authors who are from outside the English-speaking academy (Bowman and Frega 2012b, p. 9). In so doing, Bowman and Frega open MEP to a broader range of ideas, as a notable criticism of the field is that "North American and European scholars and educators have generated the vast majority of [music education's] philosophical scholarship, to the near total exclusion of those from other geographical and cultural settings…" (p. 9). More work needs to be done to make MEP a more inclusive field,

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Modern Age (2014) are concerned with the performance practice of early music, which is far less composer-centric, and is more contextually-specific than music composed from around 1800 onwards.

[30] Original contributors are Margaret Barrett, Wayne D. Bowman, Pamela Burnard, Robert A. Cutietta, Lori-Anne Dolloff, J. Scott Goble, Wilfried Gruhn, Marja-Leena Juntunen, Constantijn Koopman, Jeffrey Martin, Marie McCarthy, Patricia O'Toole, Thomas A. Regleski, Sandra L. Stauffer, C. K. Szego, Kari K. Veblen, Heidi Westerlund, and Sheila C. Woodward (Elliott 2005, pp. xiii–xv). Contributors come from Australia, Canada, England, Finland, Germany, the Netherlands, and the United States, with Canada and the United States significantly over-represented, with six contributors from each.

[31] Original contributors are Wayne D. Bowman, Deborah Bradley, David J. Elliott, Ana Lucía Frega, Harold Fiske, Chris Higgins, V. A. Howard, Tadahiko Imada, Estelle R. Jorgensen, John Kratus, Ricardo Mandolini, Charlene A. Morton, Erum Naqvi, Randall Pabich, Thomas A. Regleski, Bennett Reimer, Luis Alfonso Estrada Rodríguez, Marissa Silverman, Sandra Stauffer, Michael Szekely, Diane Thram, Lauri Väkevä, Robert Walker, and Yuhwen Wang (Bowman and Frega 2012a, pp. ix–xiv). Contributors come from Canada, the United States, Argentina, Japan, Ireland, Mexico, the United Kingdom, South Africa, Finland, and Taiwan, with Canada and the United States over-represented again (four contributors from Canada, thirteen contributors from the United States). As gender equality is a focus for this book, it is also worth noting that nine of its twenty-six contributors are female.

but *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy in Music Education* provides useful preliminary understandings about music education from non-English speaking perspectives.

What is clear in this scholarship is that there is a general consensus amongst many authors about the overarching intention of music education, but little agreement when it comes to the finer details. Of course, this reflects the essential nature of doing philosophy: it is the philosopher's job to question commonly-held assumptions, and no matter how authoritative the statement, there is always something that can be considered from a different perspective (Williamson 2018, p. 142). Doubtlessly, MEP will continue to develop as thinking evolves.

Curriculum theory and design, the discursive gap, and habitus

Curriculum theory and design is another area of literature that will be explored in considerable detail in Chapter Two. My background as a musician, rather than a curriculum theorist, means that I must place limits on the expectations of the present discussion. At no point in this thesis do I attempt to re-define what a curriculum is, or what it should be. I simply apply pre-existing ideas that align with a praxial concept of best practice in music education. As different models of curriculum design are a topic of discussion in the Chapter Two, the present section introduces the concepts that underpin any discussion of curriculum. In itself, this is no easy task: as noted by specialists in the area, "it is not uncommon for two curriculum specialists to discuss their field at great length before discovering that each is using the term 'curriculum' to mean something quite different" (Flinders, Noddings, and Thornton 1986, p. 33).

The *Oxford Dictionary of English* definition of curriculum—useful because it indicates a common understanding of the term—is "the subjects comprising a course of study in a school or college" (2010). This represents a simplified understanding of what a curriculum is: according to Carr (2009), any attempt to understand what a curriculum is must be philosophical, because it is reliant on questioning the value of knowledge (p. 281).[32] For

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[32] Carr states that "the key issue of curriculum theory—that of how we might justify what we teach—is primarily a philosophical question. Insofar as the question of what we should teach and why we should teach it is about the worth of what is taught for human life or well-being, it undoubtedly belongs to that part of value inquiry broadly known as ethics or moral theory" (p. 281). Regleski simplifies this point: "Of all of what can be taught, what is most worth teaching?" (Regelski 2005, p. 237).

example, timetabling more English lessons than music lessons encourages a range of questions: is English prioritised because it is considered more important than music? If so, why? Or are there other reasons for the discrepancy in time? I will not attempt to answer these questions, because that is the role of music education literature and MEP. However, once a range of knowledge or subjects are selected and justified, the philosophical problems do not stop. An expansion of the base definition of curriculum "is that it is what is taught in school or what is *intended* to be learned" (Posner and Rudnitsky 1986, pp. 7–8, in Elliott and Silverman 2014, p.393, emphasis added). I am interested in the *intended* learning outcomes of curriculum because I am analysing curriculum documents that can do little other than indicate intention. This is what Elliot Eisner (2002) defined as the explicit curriculum. However, the delivery of a curriculum also has a range of implied or unintended consequences, referred to by Eisner as the implicit and null curricula (p. 26, p. 31, in Elliott and Silverman 2014, p. 405). In particular, the null curriculum has been a useful concept within this thesis, and will be explored further below.

The implicit curriculum has more to do with individual school situations, and the values and skills that school systems attempt to imbue within students, than the curriculum documents themselves. Within the context of the Australian Curriculum, these can be roughly equated with the Capabilities. In addition, Eisner refers to social skills and behaviours that are not necessarily included within a curriculum but are implied by the school system: for example, students learning to raise their hand to ask a question, or to wait in line (Flinders, Noddings, and Thornton 1986, p. 34). By contrast, the null curriculum refers to all the knowledge that is *not* included within a curriculum, and how this suggests a hierarchy of importance in knowledge. The assumption is that what is included within a curriculum is important for students to know, and what is not included is unimportant (p. 34). Within the present thesis, this notion is explored in detail in Chapters Four and Five, as it carries considerable implications when considering the value of different types of music, or ways of engaging with music.

This thesis is concerned with the implementation of the ACM as well as its development and content. Therefore, it has also been necessary to explore ways that teachers interact with and realise curricula within classrooms. I encountered the idea of the discursive gap in Philpott and Wright's work (2012), and subsequently explored the work of the originator of

the concept. Basil Bernstein (1924–2000) was a noted sociologist whose work focused on language and the transmission of knowledge. The discursive gap was one of his later theories that appeared in 1996. The essential nature of the discursive gap is as follows: by contextualising a discipline (in this case, music) for study, gaps are created in the discourse as knowledge is selected for inclusion within the curriculum (Bernstein 2000, Philpott and Wright 2012). The same process occurs when teachers interpret a curriculum for use in the classroom: they select examples, styles of music, or theoretical concepts that they believe will best represent the intentions of a curriculum. It is in these gaps—potential sites for individual agency—that teachers (or curriculum designers) can manipulate the discipline or curriculum in a way that works for them.[33] Bernstein suggested that the individual background of each teacher will inform the way that they manipulate the discursive gap. This thesis focuses on the discursive gap that is created between the ACM and its implementation in the classroom, placing the ownership of Australian music education in the hands of teachers. However, it also explores the processes used to transform music into the ACM. The tripartite structure of this thesis—curriculum analysis, teacher response, teacher implementation—is directly influenced by the discursive gap.

By drawing on their background to interpret a curriculum, teachers are also calling to mind another sociological theory of the twentieth century: Pierre Bourdieu's (1930–2002) concept of habitus (1977, 1996). It is an equally applicable unit for analysis in the present thesis and supplements the discursive gap. Where Bernstein's concept is focused on potential sites for individual agency, Bourdieu considers how pre-existing habits, skills and dispositions influence the potential range of actions an individual may take. Accordingly, while individual teachers have the potential to draw from their previous experiences to influence their interpretation of the ACM, the homogeneity of those experiences—as will be explored later, most Australian music teachers are white, middle class, have significant formative experience in Western school systems, experienced specialised conservatorium

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[33] Lawrence Stenhouse (1975) suggested a similar framework to the discursive gap. According to Smith and Lovat (2003), this framework developed from the fact that "…curriculum, like making a pot, baking a cake or designing a garden, will always be ideal in nature: in reality, it will never come out exactly the way you imagine or plan for it. There will always be factors that will prevent the ideal being [realised]. For Stenhouse, *it is the gap between the ideal and the actual, between the intention and the [operationalising] of the intention, that should be the most important focus for curriculum study and research*" (p. 14, emphasis in original).

training in music, and participated in a targeted classroom teacher training course—means that teachers are, in fact, likely to implement the ACM in similar ways.

Structure of the thesis

To achieve the aims of this thesis and answer my research questions, it is structured into three sections. The first section is an analysis of the ACM against the field of music education philosophy to determine how well the ACM aligns with current academic opinions on best practice. The second section is an exploration and analysis of the responses that seven Canberra-based music teachers had to the ACM. This analysis compares and contrasts these responses between each other, as well as against the literature surrounding music education philosophy and the ACM itself. The third section explores and analyses course documents from two of the schools within the interview sample. These are assessed against the interview responses of the participating teachers, the analysis of the ACM, and the literature surrounding music education philosophy. The aims are to gain an understanding of how the ACM is designed and situated, how teachers react to the ACM, and how the ACM is realised within the context of individual schools. This tripartite structure is directly influenced by the theoretical concept of the discursive gap, which conceptualises how disciplinary fields are converted into educational fields (Bernstein 2000, pp. 30–31). In this conversion, gaps appear in the discourse, and these spaces allow curriculum designers and teachers to interpret the discipline or curriculum in their own way.

I begin by establishing my methodology and research design in Chapter One. Chapter Two is an overview of music education philosophy, a deeper analysis of the praxial philosophy in relation to curriculum, and the exposition of the praxial characteristics I have developed as the analytical tool for this thesis. To adequately answer my research questions, I first needed to understand the implications of different philosophical positions on curricula, as these are statements of best practice in music education. Music education philosophy accounts for different concepts of music and music making, and contemporary approaches also integrate concepts of education and concepts of personhood within their frameworks in an attempt to increase their persuasiveness beyond those immediately invested in music. An assessment of a curriculum also requires an understanding of different interpretations and concepts of the term *curriculum*, as different interpretations are indicative of different

approaches to education. Of particular importance to this research is the concept of the null curriculum, where what is *not* included within a curriculum is assumed to be of less value or importance than what is included. These fields support my praxial analytical framework, which logically extrapolates the implications of a contemporary statement of best practice in music education and curriculum and then uses the characteristics that emerge as a tool to analyse the ACM.

To satisfactorily analyse the different interpretations of the ACM, it is first necessary to develop a strong understanding of the ACM itself. In Chapter Three, I explore the development of the ACM, from the Australian music education context as indicated in the 2005 *Review*, through the original statement of intent for a national curriculum in 2008, and then through drafts and consultation conducted by ACARA from 2009–2012. In analysing these documents, I seek to determine whether the design framework for the ACM was developed in response to the recommendations made by the 2005 *Review*, and whether there is scope for the ACM to address the challenges facing Australian music education. In Chapter Four, I analyse the broad intentions of the ACM—the aims and achievement standards—against the praxial characteristics. I seek to determine whether or not these aspects of the ACM align with the key praxial characteristic of being relevant to *all* types of music while also indicating a sense of progression—a fundamental requirement for music education stated within the ACM itself. An analysis of the ACM in secondary schools cannot exist in a vacuum, and the challenges of primary music education, which were raised and discussed in great detail by the interview participants and are inherently problematic, are also explored here. In Chapter Five, I deepen the analysis to explore the structural components of the ACM, which includes the knowledge and skills that students should learn, the concepts of *making* and *responding*, and the content descriptions and elaborations. These are the sections of the ACM that teachers within the interview sample have adapted and individualised the most through the manipulation of the discursive gap, therefore understanding their implications is of fundamental importance. If there are inconsistencies in the language, structure, or philosophical positioning of these sections of the ACM, they will potentially be reflected in the programs that teachers implement in their schools and may perpetuate inequalities in music education.

To understand how teachers have responded to the ACM, the second section of the thesis analyses the background of teachers and their interview responses. In Chapter Six I summarise the background of each teacher, and in Chapters Seven and Eight I consider the implications of their responses to the ACM itself, in relation to the dominant narrative and other divergent opinions. The influence of teacher background on the interpretation of a curriculum is the aspect of the discursive gap I seek to capture: there was no clear consensus about the ACM amongst the teachers, but an understanding of the teachers' backgrounds illustrates how and why they have responded differently to the same stimulus. There were consistent themes and references to an informal understanding of praxis within the responses, although these were made in relation to different aspects of the curriculum and the teachers' classroom programs. By analysing these responses, further clarity about the nature and applicability of the ACM can be ascertained in a wider range of contexts than an analysis of the curriculum alone.

Chapter Nine concludes the second section. In all interviews, teachers referred to the difficult nature of implementing the Priorities. These are the overarching focuses of the entire Australian Curriculum and their implementation is important. As such, this chapter is an analysis of the ways that the teachers attempt to implement these focuses: which ones are challenging, which ones are straightforward, and why. Again, there is no absolute consensus, but there are some trends and similarities across schools. In particular, the treatment of the Indigenous Priority is problematic in all schools, which indicates that there is a disconnect between the expectations of the ACM and the implementation procedures of teachers. Consequently, analysing these issues points to areas of potential improvement within the ACM and teacher training.

The final section of the thesis is a detailed snapshot of the music programs in two schools, supported by an understanding of secondary school music in a broader ACT context. Chapter Ten begins with an overview of the ACT context by analysing publicly available documentation about music from as many Canberra schools as possible, which provides a point of comparison for the subsequent detailed analysis. It then explores a phenomenon prevalent within Canberra: the realisation of the ACM through curricular ensembles, which is my term for ensemble programs that use the ACM as their foundation. I outline the contributing factors that may influence the presence of such programs in Canberra, and then

assess how effectively each program within the sample can realise the ACM. This is not an assessment of the quality of each program. Rather, it is an attempt to determine the tensions that exist between a curricular ensemble and a broad, all-encompassing music curriculum. In turn, this facilitates an assessment of any compromises that need to be made when using a curricular ensemble, ultimately determining if they are a philosophically viable method of ACM realisation. To conclude, I analyse the application of the ACM to the classroom programs of all four schools within the research sample, paying particular attention to the course documentation provided by Schools One and Two. In so doing, this chapter compares the ways that teachers can interpret the ACM and suggests approaches and dispositions to curriculum implementation that may be of benefit to other teachers.

Although I draw important conclusions about the role of the ACM in the dialogue between curriculum and the classroom, there are also external factors challenging music education that are beyond the scope of a curriculum to address. I introduce these throughout the thesis but cannot explore them in detail because of time and space limitations. Therefore, I conclude the thesis by elaborating on these issues and suggesting further areas of research that could contribute to the strengthening of Australian music education.

Chapter One: Research methods

1.1 Research questions

The present thesis seeks to answer three interrelated research questions.

1. Can the Australian Curriculum in Music (hereafter ACM) align with a praxial framework of best practice in music education?

2. How did secondary music teachers react to the introduction of the ACM?

3. How have secondary music teachers responded to the ACM for use in their classrooms?

Answering the first research question primarily involved document analysis of the ACM itself along with documentation that chronicles its development, and literature pertaining to music education and the philosophy of music education. Similarly, answering the third research question also drew on the analysis of teachers' course documents. To answer the second research question and provide further context for the third, I needed to interview music teachers to understand their reactions to the ACM and to provide a rationale for their implementation of the curriculum.

As a relative novice to social research (my personal background is in music performance, not sociology) I needed to engage with the literature of the field to understand the various discourses and to position my work. Alan Bryman's *Social Research Methods* (2012) proved most useful in this regard because it serves as a practical guide rather than an abstract methodological essay: it uses real-world examples of social research to illustrate methodological points, thus serving as a gateway into social research literature. *The SAGE Handbook of Social Research Methods* (Alasuutari, Bickman, and Brannen 2008) and *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Data Analysis* (Flick 2013) were also useful orientation points.

1.2 Qualitative research methods

In choosing to conduct a small number of interviews and prioritise depth of data and not breadth, I positioned myself within a qualitative research paradigm. This carries with it a set of methodological assumptions, the most important of which is that it stems from an interpretivist approach to data collection and analysis, and not a positivist approach (Alasuutari, Brannen, and Bickman 2008, pp. 5–6). In particular, this thesis adopts the critical

realist paradigm: there is an external reality, but it is interpreted differently by each individual (Bryman 2012, p. 29). In the case of the present thesis, the ACM itself can be seen as the external reality, and the responses and course documents of the interview participants are the interpretations of it. I take my lead here from Atkinson and Coffey (2011), who suggest that official documents cannot be taken as an objective representation of reality; rather, they are a form of reality in their own right (Bryman 2012, p. 554). This perspective extends to my own analysis as well: I cannot remove myself from the analysis that I have conducted, and this analysis represents my own interpretation of the external reality that is the ACM, the interviews I have conducted, and the course documents that I have reviewed.

Implementing a qualitative research framework that targets music teachers in relation to their interpretations of the ACM fills an important lacuna in the field. This exists for at least four reasons. First, the ACM itself is quite new, having only been fully endorsed by the ACT Education Directorate in 2017 (ACT Curriculum Advisory Group 2016). Therefore, there has been little chance for a study of the present nature to occur. Secondly, education research in Australia seems to target students as the object of inquiry rather than teachers, and this has resulted in schools feeling that their students are over-tested (see the issues encountered section, below).[1] Third, and as an extension from the previous point, much of the educational research done recently (including the NAPLAN tests) is quantitative in nature, in an attempt to build a statistical framework for the development of Australian education (ACARA 2016d). And finally, a comprehensive overview of music in schools of any kind is overdue; the most recent large-scale review is the *Review* (2005), although smaller-scale studies such as those of Butler (2015), Crooke and McFerran (2015), and Joseph and Southcott (2010) contribute to form an overall picture of Australian music education. I do not have the same resources as the authors of the *Review* and therefore only have the capacity to draw far more modest conclusions, however, there are similarities in the methodologies of the *Review* and the present thesis. Most notably, my use of case studies to

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[1] A cursory analysis of the *Australian Journal of Education* illustrates that students are overwhelmingly the target of educational research. The 2017 issues include eight articles obviously targeting students, three specifically targeting teachers, and two that are difficult to define. When considering music education specifically, the 2018 issues of the *Australian Journal of Music Education* tend to focus on curriculum, with five articles exploring various facets of the relationship between music and curriculum. There are also four articles concerned with students, and three specifically focusing on teachers.

illustrate a small selection of ACM interpretations aligns with the case studies in the *Review* that served as examples of best practice in Australian music education.

1.3 Interviews, transcription, and analysis

A common method for undertaking qualitative social research in an educational setting is the semi-structured interview (Shek, Lin, and Liang 2018). These interviews are significantly different to the surveys and structured interviews used in statistical research. Firstly, the questions are more open-ended than those in statistical research, allowing for deeper and more comprehensive responses to research questions, and secondly, the interviewer and interviewee are both able to follow tangents if the need arises (de Leeuw 2008, pp. 317–318, Bryman 2012, p. 471).[2] This flexibility is tempered across interviews because each interview utilises a similar sequence of questions. Even though the wording may be different, the overall structure remains consistent and allows comparable information to be collected in each interview (Bryman 2012, p. 472). This combination of flexibility and structure was an important factor in my interview process, because each teacher had a different amount of time available, ranging from 50 minutes to 80 minutes. In addition, the final interview I conducted was a group interview, which provided its own distinct challenges. A unique benefit of group interviews is that individuals can discuss points amongst themselves, which can lead to more detailed points being expressed (Smithson 2008, pp. 359–360, Bryman 2012, pp. 513–516).[3] However, I was unable to ask these teachers about their professional backgrounds during the interview because of time constraints, and so I asked them to complete a brief questionnaire in the days after the interview (see Appendix D).

Interview transcription proved to be a challenging process, but it was also an important component of my overall approach. There are conflicting opinions on the transcription of interviews: some advocate for the interviewer to complete the transcription, as they are sensitive to the issues at play within the interview and can begin their analysis immediately;

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[2] Edith de Leeuw's chapter is primarily concerned with fully standardised interviews, but she acknowledged that "partly structured interview schedules with open questions can be used as the interviewer poses the questions, follows up with additional probes, bridges silences, and records answers" (2008, p. 317).

[3] In social research discourse, group interviews are referred to as focus groups. They became popular in social research in the 1990s, and are commonly used in education research (Smithson 2008, p. 357). Within the present context I prefer the term *group interview* because of the small group size (four participants) and because two interviewees dominated much of the discussion as the other two were late.

while others suggest that it is not necessary for the interviewer to also transcribe the interview because it is too time-consuming (Bryman 2012, pp. 482–487).[4] I transcribed the interviews and found that it was possible to identify some key points of analysis early.[5] The analysis of the interviews drew on two analytical frameworks: most significantly content analysis, with support from discourse analysis when appropriate. Content analysis is simple to conceptualise, as it is the analysis of what was said during the interviews. As long as the transcriptions were accurate, there were few concerns with analysing the interviews with this method.

By contrast, discourse analysis takes the study of language to a deeper level and analyses how things are said (Taylor 2001, pp. 6–7). Taylor suggests that there are four approaches to using discourse analysis in research, and I have noted two of these as being appropriate to the present thesis.[6] The first of these is the study of terms that are used in relation to a particular topic or social phenomenon. In this instance, it is the study of language in relation to music education: how music teachers say things in different ways to imply certain meanings, such as *practical* to imply performance (p. 8). The second approach is the analysis of the use of language in relation to how it reflects on aspects of society as a whole. This relates to the teachers' intentional and careful positioning of their responses in relation to Indigenous Australian music, or including students with a disability in the classroom, as examples (p. 9). While the bulk of the analysis in this thesis can be considered content analysis, using discourse analysis at appropriate times adds depth and clarifies links or differences between the responses of different teachers.

As illustrated below, I encountered issues in my data collection that resulted in the alteration of the scope of this thesis. Only two of the four schools within the sample were willing to provide course documentation for analysis, which necessitated a change of approach to a multiple case study analysis. According to Bryman, one of the intentions of a

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[4] Anecdotally, it is suggested that five to six hours should be allowed to transcribe each hour of interview material. For the most part, this was an accurate estimation.

[5] According to Roulston (2013), there are "no 'right' ways to transcribe and/or translate interview data, but the choices made in the processes of transcription and/or translation allow certain kinds of analytic questions to be asked" (p. 7). Utilising a hybridised approach to transcription and data analysis allows me to specifically target the research questions in this thesis.

[6] The two that I do not use are the study of language itself, which is much like the work of linguists, and at a slightly broader level, there is the study of interaction, based on the premise that "any one person's contribution must follow on from that of the previous contribution and inevitably shaped by what has gone on before" (Taylor 2001, p. 8).

multiple case study project is to compare and contrast the different cases presented (pp. 72–75). In the context of this thesis, each school represents an individual case. Any comparison between the cases is not intended to facilitate a judgement of quality or worth, and I am mindful of the different contexts that surround each school. Comparison is merely intended to identify common trends or issues in the implementation of the ACM. In combination, the cases provide a general snapshot of music education in Canberra. Therefore, at a broader level, it is possible to conceptualise the ACT as a case study as well.

Case study research is particularly useful for understanding data in a deep and comprehensive way. While case studies can be adapted for more statistical types of research or used to support the conclusions of quantitative studies (as in the *National Review*), within a qualitative framework they can be used to explore different aspects of social phenomena. Linda Mabry (2008) proposed two basic examples of case studies: the typical case, which is an example of an ordinary, average case; and the atypical case, which can be further broken down into sub-categories, but is essentially a case that does not conform to the social theory surrounding the phenomenon being studied (p. 217). The sub-categories that Mabry suggests are negative cases, discrepant cases, or deviant cases.[7] Although I cannot generalise too far beyond the present sample, I suggest that the two schools within this thesis are typical cases—they match what I determine to be the emergent Canberra context (see Chapter Ten)—although the first school exhibits discrepant elements in the positioning of music within the school. The use of case studies in social research is supported by Bent Flyvbjerg (2006), who believes that even a small sample of cases can provide representative data on a scale far greater than I attempt to achieve (p. 221, p. 225). Two key benefits that he identifies are that case studies allow researchers to interrogate and account for their own biases in a way that other methods do not (pp. 235–236), and that they allow for a real representation of the complexities associated with studying humanity (p. 224, p. 229, p.

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[7] There appears to be some discrepancy between different methodological texts in relation to types of cases. Yin (2009) suggests five different types of cases: critical cases, or cases whose circumstances allow for thorough interrogation of the social phenomenon at hand, and are useful for proving or disproving hypotheses; extreme or unique cases, which are fundamentally different to typical cases, although they do not necessarily need to contradict the typical case; representative, typical, or exemplifying cases, which attempt to capture the "everyday" occurrence of a social phenomenon; the revelatory case, which is the first time a social phenomenon has been studied in detail; and the longitudinal case, which is where cases are analysed for development over time. Elements from one, some, or all of these case types may be present within an individual case (Yin 2009, in Bryman 2012, pp. 70–71).

241). The overall impression here is that case studies are one of the better methods to generate an accurately complex understanding of a social phenomenon, in place of idealised generalisations.

1.4 Processes of data collection and analysis

The following section outlines the steps taken to collect and analyse the data used in this thesis. Because document analysis was integral to addressing the first and third research questions, I begin with a description of collection and analytical processes used in relation to curriculum documents and course outlines. Following this I explore the processes used to conduct and analyse interviews.

1.4.1 Document collection and analysis

There are two kinds of documents that I refer to here: curriculum documents and course outlines. The course outlines share a similar process of analysis as the curriculum documents but were reliant on the approvals described in relation to interviews. By contrast, curriculum documents were easy to access without restriction online.

My initial source for curriculum documents was the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (hereafter ACARA) website, which continues to host a significant number of documents that outline the development of the Australian Curriculum. There were several documents in the sequence of development that were not available on the website, but ACARA provided copies of these documents through private correspondence. The Australian Curriculum itself is hosted online and its content is publicly available. Collecting this data simply involved accessing the relevant section of the curriculum through the website. There were no confidential or restricted documents accessed in this process of data collection.

I utilised an inductive, continuous, and comparative method of document analysis, comparing collected documents to the literature, other documents, and the interview data where relevant. By continuously referring back to the data I ensured that I stayed as up to date as possible, a challenge given the nature of the ACM as a website and therefore easily updateable. By contrast, it was evident that the course documents did not change as frequently so they have been considered stable since their collection. Another challenge

emerged in relation to language in curriculum documents. As the ACM has re-defined pre-existing terms (see Chapters Four and Five), a level of complexity was added to what was otherwise a relatively simple process of document analysis. In the case of any adapted terms, it was necessary to be aware of the conventional definition of the term, and how it had been adapted for use in the ACM.

1.4.2 Interviews
1.4.2.1 Institutional approval processes

The first step of data collection involved gaining approval to conduct the interviews from the university, the ACT Education Directorate (where relevant), the principals of each school, and the teachers themselves. This section is concerned with the first three steps. To begin, the research and interview design needed to be approved by the university's Human Research Ethics Committee to ensure it aligned with the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research* (2007). I submitted a proposal along with draft request forms, consent forms, and indicative interview questions. I was given full permission to commence interviews after making recommended amendments to the request forms.

The next step was to submit an application to the ACT Education Directorate. This step was only required for government schools, as research in independent schools is at the full discretion of the school principals. As with the initial ethical approval phase, I was required to submit a proposal along with my request and consent forms and indicative interview questions. Approval was only for a limited timeframe, after which I would need to apply again if I needed to continue data collection. Once approved, I was able to approach individual schools.

I initially contacted schools by email through their "general inquiries" link. In these emails I briefly introduced myself and the purpose of my research and asked for the attached forms to be forwarded to the school principal for approval, or for the contact details of the school principal. Once I had gained approval from the school principals, I was then directed to the head teacher for music or the Arts within the school. Often, this was the person who I ended up interviewing, but on occasion they directed me to another teacher. Interviews only occurred if I gained permission through all of these steps.

1.4.2.2 Contacting interview participants

Once I made contact with the relevant teacher, I then negotiated with them to find a mutually agreeable time to conduct the interviews. All communications occurred through my university email account and the teachers' school email accounts. If necessary, I followed up with teachers after the interviews had occurred to distribute and collect professional background questionnaires (see Appendix D) and to request copies of course documents. I ceased all communication with the teachers once my research period allocated by the ACT Education Directorate had expired.

1.4.2.3 Conducting interviews

Three of the seven interview participants had individual, face-to-face interviews. When arriving at these schools, I checked into the relevant school's visitor log in reception to comply with school processes. The music teacher then came to the reception to direct me to the classroom or office where the interview was scheduled to take place. I commenced each interview by giving the teacher a consent form and informing them of their rights as interview participants, including their right to refuse to answer questions or to withdraw without penalty. I also requested consent for the interviews to be recorded. All of the individual interview participants gave full consent to these requests.

The process of conducting the individual interviews was similar in each instance, with the most significant difference between interviews being the amount of time that each teacher had available. I followed a loose guideline of interview questions and topics that allowed me to collect comparable information between the interviews in spite of the differences in time allocated (see Appendix D for the list of questions). This guideline also served a practical purpose of allowing me to re-orient myself to the interview process in the case of interruptions or tangents.

The final interview was a group interview with four participants. I followed a similar process of checking into reception and meeting a representative in the reception as I did for the individual interviews. I also similarly ensured that each teacher had completed their consent forms and were aware of their rights before I commenced interviewing. The key difference in process for the group interview was the late arrival of two participants, which necessitated a pause in proceedings for me to gain their consent. I also followed a similar

process of following a loose guideline of interview topics and questions to ensure I collected comparable data. Because of the presence of other teachers, my role in this interview was similar to that of a facilitator: rather than asking each participant direct questions, I raised points of discussion and allowed the participants to explore them fully amongst themselves.

A requirement of the ACT Education Directorate is that all research participants must remain anonymous, and no schools are to be identifiable. Therefore, I informed the teachers of this fact when asking them to complete their consent forms prior to the interview commencing. I also ensured that all teachers agreed to having the interviews recorded for transcription later, and all agreed. To comply with the need anonymity, all teachers have been given a pseudonym and as many identifying details as possible have been removed. However, the unique nature of some school programs means that anonymity cannot be guaranteed, particularly within a small city such as Canberra.

An additional point to note is how my background as a musician affected the interview process. I was initially unsure about whether I would be able to conduct the interviews effectively due to my inexperience with social research methods. However, I shared a similar tertiary music education experience with all of the interview participants and was able to use this to build connection and rapport with the teachers quickly. Therefore, my musical background can be seen as a benefit in the context of this research.

1.4.2.4 Transcription

I used the same method of transcription for all interviews. I imported audio recordings from my digital audio recorder to my computer and manually transcribed each interview for analysis using the transcription software interviewScribe. As content analysis (with discrete instances of discourse analysis) was my intended method to analyse the interviews, I immediately transferred the transcriptions to Microsoft Word documents and edited them to better reflect written English. While there are a range of transcription services that do not require the (admittedly time consuming) manual input of data, going through each interview personally sensitised me to the data and allowed me to identify themes and trends early in the data analysis process.

1.4.2.5 Coding and analysis

To analyse the interview data, I commenced a process of coding and categorisation, a full table of which can be found in Appendix B. I completed this process manually: given the small sample size it was not necessary to use coding software. As with the analysis of documents, the analysis of interviews was an inductive, continuous, and comparative process which compared the interviews to the literature, each other, and the curriculum and course documents. After forming initial codes, I commenced the writing process which allowed the abstract connections between curriculum, interview, and course data to become more readily apparent. This then informed changes to and recategorisation of codes, a process that I continually refined throughout much of the thesis writing process.

1.5 Issues encountered during the research process

The scope of this thesis has changed dramatically since the inception of the project in 2015. It is important to account for the changes in scope and methodology, because they made it necessary to employ an adaptive method of data collection and carry some implications towards my overall conclusions. In my initial plans, I intended to carry out research on a national scale, interviewing a small sample of teachers from each state and territory in Australia: my initial proposed sample was one government school and one non-government school from each jurisdiction. It soon became apparent that this was an unrealistic sample size, both logistically and because I intended to conduct an analysis of the ACM in addition to my proposed interviews. Furthermore, researching the ACM revealed that some jurisdictions were not yet implementing the Australian Curriculum.[8] To retain some sense of national significance while managing the scope of the research, I targeted the study to two jurisdictions: the Australian Capital Territory (ACT), and Tasmania. These were convenient jurisdictions because they were both at the front end of the Australian Curriculum implementation schedule, and because they are logistically convenient for me to work within.

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[8] This challenges the concept of the Australian Curriculum as a national curriculum. New South Wales chose to integrate the Australian Curriculum with elements from their previous state-based syllabi (Board of Studies NSW 2015); Victoria and Western Australia also made significant amendments (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority 2018, Government of Western Australia n.d.).

The first challenge I faced was the rejection of my research application by the Tasmanian Education Department. After a promising consultation where the Department identified the Tasmanian government secondary schools that were implementing the ACM in 2016, my formal application to research within these schools was denied on the grounds that "the proposed research does not demonstrate a benefit to schools" (Tasmanian Department of Education, email message to author, October 17, 2016). While the Department were within their rights to reject the application, I sought to determine more precise reasoning why, as the inclusion of Tasmanian schools was important to retain national scope. The Department replied, indicating that because the ACM was so new they did not want to pressure schools and teachers by having their implementation of it under assessment.

> The [Tasmanian] Department [of Education] has recently begun implementing the Australian Curriculum for Music in schools using a staged approach. Schools are making this transition *at their own pace* and for this reason the Department will not support any projects that seek to undertake research in this area at this early stage (Tasmanian Department of Education, email message to author, October 18, 2016, emphasis added).

They also indicated that this situation would not change for at least twelve months, significantly delaying my proposed fieldwork timeline. There was also no guarantee that the Directorate would approve the second application. The barring of access to Tasmanian government schools was a significant setback which demonstrated a general reluctance of the Tasmanian Department of Education to participate in research of this nature without even consulting teachers. I determined to maintain national scope by instead targeting non-government schools in Tasmania, which did not require approval from the Department.

While I was re-structuring my approach in Tasmania, the ACT Education Directorate approved my research application and I made attempts to contact ACT government schools. Non-response of potential participants is a significant issue in social research (Bryman 2012), and I was only able to conduct three interviews in the timeframe that the Directorate had given me. I also dealt with non-response in the Tasmanian non-government schools I attempted to contact as well. I managed to gain permission from the principals of two Tasmanian non-government schools, but in one case the music teachers did not respond to any further emails, and in the other the music teacher refused to participate any further, citing the same reasons as the Tasmanian Department of Education. Non-response and reluctance to participate may be indicative of broader attitudes among teachers. However, it could also be argued that I began this research too early in the ACM's implementation

timeline. I acknowledge this point, but I also highlight the benefits of conducting such an initial study. In particular, I draw attention to the focus on teachers' adaptation to changing models of curriculum: had I waited for teachers to become more familiar with the ACM, their recollections of previous curriculum models may have been less accurate and the understanding of the teachers' adaptation to change more limited. Teachers' reluctance to participate may also indicate a need for greater support mechanisms in the implementation of new curriculum programs. Finally, the dates listed for ACM implementation were, in fact, the *latest* dates that teachers could fully implement the curriculum model. Because of this, teachers may have had a significant amount of time to experiment with their delivery of the ACM. In the present sample, the two schools that provided the most detail had been working from drafts of the ACM since 2014 or 2015—at least two years before the interviews took place. Regardless, and despite my best attempts, my sample was now limited to the ACT.

Because Tasmania was closed to me, and I wanted to collect data from non-government schools, I compiled a list of all non-government secondary schools in the ACT, determined whether they implemented music, and then attempted to contact all schools that matched these criteria. The majority of schools did not respond to the request. In the end, only one school approved my request to conduct interviews, culminating in my final sample size of three government schools and one non-government school. However, this was not the end of the negotiation process: once I had confirmed the involvement of the final school, it took almost six months to actually meet and conduct the interview. Again, this is indicative of the challenges inherent to social research, and may also indicate why there is a lacuna of the detailed perspectives of teachers in research about schools and curricula: the reason for the delay was simply because the teachers were too busy to fit it in. Furthermore, a school principal indicated that they believe students are over-surveyed for research purposes, and it does appear that much educational research is aimed at compiling the results of students (Australian Broadcasting Corporation 2018b).[9] This perspective may engender an attitude

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[9] One of the principals I contacted replied with the following: "However, as you'd be aware, we get numerous requests such as yours, all for very good research, and there is only so much time we can devote to surveys. Our students can get over-surveyed and I am very aware of the potential for this" (Tasmanian non-government school principal, email message to author, May 8, 2017). The supporting audio interview with Brian Caldwell, conducted by Nadia Mitsopoulos, reveals that the concern about over-testing is not isolated to a single school principal (Australian Broadcasting Corporation 2018b).

that extends even to areas of research that do not engage directly with students: if other school principals feel the same way, then it may be that research about the opinions and responses of teachers may be rejected out of hand.

The final challenge, and the one that had the most considerable impact on the structure of this thesis, was the unwillingness of some schools to provide copies of the course documentation I requested. The course documents that teachers design are the property of the school, not the teachers themselves; therefore, all teachers within the sample were unwilling to provide any documentation without first confirming approval with their school principal. In the end, two schools did provide course documentation, and two did not: one government school teacher agreed in principle during the interview but did not respond to any further requests for this documentation; and the teachers at the non-government school indicated that it would be difficult to arrange access to this documentation.[10] This resulted in the final re-structuring of my analytical framework. My initial plan was to conduct a comparative thematic analysis between the four schools in an attempt to understand common themes and trends in the interpretation and implementation of the ACM. As only two schools provided course documentation, I instead analysed their programs in detail and drew from interview data from the other two schools to support the analysis. This informed the final tripartite structure of this thesis: curriculum analysis, interview analysis, and the analysis of course documentation through the detailed comparison of case studies.

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[10] The Head of Music at School Four sent the following email after I had sent numerous requests for a copy of their course documents: "Hello Alex, sorry for the delay. Getting a copy of our 7–10 full academic curriculum might be difficult as it is all online and [only] accessible to [School Four] staff and students" (Chris, email message to the author, April 9, 2018).

Chapter Two: Philosophical underpinnings of the Australian Curriculum in Music

2.1 Introduction

This chapter is a substantial elaboration on an area of fundamental importance to the present thesis: music education philosophy (hereafter MEP). According to David J. Elliott (2012), music education philosophy is well-established but still nonetheless "significantly underdeveloped" (pp. 65–66), meaning that outdated ideas are entrenched in the collective consciousness of music education professionals. This contradicts a key point made in Bennett Reimer's *A Philosophy of Music Education* (1970): that the role of such philosophy is to reflect best thought in the area at any given time (p. 2). This means that music education philosophy should be critically appraised and updated frequently to ensure that it is an accurate reflection of contemporary best practice. At the time of writing, the most recently published comprehensive statement of a music education philosophy is David J. Elliott and Marissa Silverman's second edition of *Music Matters* (2014), which is an exploration of the praxial philosophy of music education. I argue that this is presently the best statement of best practice in music education, a view that is supported by leading figures in music education and MEP, although there are some who disagree.[1] I have used the praxial philosophy as the basis of an analytical framework to assess the ACM.

In this chapter I will broadly outline the field of MEP, define the praxial philosophy in broad terms, outline concepts of curriculum, and define the praxial characteristics that form the basis of my analytical framework. I argue that the field of MEP in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries can be considered a dialogue between Reimer and Elliott (and Silverman), and outline how their publications developed in relation to each other. I also argue that despite some flaws in the praxial philosophy, it equates with contemporary best practice in music education and can be used as a foundation to develop an analytical

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[1] In 2014, Silverman, Susan A. Davis, and Elliott published an analysis of the critical commentaries pertaining to praxial music education. Within this article, they compiled a sample of opinions about praxial music education from a variety of academics and philosophers, some of whom were discussed in the literature review. Those in support included Margaret Barrett (2007), Regelski (2005), Natalie Sarrazin (1996), and Marie McCarthy (2000), who praised inclusivity, the emphasis on contexts, and the people-focused nature of the philosophy (p. 54). By contrast, detractors included Reimer (1996, 1997), Rebecca Draisey-Collishaw (2007), Heidi Westerlund (2002), Gerard Kneiter (2000), and Paul Woodford (2005), who suggested that Elliott's focus on practical activities was an outdated throwback to the nineteenth-century conservatorium model (p. 54). Although I have criticisms of the praxial philosophy (explored below), the focus on the practical is not one of them.

framework for the ACM. I consider the praxial philosophy alongside *music education as aesthetic education* (hereafter MEAE), another dominant philosophical approach to music education in the twentieth century. Following this, I attempt to concisely explain what the praxial philosophy is and why it is relevant to the present thesis. In particular, I briefly introduce different concepts of curriculum and explore the characteristics of them to ascertain what would be a good fit for best practice in a praxial music curriculum.[2] To apply this concept to my analysis of the ACM and its implementation in case studies, I then take the characteristics of the praxial philosophy, consider these against the concepts and approaches to curriculum design, and develop seven praxial characteristics of a music curriculum against which the ACM can be assessed. I suggest the ACM should reflect and contain these characteristics if it is to be considered an example of best practice in music education.

2.1.1 Best practice?

Best practice is a term that is often used in education that was initially borrowed from medicine, law, and architecture (Zemelman, Daniels and Hyde 2012, p. 1). Its dictionary definition refers to "commercial or professional procedures that are accepted or prescribed as being most effective" (in the *Oxford Dictionary of English* 2010), but its use in an educational context has "suffered from…a process by which useful educational ideas become overly popular, are carelessly used, and come unmoored form their original meanings" (Zemelman, Daniels and Hyde 2012, p. 2). Furthermore, it is worth noting that while there are some elements of best practice in education that appear to be commonly understood (discussed below), it is a highly relativistic concept that can mean different things to different people. Therefore, when I use the term in the remainder of this thesis I am not suggesting that there is only one way to interpret best practice in school music

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[2] The ACM development documents rarely explicitly mention best practice, but they do imply it. The *Position Paper* (ACARA 2009a) for the Arts describes Arts learning as "the centrality of practice—children working artistically engaging their whole bodies, voices, instruments, mediums and technology imaginatively towards aesthetic outcomes" (p. 1). It also states that "a high quality national arts education will ensure that students have opportunities to engage with significant global, historical and contemporary arts practices, knowledges and theories at all phases of schooling" (p. 3). Therefore, the vision of Arts learning heading into the design process was for a practically based curriculum that encompassed a variety of historical and cultural contexts as students worked towards aesthetic outcomes. Aesthetic outcomes are problematic and require further consideration: they will be explored in greater detail in Chapters Four and Five.

education. Instead, I use the term to signify that the approaches that are used in the present thesis make a reasonable attempt to account for the complexities associated with defining and teaching music in the secondary school classroom. My understanding of best practice in music education is naturally informed by my background as a Western classical musician, and while I have made attempts to be as objective as possible, my assertion that praxial music education equates to best practice is ultimately subjective. To paraphrase Bowman and Frega, philosophical conclusions are working hypotheses that remain fallible and should be continuously questioned (2012b, p. 4, 2012c, p. 24).

According to Steven Zemelman, Harvey Daniels, and Arthur Hyde, there is some consensus on what best practice means amongst American teachers in education more broadly (2012, p. 5). This is likely to have some transferability to the Australian education system. For the most part, their recommendations call for an increase in practical, experiential, and constructivist learning approaches (pp. 8–9).[3] A further analysis of best practice as an abstract concept goes beyond the scope of the present thesis, but it is important to note that such recommendations align with praxial approaches in music education, as will be outlined throughout the remainder this chapter.

2.2 Music education philosophy (MEP)—a very brief introduction

The field of music education philosophy played an important role in the development of the ACM, as seen in the bibliography for *The Shape of the Australian Curriculum: The Arts* (ACARA 2011a) which lists works by two of the most prominent authors in the field, Reimer and Elliott (pp. 15–16), among its references. As this thesis focuses on the practical implementation of praxial approaches and is not a targeted analysis of the field of MEP, the following discussion about the development of the field is only intended to serve as a brief introduction and is not a comprehensive history. In the interests of time and space limitations, I commence this history of MEP in 1970 with the publication of Reimer's *A Philosophy of Music Education*, which is arguably the first formal and fully realised statement of MEP. Of course, philosophical ideas influenced music and educational practice prior to

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[3] Zemelman, Daniels, and Hyde describe best practice as "student-centred" (authentic, holistic, experiential, and challenging), "cognitive" (developmental, constructivist, expressive, reflective), and "interactive" (sociable, collaborative, democratic) (2012, pp. 8–9).

1970: for more on earlier philosophical antecedents, see *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy in Music Education* (Bowman and Frega 2012a).

Reimer and Elliott took opposing positions in the debate that has ultimately defined the field since 1970. Reimer prioritised an approach to music education that was based in aesthetics and which emphasised musical products, while Elliott continues to promote a practice-led philosophy of music education with an emphasis on musical processes—on doing and making. Although other authors have contributed to music education philosophy, I suggest that the key texts that have led the definition of the field have been authored by Reimer and Elliott (and Elliott's co-author, Marissa Silverman, in 2014). In this way, the overall shape of the field can be seen as a dialogue between Reimer and Elliott.[4] The influences of MEAE and praxis are strongly felt throughout the ACM, creating a sometimes-irreconcilable tension within the curriculum.

In 1970, Reimer published his foundational MEP text, *A Philosophy of Music Education* (Reimer 1970). The second edition was published in 1989. It took six years for Elliott to formulate his response, *Music Matters: A Philosophy of Music Education* in 1995. Reimer published the final edition of *A Philosophy of Music Education* in 2003, and two years later in 2005, Elliott edited *Praxial Music Education*, which compiled a collection of responses and opinions about the implications of the 1995 edition of *Music Matters*. This was followed by the most recent music education philosophy text, an updated edition of *Music Matters*, in 2014 (Elliott and Silverman). Reimer died in 2013; a continuing dialogue between the authors would have doubtlessly been influential on the continuing development of music education philosophy. Despite their differences in opinion, the approaches of both authors share a foundation in basing their philosophies on the underlying nature of music. Ultimately, both were seeking greater value and priority to be placed on music education, and they pursued different means to realise this end.

Reimer's 1970 edition of *A Philosophy of Music Education* formalised much of the professional thinking at the time. It fully developed MEAE, in which the focus of music education is to teach students about the nature and value of beauty. This stemmed from the philosophical paradigm of aesthetics which, within the context of MEP, is a Eurocentric field

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[4] Deborah Bradley also considers Reimer and Elliott to be the key contributors to the field of MEP, although she also emphasises the efforts of Alperson, Bowman, and Regleski in the praxial camp (2012, pp. 417–423).

that attributes universal values and qualities on all music. Within this framework, the role of music education was to encourage students to appreciate beauty, with students playing a passive role in their education (Reimer 1970, pp. 122–125). This meant that actively making music was not the central priority in the MEAE framework. In addition, the qualities that were defined as being aesthetically pleasing, and therefore worthy of study, were primarily based in the Western art music tradition comprising of musical *works*. These qualities were treated as being universal to all music, so the logical extrapolation of this—and one of the key arguments against the MEAE approach—was that all music, from any culture or stylistic background, should be considered against these Eurocentric aesthetic ideals. This reveals an underlying cultural bias, the effects of which are still present within the ACM.

By prioritising *works* of music, MEAE is reliant on the *work concept* of music: a European concept where each individual work of music has an idealised representation beyond its written notation (or score), or any single realisation of its written notation (Goehr 1992, pp. 1–9). No individual performance of the work can be considered definitive because of the inherent imperfections associated with live performance (unless it is the composer's own interpretation), and the score is merely a visual representation of the work, and not the work itself (pp. 13–69). The work concept can be traced back to the fifteenth century, but the status of the work concept as the dominant approach in Western art music did not occur until around 1800 (p. 120, p. 176, Talbot 2000, p. 171). Talbot claims that "between 1780 and 1820…a genre-centred and performer-centred practice became a composer-centred one" (p. 172). Prior to this point in Europe, composers were employed by aristocrats, royalty, or the church, and were commissioned to compose music for specific purposes or occasions (Goehr 1992, pp. 176–204, Scruton 2011, pp. 14–15). Due to the frequency of the events they were composing for, composers pre-1800 often employed a shorthand approach to writing their music, giving performers significant freedom of interpretation. The shift to composer-centred practice meant that, after 1800, composers became less prolific and assumed a greater degree of creative control over their output: the perception of the composer as a "creative genius" began to manifest (Goehr, pp. 224–225, Talbot, p. 180). The issue with the work concept, and by definition MEAE, is that it has limited applicability to music outside of the limited scope of instrumental music in the nineteenth century Western classical tradition (Elliott and Silverman 2014, p. 71, McCarthy and Goble 2005, pp. 19–51).

The publication of the first edition of *A Philosophy of Music Education* represents the purest statement of MEAE. Although this text fulfilled an important "utilitarian" function of "uniting the field" of music education (McCarthy and Goble 2005, p. 24), MEAE faced questioning from that point onwards.[5] Indeed, Reimer believed that while he was pursuing his vision for music education, others would be doing the same elsewhere. However, this was not the case.

> I would not have quite believed how monolithically the profession would evolve in the 1970s…I envisioned that my own attempts to articulate a philosophy and play out its implications in the curriculum would be matched by alternative efforts (Reimer 1977, in McCarthy and Goble 2005, pp. 28–29).

Reimer would need to wait until 1995 for a comprehensive critical response to be published. In the intervening years, he published the second edition of his work in 1989. However, it is important to acknowledge that while the MEAE paradigm remained unchallenged by teachers, it was also primarily implemented in the United States. In Europe, the practice-led methods of Zoltán Kodály and Carl Orff were influential on the classroom-based practice of music teachers, and this influence extended to Australia through primary school music (Department of Education, Science and Training 2005, pp. 15–16).[6] In Australian secondary schools, particularly in New South Wales (NSW), a common framework that was utilised was comprehensive musicianship (pp. 17–19).[7] This is a framework that continues to remain influential in Australia and has exerted some influence over the ACM. In particular, comprehensive musicianship is structured around the elements or concepts of music—a set

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[5] McCarthy and Goble (2005) describe the "utilitarian" function as follows: "The development of an aesthetic basis for music education established a cohesive philosophy for the music education community at a time when ideological homogeneity was a societal ideal. Efforts toward philosophical unity were reasonable for a profession in need of security and a society in need of socio-political balance" (p. 24). They also outlined some of the various arguments against the aesthetic approach, which were usually based on the assumption that music had more reasons for existence in the curriculum than its "aesthetic rationales" (p. 28). In particular, they list the work of John Blacking (1973), John Shepherd et al. (1977), and Christopher Small (1977) as the sources of this argument. Despite this, McCarthy and Goble claim that "the music education profession in [the 1970s] *seemed comfortable* maintaining the aesthetic philosophy," but that there was "a certain loss of confidence in the aesthetic approach" (p. 29, emphasis added).

[6] Orff emphasised a play-based style of music education that was designed to emulate how children think about and engage with music, with a focus on improvisation (Department of Education, Science and Training 2005, p. 16). Kodály emphasised pentatonic patterns and gradual development, but focused on music literacy (p. 16).

[7] Comprehensive musicianship was developed in the United States and formed the basis of the NSW music curriculum (see Chapter Three). It was designed to correct some of the perceived imbalances in school music education. Of particular note is its attempt to include music other than Western art music. According to Choksy et al. (1986, p. 108), the aims of the Comprehensive Musicianship Programme are "(1) gain specific insight into the nature of music; (2) relate and synthesize [sic] the isolated facets and areas of musical experience; (3) view music with a global perspective" (Department of Education, Science and Training 2005, p. 17).

of attributes that are supposedly universal to all styles of music.[8] These elements of music are a central component of the ACM.

Elliott's first edition of *Music Matters* (1995) introduced the concept of praxial music education to a broader audience.[9] As with Reimer, Elliott built his philosophy of music education on a philosophy of music, but instead of focusing on music as a product, he took up the concept of praxis and focused on the human processes of creating and listening to music. His primary argument—and the thread that carries through to the 2014 edition—is that music is, "at root, a human activity" (p. 39). Elliott's initial approach addressed and challenged many of the substantive aspects of the MEAE paradigm, not least the limitations of the educational framework when exploring music outside of the Western art music tradition (Elliott 1995). However, it also raised issues of its own. Perhaps unsurprisingly, Reimer was chief among those who critiqued Elliott on being overly focused on practice, performance, and adopting a dualistic view on musical processes and products: processes are good, products are bad (Reimer 2003).[10] To resolve this, Reimer formulated a new approach that attempted to reconcile these disparate and extreme positions.

In his 2003 edition of *A Philosophy of Music Education*, Reimer argued that different educational frameworks were all working towards the same ends and were all starting from the same base assumption—that a philosophy of music education was reliant on a philosophy of music. Therefore, the key difference between each approach came from the different position taken by the authors on the nature of music, and that these were inevitably extreme positions—particularly in relation to musical processes and products.[11]

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[8] Although the elements of music are broadly influenced by the dominant philosophical framework at the time, they are usually comprised of some variation on rhythm, pitch, dynamics and expression, form and structure, timbre, and texture.

[9] Elliott's work draws heavily on the work of Alperson (1991) and Sparshott (1982).

[10] Reimer's critique centres on Elliott taking an extreme position against the MEAE philosophy, while also acknowledging that his own early attempts were too focused on musical products: "Once the aesthetic concept of music is portrayed in the most extreme formalistic way possible (as it is by Elliott), a very strong antidote is apparently needed to correct its drastic imbalance—an antidote just as imbalanced in the opposite direction. A position focusing on process as the be-all and end-all of music…" (Reimer 2003, p. 49). Bowman called Elliott's reliance on performance into question (2005a, pp. 65–66), and Regelksi suggested that Elliott still relied on some outdated ideas in the development of the praxial philosophy: "*Music Matters* is clearly a pathbreaking work. But…I have had occasion to call into question whether the path thus cleared is sometimes narrow and…whether echoes of older thinking and influences and other obstacles to clarity still appear now and then" (2005, p. 238).

[11] The disparate positions on music that Reimer attempted to synergise are "music as form" (can be equated to MEAE), "music as practice" (early views on praxis), "music as social agency" (particularly in relation to gender, Cusick 1994), and the "boundaries of music" (particularly in relation to its "utilitarian values," Detels 1999).

For best results, it would make sense to synergise these different approaches by centralising the viewpoint and "picking and choosing" the best components of each educational framework (pp. 66–69). This moderate approach was evidently well-received as it remains highly regarded to this day, although it still carries some of the assumptions about the universal nature of music that were prevalent within the MEAE paradigm: Reimer suggested "that there are indeed universal criteria applicable to diverse musics but that these criteria must be applied distinctively in each" (p. 266).[12] He also made some pertinent observations about the realities of music students, to do with how previous philosophies neglected to acknowledge these realities.[13] Therefore, Reimer's work is still valuable in MEP discourse, and retains relevance in the ACM.

The 2014 edition of *Music Matters* is the most recent authoritative philosophical text in the dialogue between Reimer, and Elliott and co-author Silverman. It was published after the development process of the ACM had begun, and as such its amendments to the 1995 philosophy could not be taken into account by the curriculum designers. However, in the first edition of *A Philosophy of Music Education*, Reimer stated that "the obligation of music education is to [ensure] that the general music program mirrors the best thought of the profession as thinking evolves," and that individual philosophical frameworks are products of their time and should be updated (Reimer 1970, p. 2, p. 110). As the most recent MEP framework, it makes sense to consider the ACM against the second edition of *Music Matters*. It shares much with the 1995 edition, although significant portions are greatly

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However, Bradley (2012) pointed out that Reimer's approach involved simplifying philosophical problems dualistically, and in positing that such problems *could* be resolved satisfactorily, it "[foreclosed] inquiry rather than [encouraged] and [nurtured] it" (p. 420).

[12] Tutt and Townley (2011) used Reimer's description of *aficionados*, *amateurs*, and *professionals* (see the next footnote), but argued that the terms were unclear for a general audience (p. 61). Erik Johnson (2013) based his entire discussion of developing harmonic understanding on his interpretation of *A Philosophy of Music Education*: that "a large part of a person's ability to enjoy the aesthetic qualities of music is the degree to which he or she understands the elements of music" (p. 63). Direct references to Reimer's ideas appear to diminish after around 2013/14—incidentally around the time of the publication of *Music Matters* (2014)—but more recent authors, such as Randall Allsup (2016), attempt to carry the spirit of synergism through the dialectical positioning of different philosophical approaches (p. 126).

[13] Reimer stated that the majority of people engage with music as *aficionados*: they listen to and enjoy styles of music that they like and/or understand. However, most music education programs are aimed at students developing the skills needed to develop as *professionals*, which is not even an accurate representation of how the majority of people who have taken private music lessons engage with music. Reimer suggests that general music programs should be aimed at students developing the skills to become aficionados of music, specialist music programs should be aimed at students developing the skills to become *amateurs*, and professional types of engagement and understanding should be included in both generalist and specialist programs, but in a limited manner (2003, pp. 240–299).

expanded and more comprehensively realised in response to the critiques of Reimer and others.

Music Matters (2014) presents the most comprehensive and current attempt at a philosophy of music education, introducing elaborations on the philosophical underpinning of *education* in addition to its foundation in music. It is surprising that education had not been explored before in relation to MEP, as it seems to be a fundamental component of *music education*; in all the prior attempts in the dialogue between Reimer and Elliott the focus was limited to the implications of concepts of music and music making on music education. As well as adding a focus on education philosophy, Elliott and Silverman amended several of the issues that are present in the first edition of *Music Matters*. In particular, they attempted to clarify that this philosophy is not dualistic and overly based in musical processes. Rather, musical study was contextually situated, so that the methods of study reflect how real-world practitioners engage with different kinds of music. Again, the central claim is that music is a human activity: therefore, music should be taught in ways that humans engage with it.

Although the work of both Reimer and Elliott were influential on the development of the ACM, I have chosen to frame the majority of the analysis through the praxial philosophy. There are two main reasons for this. Firstly, as already established, MEP should reflect best practice at any given time. Secondly, I suggest that the ACM took more influence from Elliott than it did from Reimer, at least in how it positioned the concept of music. In one of the earliest drafts of the Arts Learning Area, engagement in the Arts is described through a question: "what do *humans do* when we engage in the Arts [music]?" (ACARA 2010a, p. 7, emphasis added). This paraphrases Elliott's original thesis, and the foundation of the second edition of *Music Matters*: music is a *human activity*. In addition, the 2014 edition of *Music Matters* has dealt with Reimer's most substantial criticism of it by explicitly expanding its concept of music making well beyond performance.[14] In many ways, the most recent editions of *A Philosophy of Music Education* and *Music Matters* are actually quite similar in intention, in that they synergise different philosophical viewpoints to develop a

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[14] For the criticism, see Reimer (2003, pp. 48–51). The entire of *Music Matters* (2014) could be considered a rebuttal Reimer's arguments, but the seventh chapter, "Musicing and listening in contexts" (pp. 236–281) provides the most targeted explanation of the different facets of music making: performing, interpreting, composing, improvising, and arranging.

comprehensive framework for music education. Therefore, it came down to how each philosophical framework handled one of the key tenets of the ACM: that music education can "engage, inspire and enrich *all students*" (ACARA n.d.-r, version 8.3, emphasis added). Elliott and Silverman account for inclusivity and diversity in music education better than Reimer does, with Bradley going so far as to suggest that Reimer situates multiculturalism as a threat to music education (2012, p. 420). There are valuable contributions from both camps, and there are issues within both frameworks. Some of these issues will be explored below, but for the most part the praxial philosophy of music education is ethically sound, inclusive, and is felt in the ACM's overarching goal of relevance for all students.

2.2.1 What is the praxial philosophy of music education?

Because of its broadness of scope, the praxial philosophy of music education remains difficult to define. Elliott and Silverman devoted a considerable portion of their book to defining both music and education, and it is therefore impractical and beyond the scope of the present thesis to present a detailed overview of all the nuances and ramifications of the concept. However, there are some key points that are central to the praxial philosophy, which will be considered now.

Firstly, the definition of the term *praxis* is important. It is defined as "practice, as distinguished from theory" (in the *Oxford Dictionary of English*, 2010). Within the praxial philosophy, this definition is far more nuanced. Here, praxis is considered to be the intersection of two other types of understanding: *theoria*, or abstract theoretical knowledge; and *techne*, or abstract technical knowledge (Elliott and Silverman 2014, pp. 43–51). The authors adopt the position that neither kind of knowledge is particularly useful on its own, so the intersection of both into *poiesis*, or contextually appropriate knowledge-in-action, is at the heart of the praxial philosophy. The theme of *appropriateness* is a central component of other aspects of the praxial philosophy as well.

Secondly, the concept of music that is attached to this philosophy is also nuanced, and the authors utilise a visual difference in presentation to realise these nuances. There are three levels of discourse in music: MUSICS refers to all possible kinds of music, past or present, from any culture; Music (capitalised) refers to a particular style or genre of music; and music (lower case) refers to individual musical products and conventional usage of the

term (p. 105). The implications of this concept are central to the reasoning behind the appropriateness of the praxial philosophy to assess the ACM: the ACM states that it is relevant to all students (ACARA n.d.-r, version 8.3). Australia is a multicultural society; this implies therefore that the concept of music that should be present at the curriculum-wide level should account for all possible kinds of music, past or present, from any culture—the concept of MUSICS.

Third, Elliott and Silverman take a similar approach to their concept of education. They use EDUCATIONS to refer to "all possible instances and forms of teaching and learning in the world" (p. 150); Education (capitalised) refers to "one specific instance of educational praxis," with "educational praxis" referring to a specific instance of an educator teaching students (pp. 150–151). Finally, education (lower case) refers to "the wide range of educational…values and goods explained [in *Music Matters*]…but with the added points that a praxial education…should focus on…personal growth, flourishing, and life values…" (p. 151). They emphasise these key points to clarify that they do not conceive of education as a) "a static body of skills and concepts," or b) "job training," which is a critique that they have of conventional models of education and curriculum (p. 151, pp. 395–402).

For Elliott and Silverman, the point of learning music is not so that students can become professional musicians. Rather, the intersection of ethical and appropriate conceptions of music and education is intended to contribute to students' *personhood*: a culturally- and contextually-situated understanding of who they are, what they do, and how to be in the world (pp. 153–191). An explanation of this concept goes well beyond the scope of this thesis, but at a basic level it serves to justify music education:

> In conclusion, we hope that some or all of what we've attempted to say…is worth considering when school music teachers and [community music] facilitators interact with students, and when we try to explain to ourselves why we've dedicated our lives to musics and educating others in, with, and through musics (p. 190).

In drawing upon philosophical, scientific, and psychological literature, the authors were attempting to provide a satisfactory statement about why music education is important. The 2005 *Review* also listed such justification as an important recommendation, as the arts "are increasingly being advocated for their practical relevance to 'serve the educational and human priorities of the moment'" (Department of Education, Science and Training 2005, p. 8). Although Elliott and Silverman were not directly responding to the *Review*, their attempts

to justify music education in evidence-based ways aligns with the *Review*'s recommendations.

Personhood serves as the final individual component within *Music Matters*, as the remainder of the book explores the implications of music, education and personhood among a range of contexts: musical understanding, music making and listening in contexts (see Chapter Five), musical products in contexts, musical-emotional experiences, musical creativity in contexts, and musical values. It culminates in an exploration of music and-as-in education: music education and curriculum, music teaching and learning, and music education and schooling. The end result is a dense but comprehensive statement of what contemporary music education *should* be at present that informs my approach to analysing the ACM.[15]

2.3 Music curricula

To design a praxial music curriculum, Elliott and Silverman propose seven "curriculum commonplaces" that "…appear and reappear in all teaching-learning situations and in all discussions of curriculum making" (p. 407). These commonplaces are:

1. Aims
2. Knowledge (subject matter)
3. Learners (students)
4. Teaching-learning processes
5. Teacher(s)
6. Assessment
7. Learning context (p. 407).

While the authors suggest that these are common in every discussion surrounding curriculum making, it is impossible for the ACM to account for four of them because they are directly related to classroom-specific situations: the learners, the teaching-learning

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[15] Elliott contributed to the *Oxford Handbook of Music Education*. He stated that philosophy of music education has two roles: "there is a fairly sizeable and rapidly expanding international literature intended to (1) analyze [sic], synthesize [sic], debate, or 'problematize' [sic] or 'worry' all theoretical and practical aspects of music education, and thereby, to (2) inform teachers, university music education students, and scholars about fundamental concepts, conceptions, controversies, principles, and practices in school and community music education" (Elliott 2012, p. 63).

processes, the teachers, and the learning context. There is no way that the designers of the ACM could have intimate knowledge of each and every classroom scenario—at best, they can have a broad thematic understanding provided by those who submitted responses to drafts (see Chapter Three). Therefore, while the commonplaces provide a comprehensive overview of the design processes in relation to *both* the ACM and school course documents, the ACM itself can only address aims, knowledge, and assessment. This is a limit in the praxial potential of the ACM; a further overview of concepts and models of curriculum is required to determine how the commonplaces can be utilised within a praxial curriculum framework.

There are a broad range of interpretations of the term curriculum; however for the purposes of this thesis I will use a conventional, layperson understanding of a curriculum as "what is taught in school or what is intended to be learned" (Posner and Rudnitsky 1986, pp. 7–8, in Elliott and Silverman 2014, p. 393).[16] The key to this definition is the idea of intended outcomes: a curriculum consists of the planned and intended activities, content, and knowledge that are taught in schools. This is what the ACM provides for music teachers in Australia—it is the intention for music education in Australia.

One important repercussion of this concept of curriculum is the null curriculum: what is contained within a curriculum is implied to be valuable knowledge, and what is not contained is not valued, or not important enough to be included (Eisner 2002, p. 26, p. 31, in Elliott and Silverman 2014, pp. 404–405). What is not contained is referred to as the null curriculum, and the implications for music education are important. If a music curriculum only includes information and examples from Western styles of music, then it implies that these styles are more important than any others. This perpetuates many of the inequalities in music education. Therefore, while I primarily refer to curriculum in the layperson sense, the implications of the null curriculum will also be discussed.

To find a model of curriculum that supports the praxial philosophy and aligns with the ACM, a further understanding of curriculum design is required. Very broadly, there are two categories of curriculum: the conventional or formal, which is linear and product-based; and

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[16] Elliott and Silverman provide an overview of different concepts of curriculum, citing many different authors. See Elliott and Silverman (2014, pp. 393–394) for a full exploration of these concepts. Smith and Lovat (2003, pp. 8–9) utilise many of the same authors and concepts in a similar overview of concepts of curriculum.

the non-conventional or progressive, which is based on processes and is not defined in a linear fashion. Although there are variations and compromises based on each approach, the conventional, product-based model of curriculum can be defined by a four-step, linear process. This process was established by Ralph Tyler in 1949, and still forms the foundation of some modern approaches to curriculum design—particularly outcome- or product-based curricula (Smith and Lovat 2003, pp. 114–115).

1. Define the purposes of the curriculum

2. Define the educational experiences related to the purposes

3. Define the organisation of these experiences

4. Define the evaluation of the purposes (Tyler 1949, in O'Neill 2010).[17]

This conventional process of designing a curriculum results in standardisation of content. As the four steps are linear, there is little in the way of dialogue between the steps, and there is also no reference to the students who are supposedly the beneficiaries of this kind of curriculum. Indeed, in a product-based paradigm, students are conceived of as empty vessels who require filling with the same standardised knowledge, and this knowledge is defined by subject matter experts, not teachers (O'Neill 2010, Elliott and Silverman 2014, pp. 395–396). Elliott and Silverman are philosophically opposed to the product-based model, and although this model is an efficient way to design a curriculum, it has been criticised as being too linear.[18] It is worth noting, however, that it would be unlikely for a purely Tylerian curriculum to be used in contemporary schooling.[19]

When considering the Australian Curriculum and its design process as a whole, it becomes apparent that it shares many similarities with the conventional model of curriculum design. For example, the four-step model can be found in developmental documentation. The purposes of the curriculum were defined in the *Melbourne Declaration*

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[17] The basic, four-step model can be referred to as a Tylerian curriculum. O'Neill also cites the work of Wiggins and McTighe (2005) in relation to product-based curricula. Smith and Lovat (2003) explain that although the Tylerian approach is often seen as "the best approach to outcomes-based teaching," it is "highly simplistic and distorts the enormous potential for outcomes-based learning" (p. 115).

[18] Elliott and Silverman state that the following authors "prominently" rejected the Tylerian approach, and not just within music education: Joseph Schwab (1962), Lawrence Stenhouse (1968), Wilfred Carr and Stephen Kemmis (1986), F. Michael Connelly and D. Jean Clandenin (1988), and Shirley Grundy (1987).

[19] Gary Thomas (2013) states that "In practice, few schools and fewer teachers fall neatly into the categories…In reality there is an acceptance that each position [formal and progressive] has some validity…So it's not really so much a question of either/or, but, rather, 'How much of each?'" (p. 33).

on Educational Goals for Young Australians (2008, see Chapter Three); educational experiences were defined based on these purposes, and these can be illustrated through the aims and achievement standards within each subject/Learning Area, and the Cross-Curriculum Priorities and General Capabilities that permeate the Curriculum (see the Introduction); the organisation of the experiences are defined through content descriptions and other organisational language (see Chapter Five); and the achievement standards also define the evaluation of the purposes. Furthermore, as explained in the curriculum development documentation and also within the interviews, Learning Areas outside of the Arts are content-driven and highly standardised (ACARA 2012b, Chris et al. 2018). Therefore, the way the majority of the Australian Curriculum is structured is a strong match for the conventional model of curriculum.

An alternative is the process-based model of curriculum, which according to Elliott and Silverman better enables praxis (pp. 396–402). There are several variations on the process-based models, but they all share the characteristic of being "bottom-up" in their design approach (O'Neill 2010).[20] This means that students are considered as being active in their learning rather than passive consumers of knowledge, and learning activities are only considered valuable for study if they contribute to meaning-making for each individual student (O'Neill 2010). As students influence the content and knowledge that teachers provide them, this approach can be considered student-centred, but it is also reliant on the skill and expertise of teachers to determine what is appropriate for them to learn. The expertise of teachers is acknowledged within the ACM itself: "Teachers in schools are the key to providing students with rich, sustained, rigorous learning in [music]" (ACARA n.d.-r, version 8.3). Although the ACM is situated within a broader curriculum that is product-based, it was evidently intended to provide music teachers with significant agency.

The bottom-up nature of a process-based model of curriculum highlights the key tension between the ACM as a document and its realisation as a praxial curriculum. Students are considered central to the design of a praxial music curriculum, but they are unable to influence what has been written in the ACM. With that said, there is very little in the way of defined content within the ACM. As seen in Chapter Seven, the dominant response by

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[20] The work of Fink (2003) and Ornstein and Hunkins (2009) inform O'Neill's statements about process-based curricula.

teachers to the ACM is that it is a broad and non-specific document. Therefore, it does not match the prescriptive, content-driven nature of the more conventionally designed Learning Areas/subjects of the Australian Curriculum, but neither does it match the requirements of a fully process-based curriculum. It seems as if the ACM is in something of a no-man's land, written as a set of broadly defined guidelines. And yet, its role as the national curriculum in music matches perfectly with curriculum theorist John Goodlad's position on the function of a standardised, one-size-fits-all curriculum:

> I question the usefulness of a curriculum dreamed up out of one head intended for all settings…curriculum development is a continuous process that has great value for the results and quality of results. There are no surrogates for this process: at best there can only be *helpful guidelines* (Goodlad 1994, p. 131, in Elliott and Silverman 2014, p. 394).

If the ACM is a set of guidelines, then its helpfulness is determined by how well it guides teachers towards best practice. In the present thesis I use a considered interpretation of Elliott and Silverman's praxial music curriculum as a framework for best practice. However, the responsibility for the content and focus of study lies with teachers. To this end, the ACM should encourage and enable teachers to interpret it praxially. I define the praxial characteristics of a curriculum as the qualities needed to encourage teachers to deliver praxial learning experiences. I have distilled seven praxial characteristics from Elliott and Silverman's work to build an analytical framework with which to assess the ACM.

2.4 The praxial characteristics in the ACM

It is impossible for Elliott and Silverman to state categorically what must occur in a praxial curriculum because they are trying to account for all types of music education, not just a praxial secondary school curriculum.[21] Furthermore, they cannot know the context of each curriculum.[22] Therefore, I have extrapolated the following praxial characteristics from *Music Matters* in order to apply them to the ACM context. Very broadly, the characteristics enable the ACM to align with four attributes of (praxial) best practice in music education: the

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[21] The authors are attempting to account for individual music tuition, community music groups, and virtually anything that can be considered music education.

[22] Elliott and Silverman state that "…although we explore many dimensions of curriculum, please know that we can't possibly do justice to the nature of curriculum here, because without knowing the specifics of each and every teaching and learning situation, we can't fully know and understand the essence of curriculum" (p. 391).

inclusion of all music, immersion into specific styles and genres, comprehensive and appropriate types of engagement, and approximations of real-world practice.

2.4.1: At its most abstract level, a praxial curriculum should encompass all music

For a music curriculum to be considered praxial, it should be broad enough at a conceptual level to include any type of music from all cultures, traditions, styles, and genres. Therefore, language about music within a praxial curriculum should be non-specific, so that no particular types or traditions of music are proposed as being universal of all musical experiences. This works in theory, however, it does make defining music particularly difficult. In arriving at their visual distinction between MUSICS, Music, and music, Elliott and Silverman take over fifty pages to play out all of the implications and issues (pp. 54–106). The ACM also has this stipulation for inclusivity, but states it in a different way: music is to be relevant to all Australian school students, and Australia is a multicultural country (ACARA n.d.-r, version 8.3). To encompass this cultural diversity, MUSICS is the only concept of music that is tenable.

2.4.2: A praxial curriculum should not define a pre-conceived set of elements or concepts as universal to all music

Elliott and Silverman take a hard-line approach to elements of music: they do not believe that a curriculum should be organised in such a way. They take this approach because they define music as a human activity, and because this concept is so broad, any claims of elements universal to all music are untenable.[23] I do not disagree with this, but do not believe the elements themselves are the issue. The problem lies in the claim for universality. As seen in the interviews, the guidance provided by the elements of music in the ACM is of benefit to some teachers. Therefore, the presence of elements of music is not problematic, so long as they are appropriately contextualised.[24]

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[23] Reimer disagrees, stating that "universal, contextual, and individual levels" of elements of music are not problematic so long as there is "[recognition] that they are played out differently in different contexts" (2003, p. 267).
[24] Jackie Wiggins (2007) suggests that an alternative approach to *elements of music* would be to reconceptualise them as "dimensions" of music, and that such dimensions could be considered part of a multidimensional musical framework (p. 38). For example, *dimensions* of music roughly equate to the present elements of music, some of which can be considered *multidimensional* (for example, melody including both pitch and rhythm). Finally, overarching stylistic traits or socio-cultural context can be considered

2.4.3: When dealing with music from a specific culture or genre, a praxial curriculum should immerse students in contextually relevant ideas and terminology

There is a paradox in the praxial framework: while the curriculum itself should be able to encompass any and all music (MUSICS), the study of music itself can only be undertaken through the study of specific instances of music (Music and music) (Bowman 2005a, p. 65).[25] Therefore, this third characteristic is the responsibility of the teachers, although curriculum documents have a role in encouraging it. Once the consideration of music has moved beyond the most abstract philosophical conception of the term to tangible musical styles, the praxial philosophy posits that the context of the musical style in question should be fully embraced. Essentially, when moving from generic to particular, the broad and inclusive considerations for music as a whole make way for the specific and appropriate frame of reference for each individual style of music. This implies that teachers should make a choice about which styles and genres they will structure their music programs around, which requires teachers to be self-aware and culturally aware in their teaching practice. Both *Music Matters* and the ACM make the same suggestion for a starting point: the students' cultural background is the best place to start at the Foundation level, and from there students can approach a diverse range of musical styles (ACARA n.d.-r, version 8.3, Elliott and Silverman 2014, pp. 429–432). Teachers should initially plan the content of their music courses in relation to the individual students in their classes, and this is one of the reasons why there is so much scope for a broad range of curriculum interpretations.

2.4.4: A praxial curriculum requires a specialist music teacher

The praxial philosophy of Elliott and Silverman, the secondary ACM, and policy documents of the federal Department of Education all agree that secondary school music should be taught by a specialist teacher. This receives considerable explanation in *Music Matters*: Elliott and Silverman conceptualise the expertise of specialist music teachers into three categories: *musicianship*, *listenership*, and *educatorship* (p. 415). In a simplistic overview, musicianship

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metadimensions (p. 38). This is a useful framework worthy of further application; however, it goes beyond the scope of the present thesis due to the ACM's use of *musical elements*.

[25] Bowman states "Music's nature can only be grasped through experiences with practice-specific Music…*MUSIC education*, then, can really be accomplished only through what one would probably have to call 'Music education'" (p. 65, emphasis in original).

and listenership are what musicians know, educatorship is what teachers know, and "one without the other is insufficient" for a comprehensive music education program (p. 415). The 2016–2017 *Annual Report* of the Department of Education aligns with this understanding of educatorship and prioritises the expertise of teachers (Department of Education and Training 2017).[26] Finally, the ACM centralises teachers in the education process. This characteristic and the third characteristic are reliant on each other: a specialist music teacher is more likely to understand how to learn about musical styles outside of their expertise than their generalist counterparts, which is particularly important if the background of the students is to determine the types of music to be studied (Elliott and Silverman 2014, pp. 415–417). As with the third characteristic, the current provision for music education in Australia means that the realisation of this characteristic is beyond the capability of the ACM to enforce, as it is the school that chooses to run music programs and employ specialist music teachers. However, the ACM could exert some influence by situating music as a specialist subject across all years and utilising music-specific (but not genre-specific) terminology. This leads into the fifth characteristic.

2.4.5: A praxial curriculum should not prioritise teaching in a multi-arts subject

The praxial philosophy is not opposed to the integration of art forms when culturally relevant, but it is opposed to the assumption that there are universal elements to all performing arts.[27] Learning about drama does not make a student a good musician, and learning about music does not make a student a good actor (Elliott and Silverman 2014, p. 400). For students to be immersed in music (as in characteristic three), they require a specialist music class, and a specialist music teacher. Curriculum documents can encourage schools to implement specialist music classes, but the choice to do so in the present

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[26] The Department of Education and Training (2017) states that "Well-trained, skilled and knowledgeable teachers provide the foundation for a high-quality education system. Evidence shows the effectiveness of the teacher in the classroom is the biggest in-school influence on student achievement" (Department of Education and Training 2017, p. 34).

[27] A full discussion of this point is beyond the scope of the present thesis. In broad terms, the relationships between art forms are actively encouraged to be explored wherever they are culturally relevant—holistic approaches to cultural expression require an understanding of music as part of a broad cultural practice—but actually learning about music requires music-specific education (Elliott and Silverman 2014, p. 400). Also see David Best (1984).

Australian context is, again, dependent on schools actually acting upon this recommendation.

2.4.6: A praxial curriculum should give equal emphasis to contextually relevant practice, theory, and analysis

In response to the criticisms made against the first edition of *Music Matters,* Elliott and Silverman suggested that the best way forward in a contemporary context is to balance the inclusion of process- and product-based knowledge through the integration of contextually appropriate practical, theoretical, and analytical learning (Elliott and Silverman 2014, pp. 98–104). This position reflects a softening of Elliott's original stance and is in the spirit of Reimer's hypotheses about continued development towards a realistic statement of best practice for use in the classroom.[28] It addresses the problematic yet common assumption that *practical* is simply a word to describe performance-based activities, and this phenomenon will be explored in greater detail in Chapters Seven and Ten. The key for this characteristic is that the activities defined for learning are contextually appropriate: for example, applying Western harmonic practices to the traditional music of Indigenous Australians is inappropriate, as is the application of the *work concept* of music. However, Western harmonic practices and the work concept are appropriate frames of reference for the study of Western art music. What is appropriate is important, and this leads to the final characteristic. The implementation of the sixth characteristic relies on the music teacher, and the curriculum can encourage teachers in its realisation by emphasising that different types of activities should be given equal weight in assessment and class time.

2.4.7: A praxial curriculum should encourage approximations of real-life musical practice

This characteristic serves as the crux of Elliott and Silverman's concept of a praxial music curriculum. Based on the previous six characteristics, their logical conclusion is that students should learn about music in ways that are approximations of real-life practice (Elliott and

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[28] Reimer fairly stated that philosophical documents for music education were written from extreme perspectives. He suggested that best practice in real-world implementation will come from a consolidation of multiple perspectives—a synergy of viewpoints (Reimer 2003, pp. 30–37). As already established, Elliott and Silverman have also engaged in such synergism. In taking influence from the two leading philosophical frameworks, the ACM has also attempted a synergy of sorts. However, the following chapters will reveal that while the intention may have been good, the execution is problematic.

Silverman 2014, pp. 424–426). This relates to not only to the content itself, but to the ways in which they study content. It is not enough to teach students contextually appropriate practical, theoretical, and analytical knowledge in isolation; rather, these should be integrated to reflect the different ways in which musicians use skills and knowledge in practice. For example, performers in a Western framework use harmonic analysis to strengthen their interpretations, and composers draw upon their repertoire of theoretical knowledge and understanding of style to conform with (or subvert) compositional practices. Evidently, this characteristic is also reliant on teachers, but the curriculum can encourage it by emphasising that practical, theoretical, and analytical tasks should be appropriately integrated into learning activities, assessment activities, and outcomes, and that all of these are modelled on real-world practice and engagement.

2.5 Discussion: the realities of music education in Australia

These seven praxial characteristics represent an idealistic vision of what a praxial music curriculum looks like. They are idealistic because they do not take the realities and limitations of the Australian context into account: an analysis similar to Regelski's of the 1995 edition of *Music Matters* (2005, pp. 238–240), and similar to Smith and Lovat's (2003, pp. 14–17) extrapolation of Stenhouse's argument for curriculum creation.[29] It is important to acknowledge these discrepancies here and they will be explored in greater detail in Chapters Three, Four, and Five. Firstly, it can be stated that the overarching goal of the Australian Curriculum until the publication of "Gonski 2.0" (Department of Education and Training 2018) was standardisation and, although there are significant differences between the ACM and the remainder of the Australian Curriculum, there are some tensions that arise from attempting to contain a broad, praxially-influenced framework within a curriculum primarily designed for standardisation.[30] Secondly, these characteristics ignore the fact that

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[29] Smith and Lovat state that "there are large gaps between what it is intended *should* happen and what actually happens in curriculum work" (2003, pp. 14–15, emphasis in original). In addition, Elliott and Silverman acknowledge some of the real-world limitations placed on such idealistic visions: "Let's end this section with a reality check. In writing this book, we're fully aware that there are many forces—political, economic, social, cultural, educational, practical, and so forth—that work against music educators generally and against any efforts to implement this book's concept of music education" (p. 16).

[30] The implication of Gonski 2.0 is that the focus on standardised achievement in literacy and numeracy has not resulted in any tangible strengthening of Australia's educational outcomes (Department of Education and Training 2018). It is unclear whether this report will lead to any changes to the focus of Australia education, but

the overwhelming majority of primary schools in Australia use generalist teachers to teach music, and do so in a multi-arts format (Butler 2015, pp. 30–36), contradicting characteristics four and five. The implications of this will be explored in Chapter Three. It may be that despite the praxial philosophy being an appropriate framework for best practice in music education, it may not be the most constructive or realistic practice for primary music education in Australia. An awareness of Australia's history in education and schooling contextualises this point and raises further challenges.

It is important to establish that Australia's present approach to schooling and education is based on a Western model. Campbell and Proctor's *A History of Australian Schooling* (2014) establishes that Australia's school education system is closely linked to that of Britain. They begin their account of what would be recognisable as an Australian school system— "'schools' with four walls and persons whose profession was that of a 'teacher'" (p. 1)—in 1788, and are quick to describe such a model as British.[31] Later, the introduction of progressive approaches to education in the early twentieth century "mainly arrived in Australia from the United Kingdom" (p. 107), although there was an influence from American progressives. The authors describe how Australian schools throughout the twentieth century "have helped assimilate children [from immigrant families] into the *dominant culture*" (p. 249, emphasis added) and have excluded or marginalised Indigenous students (p. 249). They also indicated that an assimilationist approach extended through until the start of the 1970s, when attempts to celebrate diversity and multiculturalism started (p. 204). While attempts to promote multiculturalism have doubtlessly increased in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, the school system itself is a product of a Western cultural hegemony and, as evidenced by the continued prevalence of Mathematics, Science, the Humanities, and particularly English within the curriculum, is arguably still primarily monocultural in nature. The challenges in implementing a multicultural music curriculum with the auspices of a primarily monocultural school system are the subject of

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the rhetoric surrounding Australian education since its publication suggests a continued focus on a "back to basics" model of school education emphasising literacy and numeracy outcomes (ABC News Breakfast 2018).
[31] It is worth noting that Campbell and Proctor explain that in only exploring Australian education from British settlement onwards, they do Indigenous populations an "injustice" (p. 1). They then go on to give a brief overview of education "before European contact" (pp. 2–6), in so doing highlighting that the complexities and sophistication of Indigenous education methods have been lost due to the limited understanding of the early British settlers (p. 2).

much of the remainder of this thesis, and these challenges again highlight the idealism of the praxial characteristics in Australia.

Accordingly, a point of tension emerges when considering the Cross-Curriculum Priorities, particularly the multicultural emphasis of the Indigenous and Asian Priorities against the praxial characteristics. The first praxial characteristic states that no individual musical styles should be referred to at the most abstract level of a praxial curriculum, but these two broad groups of cultural styles are exceptions in the ACM. In fairness, reference to these styles does not contain any statements of universals: their presence simply serves to target attention towards the delivery of these two broad cultural categories at some point within students' study at every level of schooling. For the ACM to be accurately realised, teachers should address the music contained within these two Priorities: this is the focus of Chapter Nine.

It is also worth drawing attention to the "uneasy relationship between the Arts and education" in Australian schools (Ewing 2010, p. 5). As mentioned in the Introduction, music (and the Arts more broadly) are second-phase subjects within the Australian Curriculum which suggests they are not as much of a priority as the first-phase subjects: namely English, Mathematics, Science, and History. Furthermore, Arts subjects are not given as much time or space in the curriculum as the first-phase subjects (discussed in Chapter Four), which implies something of a hierarchy in the subjects of the Australian Curriculum. This is an interesting phenomenon because, historically, Arts subjects (particularly music) have been considered a central component of Western school curricula (Thomas 2013, pp. 91–94).[32] What causes are behind the relegation of the Arts to the status of a second-phase subject? Answering this question in detail is beyond the scope of the present thesis, but I suggest that a contributing factor is the formal/product-based perspective that the role of education is jobs training, or preparing the student body for their later lives in the work force. This is a perspective that has been used increasingly since the Industrial Revolution (Thomas, 2013, p. 107) and is directly referenced by the Australian Curriculum: "The Australian Curriculum is designed to develop successful learners, confident and creative individuals, and *active and informed*

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[32] Thomas argues that there has been very little change in the subjects included within Western curricula since the Enlightenment, and music was one of these early subjects (2013, p. 92).

citizens" (ACARA n.d.-v, version 8.3, emphasis added).[33] While Arts subjects are certainly sites where students can develop creativity, they do not contribute as obviously or directly to their job preparedness. I suggest that the dichotomy between *developing creativity* and *developing a work force* is at least partly responsible for the tensions between the Arts and the Australian Curriculum more generally.

In conclusion, the praxial characteristics are a useful framework to measure how well the ACM aligns with a concept of best practice, but it is not as simple as saying yes or no to their presence within the ACM: the matching of the praxial characteristics cannot be abstracted from the Australian educational context. In the end, the ACM is merely a guide for music teachers, whose expertise in music and education is fundamental to the programs that they deliver. Therefore, even if the ACM entirely rejected the praxial approach, I have no doubt that there would be praxially-based programs within individual schools. The importance of teachers cannot be understated, and although a curriculum can guide teachers to best practice, it is the teachers who are ultimately responsible for its delivery. As most teachers are apparently unaware of the existence of MEP (Elliott 2012, p. 65), it is important that the ACM encourages the delivery of music in a way that aligns with best practice. The next chapter begins the analysis of the ACM to ascertain whether this occurs.

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[33] This quote also highlights creativity as an educational goal. However, creativity is generally construed to be desirable in the Australian Curriculum only when it contributes to students' readiness for the work force. The "Gonski 2.0" review also illustrates this: "School education must also prepare students for a complex and rapidly changing world. As routine manual and administrative activities are increasingly automated, *more jobs will require a higher level of skill,* and more school leavers will need skills that are not easily replicated by machines, such as problem-solving, interactive and social skills, and *creative thinking*" (Department of Education and Training 2018, p. ix, emphasis added). There are no references to creativity as a desirable outcome in its own right.

Chapter Three: Australian Curriculum in Music—context and development

3.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the development of the ACM by analysing the government documents that trace its development, which is important within the context of the present thesis as the documents establish the philosophical viewpoints that have shaped the ACM's design. As established in the previous chapter, the most up-to-date philosophical position that supports an inclusive and comprehensive music curriculum is the praxial philosophy, and I argue that the ACM should display the influence of praxis for it to be considered an example of best practice. Therefore, a key point of analysis within this chapter is how the developmental documents contain music praxialism or alternative philosophical perspectives.

Tracing the development of the ACM also indicates the extent to which curriculum designers responded to the calls for improvement in music education nationally. As the *National Review* indicated, school music was underperforming in 2005, and despite the introduction of the ACM to Canberra in 2016, little has changed.[1] I argue that the development of a national curriculum was a prime opportunity to address the issues identified in the *Review*, and so understanding how those who wrote the ACM acted on, or did not act on, the *Review's* recommendations contextualises the present ACM. The design process was fraught with tension between the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), its advisors, and teachers. This chapter seeks to understand how these tensions affected the final product.

I begin with the *National Review* (Department of Education, Science and Training 2005), which serves as an introduction to the state of music education in Australia prior to the development of the ACM. From here, the scope for a national curriculum was introduced in the 2008 *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* (Ministerial Council on Education), which can be seen as the scaffolding on which the Australian Curriculum was built. Following this, the ACM commenced process of development under the broader umbrella of the Arts Learning Area in 2009. The Arts then entered the shaping

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[1] As noted in the Introduction, schools began implementing the ACM in Canberra as early as 2016 (ACT Curriculum Advisory Group 2016).

phase in 2010, followed by the writing phase in 2012. In addition to the papers that document this process, the reference groups that helped to write them are also listed (ACARA 2009b, 2010b, 2012a). In combination, these documents present a narrative about the development of the ACM, the Arts, and music that has problematic implications.

3.2 Development of the Australian Curriculum in Music
3.2.1 *National Review of School Music Education* (2005)

The most important document in the developmental sequence is the *National Review* (Department of Education, Science and Training 2005). It was commissioned by the Australian Government through the then Department of Education, Science and Training. The review provided a comprehensive overview of the contemporary state-based curriculum documents, site reports, and consultation with individual music teachers. It highlighted trends in Australian music education and proposed action to strengthen music in Australia, claiming that music education was "essential for all students" but action was needed to "right the inequalities in school music" (p. v). These inequalities were related to the equity of access to school music education which affected the standing of music in schools, perpetuating the cycle of poor attendance in music courses, and limited music offerings. High quality music teachers were identified as the key to resolving this situation (p. vi). To improve the quality of music teachers, this review suggested improvements to teachers' pre-service music education, particularly in relation to the time allocated to music for generalist classroom teachers (p. vi). There are similarities between this document, and my present methodology, and it is also telling that the issues highlighted in 2005 are still unresolved in 2019.

One of the benefits of this document is the clear context that it provides for Australian music education. Firstly, it suggested that music education in Australia has been a troubled field since at least the 1970s, with various studies providing damning evidence about the lack of student engagement with music in the classroom and the limitations of teacher training (pp. 11–12).[2] It also highlighted that the tensions between a specialist or generalist approach to primary school music have been manifesting for the same amount of time, and

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[2] See Bridges (1992), Temmerman (1991), and Lierse (1998).

compared the positive and negative aspects of each approach (p. 13).[3] The authors provided potential solutions to these problems, including compromises between specialists and generalists, where a specialist teacher would be responsible for the ongoing music training of generalist teachers within an individual school, or a range of schools (pp. 13–14).[4] These problems remain and are referred to obliquely by many of the interview participants, and explicitly by the teachers at School Four.

The *Review* also provided an overview of the philosophical groundings of music education in Australia. As with a range of other countries (such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, and throughout Europe, South Africa, the Middle East, and parts of Asia) the practice-led approaches of Carl Orff and Zoltán Kodály were influential when introduced into Australia, particularly within primary school contexts (pp. 16–17).[5] At a secondary level, the dominant approach was *comprehensive musicianship,* which was used to design the New South Wales (NSW) music curricula from 1984 to its "current manifestation" in 2005 (p. 18), and has informed the design of other Australian state curricula as well. As will be seen later, the NSW curriculum was previously the basis for music in one of the sampled schools, so NSW curriculum documents are important for providing context as well as illustrating an example of a curriculum informed by comprehensive musicianship. Comprehensive musicianship was developed in 1965, and had three aims: "(1) [students] gain specific insight into the nature of music; (2) [students] relate and synthesise the isolated facets and areas of musical experience; (3) [students] view music with a global perspective" (Chotsky et al. 1986, p. 108, in Department of Education, Science and Training 2005, p. 17). Common elements or concepts of music were developed from this approach and, as explored in Chapter Five, this is one of the defining organising ideas of the ACM. Therefore, praxis and comprehensive musicianship are opposed on their stance towards elements of music. However, both approaches share a focus on active music

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[3] In summary: generalist teachers have greater access to students, know individual learning styles better, and have the potential to include more lesson time to music than specialists can (Mills 1989, 1993). However, specialists are authorities on the discipline, and can target teaching activities (Plummeridge 1991). According to Lepherd (1994), the issues surrounding generalist music teaching had been a "recognised problem for 25 years or more" (p. 71), meaning that these issues have been discussed in Australia since at least 1969.
[4] See Plummeridge (1991), Askew (1993), Lepherd (1994), Hinson, Caldwell, and Landrum (1989), and Montague (2004).
[5] See Marsh (1974), Hoermann and Herbert (1979), and Bridges (1992).

making, thus revealing some common ground in otherwise disparate approaches to music education.

The *Review* provided a comprehensive list of recommendations, entitled "guidelines for effective music education" (pp. 81–104). These range from suggestions relating to students in four levels of schooling, to statements about including all students of any level of ability in music, to the roles of the school, teachers, and the broader community.[6] There were two broad categories of learning encouraged: music practice, which included "making music, exploring and developing music ideas, skills, processes, conventions, composing and performing music;" and aesthetic understanding, which included "listening and responding to music, and understanding music's social, cultural and economic significance" (p. 83).[7] All knowledge within these guidelines was integrated between content and abilities or processes, which respectively equate with product-based and process-based learning. A simplistic distinction between earlier iterations of Reimer and Elliott's philosophies was that Reimer was overly product-based, and Elliott was overly process-based. In their most recent publications, both authors stressed that best practice in music education relies on processes and products working in conjunction with each other (Elliott and Silverman 2014, pp. 282–305, Reimer 2003, pp. 66–69). Therefore, the recommendation by the *Review* aligns with both the synergistic and praxial philosophies of music education.

As with the ACM, the student guidelines were broad and non-specific, with no clear indication of standard or content (see Chapter Four). However, guidelines for teachers were slightly more specific, with a separation between the "role of all teachers" and the "role of specialist music teachers" at every level of schooling (Department of Education, Science and Training 2005, pp. 100–101). All teachers were encouraged to collaborate with each other and include music in whole-school activities, while specialist music teachers were encouraged to support a student-centred approach by contextualising music study around each individual student and promoting life-long engagement with the subject. Also aligning with the praxial approach—this time, the concept of educatorship (see Chapter Two)—teachers were encouraged to "know their students," "know their subject," and "know how

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[6] The levels of schooling are identified as early childhood (Foundation–Year 3), middle childhood (Year 3–Year 7), early adolescence (Year 7–Year 10), and late adolescence (Year 10–Year 12). There is an overlap between these levels.

[7] This would appear to be a non-traditional interpretation of the term aesthetic.

students learn in music" (p. 98). Therefore, while there is no formal acknowledgement of praxial music education within this document or the recommendations, there are clear aspects and elements of praxial music education implied by the authors.

As established in the Introduction, the Federal Government did little to act on the recommendations in the *Review* despite indicating an intent to do so. Furthermore, there have been no further reviews of a similar scale published, although there are promising state-level strategies for music implementation presently being implemented (for example, see Government of South Australia 2018). Therefore, the state of school music education as described in the *Review* can be understood to be the context in which the development of the Australian Curriculum commenced in 2008.

3.2.2 *Melbourne Declaration on Education Goals for Young Australians* (2008)

The first example of documentation in the official sequence of Australian Curriculum development is the *Melbourne Declaration* (Ministerial Council on Education 2008). The state and federal ministers for education gathered in Melbourne, and proposed goals for all Australian school students. These goals included examples of both educational and utilitarian goals, such as the development of areas of knowledge and competencies that students were expected to cover in their schooling, and the development of skills deemed necessary for students to become contributing members of society. The *Declaration* captured the essence of the Australian Curriculum in its most embryonic state as a collection of abstract ideas about the knowledge and values that students should be encouraged to develop. It was an important point of departure for the subsequent development of the Australian Curriculum that had implications for the ACM.

The preamble of the *Melbourne Declaration* outlined the foundation of the Australian Curriculum. This declaration followed on from the *Hobart Declaration* (Ministerial Council on Education 1989) and the *Adelaide Declaration* (Ministerial Council on Education 1999), which represent two similar occurrences of national cooperation towards education policy.[8] Evidently, the state and federal governments had been communicating for close to two

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[8] In the *Adelaide Declaration*, "…the State, Territory and Commonwealth Education Ministers committed to working together to ensure high-quality schooling for all young Australians" (Ministerial Council on Education 2008, p. 4)

decades before the *Melbourne Declaration*. One of the main goals addressed within the *Declaration* was the adaptation to "major changes in the world that are placing new demands on Australian education," with five major changes identified (Ministerial Council on Education 2008, p. 4). These were: global integration and learning to be a global citizen; recognising and learning about Asian influence and culture; encouraging students to stay in school and pursue further education opportunities to increase their chances of getting jobs in adulthood; acknowledgement and recognition of environmental issues, and the role of science to address these; and finally, literacy in information and communications technology (ICT) (pp. 4–5). Links can immediately be drawn between these challenges and what are presently known as the Cross-Curriculum Priorities and General Capabilities.

Of direct relevance to the ACM is the following quote from the 2008 preamble:

> Schools play a vital role in promoting the intellectual, social, emotional, moral, spiritual and *aesthetic* development and wellbeing of young Australians, and in ensuring the nation's ongoing economic prosperity and social cohesion (p. 8, emphasis added).

The emphasis at this time was on students developing aesthetic knowledge and wellbeing, although the definition of aesthetic is unclear. The term was qualified in later developmental documentation, but in the *Declaration* it could have referred to the aesthetic education paradigm of the Music (Arts) Education as Aesthetic Education (MEAE) framework, which is problematic in contemporary educational contexts. However, as no specific subjects were referred to, aesthetic development could have also been a simple acknowledgement of the benefits of art subjects with no philosophical agenda. This perspective was supported through the proposed outcomes in the *Melbourne Declaration*:

> The curriculum will enable students to develop knowledge in the disciplines of English, mathematics, science, languages, humanities and the arts; to understand the spiritual, moral and *aesthetic* dimensions of life; and open up new ways of thinking (p. 13, emphasis added).

Following the publication of the Melbourne Declaration, ACARA began a process of curriculum design and revision. ACARA consulted academic experts within subject areas, teachers, and other members of the public to create various drafts of the proposed national curriculum and its individual Learning Areas. There are several key development documents for each Learning Area that ACARA has placed on their website, but in the case of music I also sourced documents from ACARA directly. Each Learning Area received its own drafts and feedback reports, meaning that music, as a subsidiary of the Arts, was addressed

through documents which cover the entire Arts Learning Area. As the drafts progressed, more subject-specific information was provided to reflect the increasingly refined nature of the documentation. Despite the comprehensive nature of feedback and consultation, what is most striking about these documents is that they appear to be conceptually fully-formed in their earliest iterations. This means that what initially appeared to be a two-way dialogue between teachers and ACARA was, in fact, a relatively one-sided statement from ACARA.

Sequence of ACM development documentation		
Phase	Year	Document title
Shaping	2009	The *Arts Position Paper* (ACARA 2009a)
		The *Arts Reference Group* (ACARA 2009b)
	2010	The *Arts Advice Paper* (ACARA 2010a)
		The *Arts Advisory Group* (ACARA 2010b)
		Draft *"Shape of the Australian Curriculum: The Arts"* (ACARA 2010c)
	2011	Draft *"Shape of the Australian Curriculum: The Arts"—Consultation Report* (ACARA 2011b)
		Shape of the Australian Curriculum: The Arts (ACARA 2011c)
Writing	2012	The *Arts Curriculum Advisory Group* (ACARA 2012a)
		Draft *"Australian Curriculum: The Arts—Foundation to Year 10"* (ACARA 2012b)
		Draft *"Australian Curriculum: The Arts—Foundation to Year 10"* Consultation Report (ACARA 2012d)

Table 2: Sequence of ACM development documentation.

3.2.3 Sequence of documentation

The development of the Arts Learning Area was traced using a combination of resources from the ACARA website, documents sourced through private correspondence with ACARA, and supporting contextual sources. The key documents, appearing over four years, are presented in Table 2. Supporting materials include publicly available interviews with reference/advisory group members, published opinions of the reference/advisory group members, and documentation relevant to the design of the entire Australian Curriculum.

3.2.3.1 The Arts Position Paper *(ACARA 2009a)*

The initial Position Paper clearly stated what ACARA intended for the Arts at the beginning of the curriculum design process and is based on several key policy documents. These included the *National Review* and the *Melbourne Declaration*, although there were others relating to visual arts as well.[9] All policy documents that ACARA referenced suggested some variation

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[9] These other documents include the *National Education and the Arts Statement* (Ministerial Council on Education and Cultural Ministers Council 2006), the *Australia 2020 Summit: Final Report* (Department of the

on increasing the amount of time that students spent learning Arts subjects, improving teacher training and support, and improving the status of Arts subjects in schools. For example, the key quote sourced by ACARA from the *National Review* regarding the objectives for music is as follows:

> …improving the status of music subjects in schools; improving the equity of access, participation and engagement in school music for all students; improving teacher pre-service and in-service education; improving curriculum support services; supporting productive partnerships and networking with other music organisations, musicians, the music industry and the Australian community; *improving music education in schools through supportive principals and school leadership*, *adequately educated specialist teachers*, *increased time in the timetable*, adequate facilities and equipment; and improving levels of accountability (Department of Education, Science and Training 2005, p. xxvii, in ACARA 2009a, p. 15, emphasis added to indicate key points for the present thesis).

As ACARA highlighted these objectives, the ACM's success or failure in meeting or enabling them, in addition to its alignment with praxial approaches to music education, can be used as a measure of its overall effectiveness. Despite the initial intentions articulated in the *Position Paper*, I argue that it failed to do so.

The initial approach proposed for the Arts was very similar to what has eventually been delivered. The five Arts subjects were already defined, as were the structural elements of generic organising strands and compulsory Arts learning from Foundation to Year 7 or 8 (pp. 1–2). A praxial approach to the arts was clearly articulated: "a unique and distinct characteristic of Australian Arts education is the development of knowledge, skills and understandings of the arts through practice—young people creating and working artistically" (p. 1). The praxial characteristics of learning practically and in a way that approximates real-world engagement with the arts were indicated by the phrase "creating and working artistically" (p. 1) that was present from the outset.

The degree of arts-specific knowledge held by generalist teachers was another key issue that was raised in all subsequent discourse surrounding the development of the Arts. Despite my initial attempts to limit the scope of this thesis to secondary music study, it became apparent that an understanding of primary music delivery was necessary to fully contextualise secondary music in the ACM (see Chapter Four). In the position paper, ACARA clearly stated that Arts learning was to be compulsory, and provided by generalist teachers

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Prime Minister and Cabinet 2008), and the *National Review on Visual Education* (Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations 2008).

in primary school (F–6/7). After this point, the Arts subjects became electives, and were to be treated as specialist subjects (ACARA 2009a, pp. 1–2). There was further specification about how learning should be implemented in the early primary years, as Arts learning in F–2 was proposed to be entirely integrated, with no separation between the different disciplines (p. 2). ACARA stated that the "Australian arts curriculum should enable both generalist and specialist teachers to engage confidently with the design, implementation, and evaluation of quality arts teaching…" but offered no indication of how it would cater for these two different approaches to curriculum (p. 2). This remains a primary point of tension between primary and secondary teachers and the ACM to the present day.

3.2.3.2 The Arts Reference Group (ACARA 2009b) and the Initial Advice Paper (ACARA 2010a)

The reference group for the first draft of the Arts curriculum came together in 2009 and worked towards developing the *Initial Advice Paper* (2010a). There were several high-profile members of this reference group, and for music the most notable name was that of Richard Gill, OAM. The other contributors directly associated with music were Margaret Barrett, Peter Dunbar-Hall, David Forrest, Jane Holmes a'Court, and Richard Letts, AM. This group represented a range of perspectives on music and music education (ACARA 2009b). The lead writer of the Arts Learning Area, drama specialist John O'Toole, was contractually employed by ACARA to lead the early stages of curriculum development, advise the later stages of curriculum development, and participate in publicity events (2012c, pp. 12–13). O'Toole's considerable influence over the direction of the Arts curriculum was seen by some teachers to prioritise the position of drama over that of other Arts subjects (Australian Broadcasting Corporation 2010).

The *Initial Advice Paper* was intended to do three things: define the Arts Learning Area, define the subjects within the Arts, and explore structure and pedagogy. There were few significant changes between the *Position Paper* (2009a) and the *Initial Advice Paper*, although there was further clarification of terminology. For example, the term *aesthetic* was defined as the "perceptual and contextual fusion that is at the heart of all arts," which clearly indicated that students' perceptions of art forms, and the contexts surrounding them, were of equal importance (2010a, p. 26). This differentiated the Australian Curriculum version of aesthetic from the MEAE interpretation, which was primarily concerned with the

abstract and disinterested appreciation of artistic objects with little recourse to context (see Chapter Two). This was the first example of a shift in meaning for problematic Arts terminology and has been used consistently in subsequent curriculum documentation.

The *Initial Advice Paper* proposed an outline of the Arts that is very similar to the final product. The five Arts subjects were all present, and Arts-wide strands of knowledge were proposed whereby the same language was used to describe activities in all of the Arts subjects—here referred to as "generating, realizing, and responding" (p. 7).[10] This document also introduced a trend of stating the importance of the Arts without clarification or reference. For example:

> Though not all young people will become career artists, nor even pursue every art form as a significant leisure activity, for *practical reasons* young Australians need to feel like they have confidence and permission to access art, and to know how (p. 9, emphasis added).

There was no attempt to articulate these practical reasons. In the context of music, this was problematic, as the *National Review* clearly stated that one of the actions that could strengthen the position of music was the presence of accurate and supportable claims about the benefits of music (pp. 8–11).[11] Therefore, vague statements about the benefits of the arts, like those in the *Initial Advice Paper*, were not helpful.

Despite this issue, the *Initial Advice Paper* did provide the clearest statement of the range and scope of Arts engagement of all the developmental documents. This statement is praxial in nature, and is presented as a question: "What do humans do when [they] engage in the Arts?" (p. 7). The parallels between this question and Elliott's praxial ideas are evident, and suggest that the influence of praxis was apparent at this early stage of ACM development.

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[10] The use of an Americanised spelling of *realizing* was a conscious choice that met considerable resistance from respondents and was later removed.

[11] Websites that advocate for music education in schools often reference scientific studies to back up their claims. For example, see Collins (2018), who is also referred to heavily by Fulloon (2019). Some of the benefits listed in the *National Review* include:
1. "Developing the full variety of children's intelligence;
2. Developing the capacity for creative thought and action;
3. The education of feeling and sensibility;
4. The exploration of values;
5. The understanding of cultural change and differences; and
6. Developing physical and perceptual skills" (Department of Education, Science and Training 2005, p. 9, adapted from Robertson 1982).

Accordingly, the definition of music within this document was broad and abstract: "music is the process of creating, performing and responding to sound and silence as personally and collectively meaningful experience" (p. 6). Although a broad definition is necessary for a praxial music curriculum (see the praxial characteristics, Chapter Two), its comparison to the drama definition highlighted a point of tension between lead writer O'Toole, and others in the Arts teaching community. Drama was defined as "a collaborative performing art where a group of participants agrees to imagine and actively construct a world which is known as the dramatic or human context," (p. 5) which seems to be considerably more detailed than the definition of music. O'Toole's background is in drama, and he received criticism for strengthening the position of his preferred subject to the detriment of music and visual arts (Australian Broadcasting Corporation 2010).[12] Indeed, O'Toole alluded to the fact that music and visual arts teachers would be unhappy about what he saw as an equalisation of arts subjects in a radio interview.

> O'Toole: The people who are afraid of the new syllabus are those for whom one art form…has been given a little bit of extra privilege, and they're frightened [that] they're going to be losing a bit of that privilege…They'll certainly, a few of them, be losing a little bit of time…It's not necessary to think in terms of driven discipline thinking in a few areas…because inevitably, if you do that, other people will lose out, and *as usual* dance, media arts and drama are the ones likely to be most at threat…(Australian Broadcasting Corporation 2010, emphasis added).

O'Toole's attempts to equalise all Arts subjects were met with substantial criticism throughout the entire curriculum design process, particularly from teachers in music and visual arts (see ACARA 2011b, 2012d, below). Therefore, his sense that he was helping to "raise profile of the Arts" (Australian Broadcasting Corporation 2010) was obviously not shared.

3.2.3.3 The Arts Advisory Group *(ACARA 2010b), the* Draft "Shape of the Australian Curriculum: The Arts" *(ACARA 2010c), and the* Consultation Feedback Report on the Draft "Shape of the Australian Curriculum: The Arts" *(ACARA 2011b).*

Following the *Initial Advice Paper*, the Arts curriculum design process entered the shaping phase, and a second consultation group set out to draft a shape paper of the Arts

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[12] Within a spirited comment section, one of the more articulate examples of criticism against O'Toole comes from the user teacher_gal: "[John O'Toole] has a drama/primary background and has a vested interest in seeing drama more privledged [sic] in the Australian curriculum [sic] and he has no compunction [sic] at doing this at the expense of Visual Arts and other subjects that already 'do it well'" (Australian Broadcasting Corporation 2010).

curriculum. The music specialists were Barrett and Gill, with the four school teachers included receiving no subject specification. Their combined efforts resulted in the *Draft "Shape of the Australian Curriculum: The Arts"* (2010c), and this was the first Arts curriculum design document that was circulated for feedback from the public. There were several alterations between it and the preceding paper, although these changes were not substantial. Rather, they appeared to be simplifications or clarifications of terms and issues that were previously introduced. For example, after explaining the scope and definition of aesthetic in the *Initial Advice Paper* (2010a), the *Draft Shape* removed any explanation of the philosophical positioning of the term (2010c, p. 25). The quest for concision also affected the question that defined all activity in the Arts: taking away reference to human activities, the question became "what do we do when we engage in the Arts?" (p. 7). This is indicative of an approach to curriculum design that permeated the remaining design documents and affects the current version of the ACM, as the writers attempted to simplify their drafts at the expense of qualifying features or definitions.

The *Draft Shape* paper introduced the concept of *bands* of learning. Instead of having learning in the Arts based on individual year levels, it was conceived as a continuum across bands of years: Foundation–Year 2, Years 3–4, Years 5–6, and Years 7–8 (p. 10). At this stage of curriculum development, the writers did not elaborate on the content or focus of each of these bands of learning, but instead indicated general focuses for each subject through three groups of school years: Foundation–Year 2, Years 3–8, and Years 9–12 (pp. 11–20). These groups were indicative of the proposed organisation of the Arts curriculum: Foundation–Year 2 reflects the early years framework; Years 3–8 was initially proposed as where compulsory Arts learning was to occur; and Years 9–12 was indicated as specialised elective Arts learning (p. 10).

This paper also gave the first indication of the anticipated provision of time for Arts learning, which was stated as 160 hours per band (p. 10). This equated to 80 hours of Arts learning per year from Year 3 onwards, and although it suggested that each of the five Arts subjects should receive an equal allocation of time, there was no mandate or guidance for how the 80 hours should be divided.[13] This lack of instruction was problematic when

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[13] As the Foundation–Year 2 band includes three years of learning, the provision here was for 53.3 hours of Arts learning per year.

considering the proposal for student engagement with music. In this document, best practice for music is described as being "frequent and cumulative" (p. 17), implying that music should be taught frequently across the entire year, so students can build on their past experience. A frequent and cumulative approach to music learning is encouraged by music education experts, including Elliott and Silverman (2014, pp. 195–235) and Reimer (2003, pp. 271–272), thus aligning with praxial and synergistic music education frameworks. However, if all Arts subjects were to be implemented for the same amount of time per year, and assuming a 40-week academic year, students would be studying music for 24 minutes per week. The lack of clarity surrounding the allocation of time, and the distinct lack of time available to the Arts, was raised by many of those who provided feedback about the *Draft Shape* paper.

The *Consultation Feedback Report for the Draft "Shape of the Australian Curriculum: The Arts"* (2011b) was published in August 2011, in the same month as the following document, the *Shape of the Australian Curriculum: The Arts* (2011c). The *Consultation Feedback Report* gave a detailed outline about what respondents liked about the *Draft Shape* paper (2010c), and what was deemed necessary for improvement. There were four key strengths identified, and by contrast there were ten areas identified as "matters for improvement" (2011b, p. 4). The strengths were: the Arts as a stand-alone Learning Area; the five individual subjects; the proposed entitlement for all students to access the Arts; and the connections highlighted between the Arts and professionals within arts industries (p. 8). By contrast, the matters for improvement were: the terminology was deemed to be unclear, vague, and inconsistent; the proposed organising strands (generating, realizing, responding) were not considered appropriate for every subject; the definition of aesthetic knowledge was not strong enough; the "realms of experience" were considered too simplistic;[14] the integration of Arts subjects in primary years was seen to undermine the individuality of each art form;[15] the learning entitlement (time allocation) was considered confusing and inadequate; the organisation of

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[14] There were three "realms of experience" described in the *Draft Shape* paper (ACARA 2010c), and these were used to define knowledge in the Arts. These were "the realm of personal experience, the realm of our relation to others and the society we experience, and the realm of people, places and objects which lie beyond our direct experience" (ACARA 2011b, p. 9).

[15] For example, in their response, the National Association for the Visual Arts stated that "what is currently proposed attempts to manage the complexity of the different art forms in a way that appeals to generalist primary teachers and school systems but weakens the value of individual subject knowledge, even in the early years of schooling" (National Association for the Visual Arts, in ACARA 2011b, pp. 22–23).

the document in age ranges of Foundation–Year 2, Years 3–8, and Years 9–12 was seen to ignore the cognitive development that occurs in students between Years 3–8; and the inadequacies relating to teacher training were highlighted (p. 4). Interestingly, although unsurprisingly, approval for the *Draft Shape* was largely dependent on which years of schooling respondents were experienced in. The primary generalist teachers tended to be supportive of most of the *Draft Shape* paper proposals, while secondary specialist Arts teachers were opposed to them (pp. 20–21).

Two of the notable matters for improvement were the allocation of time for Arts learning, and the training of Arts teachers. The time constraints—80 hours per year—were deemed "insufficient for in-depth and sustained learning" (2011b, p. 4), and had a significant effect on secondary teachers. They indicated that secondary Arts learning required a "solid foundation of knowledge" in the Arts, and the current proposal did not allow for this foundation to be laid in primary school (p. 30). Other respondents who agreed with the overarching intention of the Arts curriculum noted that teacher training, professional learning, resources, and equipment at the time were unsatisfactory if "the intention of the Arts curriculum is to be realised" (p. 4). This body of feedback echoes statements made in the *National Review* (2005), indicating that the issues had yet to be resolved at a systemic level. It also reveals that despite attempting to align with best practice by employing up-to-date pedagogic theory, the Arts curriculum is limited by issues beyond its control.

For music, the major points of tension were found in relation to language used and the inadequate representation of the sequential nature of music learning, with calls for the "sequential, developmental and continuous" nature of music to be built into the definition (p. 18). There was no consensus of opinion regarding the language choices, but rather a stark difference of opinion between primary generalists and secondary specialists.[16] Primary generalists were in favour of broad, non-specific language that allowed for clear reporting, and in some cases they highlighted a preference for a fully integrated Arts teaching program (p. 22).[17] By contrast, specialists opposed generic, all-encompassing language, and preferred

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[16] I refer to *primary generalists* because the overwhelming majority of generalist teachers were situated in primary schooling. The term *secondary specialists* reflects the fact that the majority of music specialist respondents were secondary teachers, but the definition also includes academics and music industry professionals.

[17] A primary generalist respondent wanted the Arts curriculum to enable a program that could have "a performance at their school and count that as [a] drama, dance, music program" (ACARA 2011b, p. 22).

music-specific terminology. Their argument was that the terminology in music is value-laden with implied knowledge, and the proposed new language was flawed and would "potentially alienate teachers and discourage them from implementing a quality music education program" (pp. 24–25). This difference of opinion captured, in essence, the main distinction between the needs of primary generalists and secondary specialists. To satisfy both camps, the ACM would need to be broad enough at the primary level to allow for teachers with different levels of music experience to teach it, while building up students' formal understanding of the subject so that they could fully participate in a specialised secondary program. Fulfilling the needs of all groups would appear to be beyond the reach of a single curriculum framework. In response to the feedback from all subjects, ACARA acknowledged that the *Draft Shape* paper required significant revision (p. 44).

3.2.3.4 *The* Shape of the Australian Curriculum: The Arts *(ACARA 2011c)*

The *Shape of the Australian Curriculum: The Arts* was published in conjunction with the *Consultation Feedback Report* (2011b), and it provided "broad direction on the purpose, structure and organisation of the Arts curriculum" (2011c, p. 2). It was based on the feedback from the *Consultation Feedback Report* and other decisions made by the curriculum writers (p. 2). Despite ACARA's acknowledgement that the *Draft Shape* paper required significant revision, there were few obvious changes that acted on the feedback given in the *Consultation Feedback Report*. In fact, some changes went against the suggestions and proposals of respondents, which raises questions about the consultative nature of the Arts curriculum design process.

The most problematic change made was in relation to the allocation of time to Arts learning. Despite the initial proposal of 160 hours per band, or 80 hours per year, as well as the feedback that this time allocation was unclear and inadequate, the *Shape* paper indicated a reduction of time to Arts learning in the primary years: "120 hours across F–2; 100 hours across Years 3–4; 100 hours across Years 5–6; 160 hours across Years 7–8; and 160 hours across Years 9–10" (p. 4). In year-based terms, this meant that students were intended to participate in the Arts for 40 hours per year in Foundation–Year 2 and 50 hours per year in Years 3–6. As well as blatantly ignoring the feedback from the *Consultation Feedback Report*, this reduction also ignored the earlier recommendations made by the

National Review (2005), and made the claims of a priority for depth of study over breadth from the previous developmental documents seem increasingly untenable.

Another significant change was the recategorisation of the organising strands generating, realizing, and responding to the simpler terms making and responding. At an Arts-wide level, these terms would be used to describe Arts learning. Within subjects, making and responding would be replaced by discipline-specific terminology (p. 5). This document also saw the introduction of specific descriptions of engagement with each band of learning for each Arts subject (pp. 8–18). Interestingly, these included Years 11 and 12, even though a senior secondary curriculum for the Arts has never materialised.

The description of music gained detail in this document. The elements of music, which have since become central to the organisation of the ACM, were introduced: "duration (rhythm and tempo), dynamics, form, pitch (melody and harmony), and timbre (sound quality and texture)" (p. 14). There was also an indication of how making was intended to be realised in music: composing, performing, improvising, arranging, and conducting, although the terms composing and performing were used with far more frequency than the others (p. 14). The description of each band of learning did little to indicate how students would progress through music: after introducing ideas in the Foundation–Year 2 description, subsequent bands used terms like build on, develop, or gain a deepened understanding to indicate progression. Again, this disregarded the calls from specialist teachers, who asked for more specific examples of achievement in the *Consultation Feedback Report*.

3.2.3.5 The Arts Curriculum Advisory Group *(ACARA 2012a), the* Draft "Australian Curriculum: The Arts" *(ACARA 2012b), and the* Draft "Australian Curriculum: The Arts" Consultation Report *(ACARA 2012d)*

Following the shaping phase, the Arts curriculum entered a drafting phase in preparation for final publication. An advisory group was put together, consisting of sixteen individuals from a variety of arts professions, and two school teachers (2012a). Richard Gill was no longer listed as an advisor, and incidentally his autobiography, *Give Me Excess of It*, was also published in the same year. In it, he gave a damning account of his involvement in the curriculum design process, indicating his dissatisfaction with the direction that the curriculum was taking.

> I have sat on committees recently where I have had to suffer so-called "experts" pontificating on the music curriculum: people who have no deep knowledge of music and even less of teaching, and who trot out particular party lines in order to cover backsides and protect jobs (Gill 2012, p. 159).

Gill's comments capture some of the inherent tension between the nature of the curriculum development process, and its actual realisation in classrooms, and align with the views expressed by representatives of the visual arts in the 2010 interview with Peter O'Toole, one of whom stated that "part of my role in the reference group was to put [advice about the depth of current visual art learning] forward, and sadly I don't see that the reference group has taken that much further or paid much attention" (Australian Broadcasting Corporation 2010). In particular, Gill's criticism of those who "pontificated" having "no deep knowledge of music and even less of teaching" (2012, p. 159) is one of the key criticisms that Elliott and Silverman level at conventional models of curriculum making (2014, pp. 396–402).[18] It is evident that there was a failure of negotiation between those tasked with advising the development of the Arts.

This phase resulted in the first full-length draft of the Arts curriculum, presenting new concepts for clarification: content descriptions, content elaborations, and achievement standards (2012b, p. 8, p. 11). Content descriptions indicated what students were to learn, the content elaborations were illustrative examples to give teachers a reference point for content, and the achievement standards indicated learning outcomes. This draft stated that "Arts learning is based on practice" (2012b, p. 3), which was possibly the reason why there were six content descriptions allocated to making tasks, and three allocated to responding. Although Elliott and Silverman suggest that praxial learning should incorporate contextually-relevant practical activities, it should not be to the detriment of analysis and reflection. The over-representation of making descriptions suggests that the praxial influences in the ACM stem from a superficial, practice-centric understanding of the concept.

After the reduction in time allocated to Arts study in the *Shape* paper, there was no reference to time in this draft of the curriculum, although the ways in which students were intended to engage with the Arts were clarified. Foundation–Year 2 was indicated as a time for play-based learning, an approach that has since been integrated across the entire

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[18] The authors criticise models of curriculum in which subject matter experts who do not understand the teaching and learning contexts at hand are in charge of the content for study.

curriculum for these year groups (ACARA n.d.-p, version 8.3), while Years 3–6 were characterised by an integrated approach where some subject-specific content was to be incorporated into a generalist framework (2012b, pp. 9–10). These years were intended to provide a balanced and substantial foundation in the Arts, after which students could elect to study Arts subjects in more detail in secondary school.

Each Arts subject was presented as it would be within the curriculum, consisting of the aforementioned content descriptions, content elaborations, and achievement standards for all bands of learning, along with a rationale and an outline (pp. 91–112). Music was defined as "exploring, performing, creating, listening and responding to sound and silence" (p. 91), which is indicative of the generalist approach to the curriculum that drew considerable ire from respondents in the following *Consultation Report*. For one Queensland secondary school teacher "The intention of the rationale is admirable but is too vague in terms of specific skills and content…" (p. 68), and for another in New South Wales "The music aims lack academic rigour, cognitive knowledge, higher order skills, discipline-specific terminology and symbol system, a cumulative and sequential development of knowledge and skills and accepted musical terminology" (p. 68). Tellingly, such negative feedback was provided by secondary school teachers and music experts. To contrast this viewpoint, a primary school teacher noted that the music curriculum was "concise and informative" (p. 67), thus illustrating the different expectations specialist and generalist teachers had for the ACM.

There were inconsistencies across the categories of making and responding and how they were elaborated. For example, *making* in music was fully defined as "singing, playing available instruments, improvising, composing, arranging, listening, recording, performing and using available technologies and musicianship skills" (p. 92), but only singing, playing, composing, performing and listening to music were included in any subsequent elaborations. Furthermore, creating was not consistent with other language used in the ACM to describe making in music. This inconsistency was exacerbated further through the definition of learning in music: students "sing and play available instruments, compose, perform and listen to music" (p. 92), which again neglected improvising and arranging. In addition to the inconsistencies relating to making and responding, calls from teachers to clarify achievement standards from the previous consultation reports were also ignored, resulting in references to building on and developing ideas that had no indication of an actual standard.

Strengths	Weaknesses
1. The inclusion of the five Arts subjects 2. The two-strand structure (making and responding) was clear for primary teachers 3. The emphasis on students becoming innovative, critical and imaginative 4. Catering for student diversity	1. Too much content in the primary bands 2. Foundation to Year 2 is considered too broad a range of years for one band 3. Making and responding are perceived by secondary specialists as limiting 4. The place of historical context and critical analysis needs strengthening across the five Arts subjects 5. References to *play* in the Foundation to Year 2 band should be intentional and purposeful 6. The Cross-Curriculum Priorities need to be better developed and integrated across the five Arts subjects 7. References to the General Capabilities are too general 8. Connections to other learning areas are considered unnecessary 9. Band descriptions need to specific to the particular Arts subject without repetitive generic content 10. Language needs to be consistent across the Arts and terminology specific within each Arts subject 11. The distinction between techniques and skills needs to be clarified and clear in each Arts subject 12. Elements need to be clearly defined in each Arts subject for introduction in the primary years 13. Each Arts subject should have a clear sequential developmental continuum 14. Rationales and aims are vague and need to clearly identify the importance of knowing practically and conceptually in each Arts subject 15. Achievement standards are too generic and need to clearly identify the knowledge, understanding and skills students are expected to demonstrate by the end of the band

Table 3: Strengths and weaknesses in the Draft "Australian Curriculum: The Arts" Consultation Report *(ACARA 2012d, pp. ii–iii).*

Published in November 2012, the *Draft "Australian Curriculum: The Arts" Consultation Report* presented an overwhelmingly negative response to the proposed Arts curriculum. The ratio of strengths to weaknesses was even worse than in the *Consultation Feedback Report* from 2011, with four strengths and fifteen weaknesses (2012d, pp. ii–iii, see Table 3). The feedback was generally in line with that in the *Consultation Feedback Report*, in that primary generalists appreciated the broadness of language and the secondary specialists found it to be problematic, but another trend emerged from the data in the 2012 *Consultation Report* (p. ii). ACARA compiled data about which subject respondents taught, and from this it became apparent that dance, drama, and media arts teachers received their subjects well, while teachers from music and visual arts were unhappy with the drafts (p. 94). Although the reasons for this are beyond the scope of the present thesis, this does align with comments made about O'Toole's approach in the earlier stages of curriculum design (Australian Broadcasting Corporation 2010). Evidently, there was a disconnect between

ACARA's notion of an integrated Arts curriculum, and what teachers from specific disciplines expected it to achieve.

Respondents for music highlighted concerns relating to the content and the achievement standards, particularly in relation to secondary music. These concerns related to the generic language used in the draft, especially considering that secondary music was taught by specialist teachers. Some teachers said that they would understand recognisable musical terminology, and the choice to use generic language resulted in "vague and confused statements" (p. 73). However, the language alternatives that teachers proposed were usually idiomatic to particular styles and genres. Therefore, their application to the ACM— with its goal of relevance to all students—would not always be appropriate. This point requires further consideration and will be explored in greater detail in Chapters Four and Five. In relation to the achievement standards, respondents indicated that they did not require any music-specific knowledge, and they demanded nothing from students "other than vague creativity, free from a knowledge-based context" (p. 74). Some respondents also questioned the validity of achievement standards in music curricula, particularly because of the emphasis that they place on product-based learning, arguing that "the achievement standards bring the never-ending debate of process versus product. In the Arts the process can show more learning than the annotated end product. How can this be judged by an end product?" (p. 74). Emphasising product-based learning is problematic but unsurprising, as the broader Australian Curriculum has been designed in an outcome- or product-based way. This approach goes against the recommendations made by the *National Review* (2005) and is a point of irreconcilable tension between the praxial framework and the ACM design process. After all, praxial philosophy is entirely based on the premise that music is a human activity—and therefore a process—drawing upon musical products when relevant.

The *Consultation Report* was the final document in the development timeline published online by ACARA. Although the structure of the draft Arts curriculum and the published versions has remained the same, some feedback was taken on board and minor amendments to definitions, terminology, and consistency of language were made. In undertaking this analysis I have drawn from four versions of the ACM: version 7.5 (2015),

and versions 8.0, 8.2 (2016c), and the current version 8.3 (n.d.-m).[19] Despite these different

version numbers, the content for music has remained the same across all published versions

of the Arts curriculum (ACARA 2017).[20] As such, all subsequent references for the ACM are

to the present version, which is now published online (ACARA n.d.-r, version 8.3).

3.3 Discussion

The analysis of the development of the ACM paints a bleak picture for music, and the Arts

more generally. The *National Review* (2005) indicated that music education in Australia has

been a problematic area for many years and made suggestions about how to rectify this

situation. Admittedly, many of these problems were beyond the scope of a curriculum

document to solve, such as how music is positioned within individual schools, time

constraints within schools, and teacher training. However, there were several suggestions

that could have been implemented within a curriculum. Despite calls for an increase in the

time allocated to music study, the development of the Arts saw a drastic reduction in the

amount of time offered to all five subjects in primary schooling. Furthermore, the

positioning of a generalist approach to primary Arts and a specialist approach to secondary

Arts is logical, but the actual execution of this was inadequate and did little to resolve the

tensions between generalist and specialist approaches to teaching. Invoking the *National

Review*, the proposed solution to this was a synergistic integration of the approaches, but

feedback in the consultation reports indicate that the divide is as stark as ever.

The consultation reports reveal that despite the initial appearance of a dialogue between

teachers and ACARA, very little of what teachers suggested was actually considered—

particularly in the case of secondary teachers. Most of the changes that were made related

to small adjustments to language that were of little consequence. Suggestions for

substantial changes, such as the call for more precise achievement standards, were not

resolved either, which indicates that ACARA had a strong commitment to writing the

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[19] Version numbers refer to the entire Australian Curriculum, and not just the Arts. When significant changes are made to an area of the curriculum, the entire version gets updated. There have been no changes to music since the publication of version 7.5.

[20] This curriculum activity report describes amendments to the Indigenous Priority, English, the General Capabilities, Health and Physical Education, HASS, Languages, Mathematics, Science, and Technologies, while also commenting on "National Literacy and Numeracy Learning Progressions" and monitoring the effectiveness of the Australian Curriculum (ACARA 2017). There were no references to amendments to the Arts.

curriculum they wanted, without considering the concerns of the people who actually have to implement it.

Finally, the quest for concision in the final curriculum has resulted in a loss of clarity, particularly around key terms that have potentially problematic interpretations. The consideration of *aesthetic* is a prime example: although it was qualified well in the earlier stages of development, statements about its philosophical positioning were removed in later documents so that it has become a vague and nebulous buzz word about how students engage with Arts learning. If some of these considerations were made more explicit in the present ACM, its praxial intentions could be more readily realised. As will be explored in the next two chapters, the structural issues and problems with language that were introduced in the development process continue to have a problematic influence within the ACM.

Chapter Four: Aims and achievement standards of the Australian Curriculum in Music

4.1 Introduction

The drafts of the ACM exhibited scant evidence of any action towards improving Australian music education. Despite philosophical underpinnings that aligned with current approaches to best practice and exhibited clear praxial influences, the clarity of the drafts was gradually sacrificed to make the curriculum more concise, and in so doing the position that the ACM was taking became unclear. The present version of the ACM (ACARA n.d.-r, version 8.3) suffers from this lack of clarity, but insight into its positioning can still be found in two key statements within the curriculum. First is a statement of the range and scope of the ACM, supported by an understanding that Australia is a multicultural country. In the ACM, music has the "capacity to engage, inspire and enrich the lives of *all students*" (n.d.-r, emphasis added). By specifying that all students from a wide range of cultural backgrounds can find something to engage with in music, the ACM is set up to encompass *all* music, or MUSICS as defined by Elliott and Silverman (2014, see Chapter Two for a detailed explanation of MUSICS). The second statement says that students will engage with music in a "continuous and sequential" manner (ACARA n.d.-r), thus implying that students will be continuously exposed to the subject to make steady progress. By deduction, aligning with these two self-imposed statements would necessitate the ACM to be inclusive of MUSICS while demonstrating a clear sense of progression. A curriculum that could satisfactorily exhibit these two characteristics would definitely align with the first praxial characteristic—the ability to encompass all music—while also enabling immersion in and progression through individual musical styles (see Chapter Two for a full description of the praxial characteristics). Therefore, I argue that for the ACM to fulfil its own promise and align with best practice in music education, it should clearly demonstrate inclusion and progression.

To provide reasonable scope for this analysis of the curriculum, I have divided it into two parts. The present chapter is concerned with the aims and achievement standards of the ACM which can be equated to intentions and outcomes and is the most abstract level of analysis. Chapter Five analyses the content of the ACM, delving into significant detail. This allows for a logical sequence of analysis that starts at the most generic level possible before progressing into granular detail. I use the praxial characteristics as an analytical framework

across both chapters, assessing whether the characteristics can be present within what the ACM proposes.

To analyse the intentions and outcomes of the ACM, I first consider the primary music aims and achievement standards, as they are necessary for an understanding of the secondary curriculum. Next, I clarify the time allocated to music study in secondary schools. Third, I examine the inclusivity of the secondary aims and achievement standards. Finally, I determine how much progression is indicated through the ACM—admittedly a difficult task when dealing with an abstract concept of MUSICS. Underpinning the whole ACM are five generic Arts aims and four specific music aims that shape the broad direction of the ACM, but arguably do little to influence teachers' realisations of the curriculum. The Arts aims to develop students':

1. creativity, critical thinking, aesthetic knowledge and understanding about arts practices, through making and responding to artworks with increasing self-confidence

2. arts knowledge and skills to communicate ideas; they value and share their arts and life experiences by representing, expressing and communicating ideas, imagination and observations about their individual and collective worlds to others in meaningful ways

3. use of innovative arts practices with available and emerging technologies, to express and represent ideas, while displaying empathy for multiple viewpoints

4. understanding of Australia's histories and traditions through the arts, engaging with the artworks and practice, both traditional and contemporary, of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples

5. understanding of local, regional and global cultures, and their arts histories and traditions, through engaging with the worlds of artists, artworks, audiences and arts professions (ACARA n.d.-m, version 8.3).

The specific music aims are shaped to extend the five generic aims, and to target them towards musical skills and knowledge. Students develop:

1. the confidence to be creative, innovative, thoughtful, skilful and informed musicians

2. skills to compose, perform, improvise, respond and listen with intent and purpose

3. aesthetic knowledge and respect for music and music practice across global communities, cultures and musical traditions

4. an understanding of music as an aural art form as they acquire skills to become independent music learners (ACARA n.d.-r, version 8.3).

To conclude this chapter, I provide several recommendations about how the ACM could be amended to better reflect the praxial characteristics and its own intentions.

4.2 Primary music

The focus of this thesis is on the secondary curriculum, but it cannot be explored in isolation from primary school music. Not only were the issues surrounding primary school music raised by the teachers at School Four, but the achievement standards for band 5–6 are indicative of two important benchmarks in Australian music education. Firstly, Year 6 is where compulsory music education in Australia ends, as the provision of the Arts is that "all students will study the five arts subjects from Foundation to the end of primary school" (ACARA 2016c, p. 8). By extension, what students achieve by the end of Year 6 is the starting point for secondary school music.[1] Therefore, the successful implementation of the secondary ACM is reliant on primary music meeting the appropriate achievement standards. However, according to the teachers at School Four, students are rarely at the suggested standard at the start of Year 7 (Chris et al. 2018). As the end of compulsory music education, Year 6 music can be interpreted as being the national benchmark for musical understanding, and students failing to attain it is a cause for concern. The issues affecting student attainment in primary music stem from the same sources as those in secondary music—a lack of time and value allocated to music—but they are further exacerbated by the variability of teacher expertise.

In all primary bands for the Arts the subjects are only described in generic terms with no subject-specific rationale given. Instead, there is a single Arts rationale that encompasses all five subjects, and each subject receives its own specific aims. This method of curriculum organisation fails to capture the "related but distinct" (ACARA n.d.-m, version 8.3) nature of the Arts that is stated within the Curriculum. However, the integrated nature of primary Arts subjects reflects how the subjects are taught in many primary schools in Australia, and throughout the world. Arts subjects are often taught by a single generalist classroom teacher, who often does not have any specific training in Arts-based subjects (Jeanneret and DeGraffenreid 2012, pp. 399–401).[2] In Australia, many trainee generalist teachers will only receive one or two semesters of Arts training throughout their undergraduate degrees, and

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[1] The teachers from School Four conceptualise this as the "suggested minimum standard" for secondary school music (Chris et al. 2018).

[2] This is not to say that there are no specialist music teachers in Australian primary schools, just that there are many instances of the generalist classroom teacher being required to teach music.

unless these teachers have prior experience in any of the Arts, these short courses alone qualify them to be able to teach music in the primary classroom (Butler 2015, p. 32).[3] By taking a multi-arts structure and enabling generalists with inadequate musical training to teach music, the primary-level Arts curriculum goes against the fourth and sixth praxial characteristics: that music should be taught by specialist teachers in a specialised subject. The present methods of curriculum organisation and teacher training do not necessarily mean that all primary school music courses are taught by generalists in a multi-arts format, but they do validate the multi-arts approach in primary schools. These factors combine and carry over to secondary music education, as will be explored below.

Because of the significant lack of expertise in the field of music, some specialist teachers expressed concern that primary generalists would be unable to teach students the content of the ACM.[4] Some of these sentiments were expressed within the curriculum feedback reports, and others were discussed with individual secondary teachers during the interviews. Below are two examples: one from the documentation, and one from the interviews.

> Research has shown a number of times that generalist teachers *lack the confidence to teach music* and therefore if [the ACM is] to include generalist teachers [it needs] to be more prescriptive (Music Advocacy Queensland, in ACARA 2012d, p. 72, emphasis added).

> Lorraine: But…looking…at how primary teachers do engage with music, I think there are a lot of choral programs, and things like that, [where] *they don't actually unpack why* this [piece of music] feels different to that one because it's 4/4 or 3/4. They might not have time, *or even the idea that the teachers themselves are not understanding it* (Chris et al. 2018, emphasis added).

To understand the challenges that generalist teachers face when teaching Arts subjects, I sourced two books designed for their pre-service training.[5] In *Teaching for The Arts* (Roy, Baker, and Hamilton 2012), the authors provided a view on primary Arts education that is in line with the praxial philosophy and highlights similar issues to those explored in Chapter Two. Most notable of these for primary education is the profound disconnect between the statements of worth about The Arts and the chronic lack of time that they are allocated within the curriculum (pp. 13–17). It also comments on the lack of time allocated to teacher

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[3] See also: Alter, Hays, and O'Hara (2009), Biasutti (2010), and de Vries (2011).
[4] According to Thorn and Brasche (2015), there are "significant issues in terms of musical skills and experience" among trainee primary teachers (p. 191).
[5] It is important to note that there are other, more recent examples of educational texts for pre-service teachers (for example, see Dinham 2020). However, exploring such educational texts in detail goes beyond the scope of the present thesis.

training (p. 14), and the lack of "substantial and respectful exploration" of the arts of Indigenous cultures (p. 16). Furthermore, the concept of music offered is sound, but it makes no attempt to give pre-service primary teachers any education in music, or indeed any art form (pp. 119–138). The same can be said of *Education in The Arts* (2009), which again offers an abstract, academic consideration of Arts education in primary school—this time in the aesthetic tradition—and does not attempt to provide teachers with tangible skills in the Arts to boost their confidence for the Learning Area (Sinclair, Jeanneret, and O'Toole 2009). As well as unpacking similar ideas in his PhD thesis, Peter Butler attempted to provide a practical solution to strengthening primary music, by providing original songs and compositions at varying levels of complexity (2015). Primary generalist teachers can then facilitate musically beneficial lessons and activities regardless of their own level of musical understanding.

The final consideration before exploring the actual content of the primary ACM is the proposed provision of time in each year. In the *Curriculum Design Paper* (ACARA 2013), each subject was allocated an indicative number of hours per year, based on the assumption of 1000 teaching hours per school year. In primary school, it is "assumed that all students will study the five arts subjects from Foundation to the end of primary school [Year 6]" (ACARA n.d.-r, version 8.3). Therefore, while it is impossible to ensure that every student participates in every Arts subject for exactly the same amount of time, it can be assumed that each subject *should* receive an equivalent time allocation. In primary school, students spend 4% of their time in F–2, or 40 hours per year, studying the Arts, and 5% or 50 hours per year in Years 3–6 (ACARA 2013, p. 9). Students are expected to study all five Arts subjects in primary school, so each individual subject is allocated 8 hours per year in F–2, and 10 hours per year in Years 3–6. Assuming that continuous and sequential Arts subjects are taught for a full 40-week academic year, this equates to a weekly time allocation for a single subject of 12 minutes in F–2, and 15 minutes in 3–6.[6] For context, the weekly provision for English study in primary school is 6.75 hours in F–2, 5.5 hours in Years 3–4, and 5 hours in Years 5–6.

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[6] It is unlikely that an Arts subject would be taught for a full academic year. As is suggested in the development documents for the Arts, individual subjects can be taught for short intensives: "The curriculum will not determine how learning in the Arts will be delivered. Schools will be able to make decisions about how to deliver the Arts curriculum over a school year(s). These decisions will take account of different approaches that can be taken for each art form. As in other curriculum areas, some art forms, and some activities within all art forms, require frequent brief tuition. Other art forms require more intense immersion less frequently" (ACARA

With these considerations about the state of primary Arts education in mind, the first three bands of the ACM can be explored in full context. This is where the foundations for music study and understanding are laid. It is important to remember that these aims and achievement standards are intended to be met through the equivalent of a mere 12–15 minutes of weekly music study.

Year F–2 aims	Year 3–4 aims	Year 5–6 aims
Students become aware of rhythm, pitch, dynamics and expression, form and structure, timbre and texture.	Students extend their understanding of elements of music as they develop their aural skills.	Students further their understanding of rhythm, pitch, dynamics and expression, form and structure, timbre and texture in music.
Students explore sounds as they listen to and make music.	Students explore meaning and interpretation, forms, and elements including rhythm, pitch, dynamics and expression, form and structure, timbre and texture as they make and respond to music.	Students explore meaning and interpretation, form and elements of music as they make and respond to music.
Students learn to discriminate between sounds and silence, and loud and soft sounds.	Students match pitch and show the direction of a tune with gesture or drawings.	Students extend their understanding and use of aural skills as they sing and play independent parts against contrasting parts and recognise instrumental, vocal and digitally generated sounds.
Students learn to move and perform with beat and tempo.	Students recognise and discriminate between rhythm and beat.	Students explore and use rhythm, pitch, dynamics, form and structure, timbre and texture in music they perform and compose.
Students learn to listen as performers and audience.	Students learn to listen as performers and audience, extending their awareness of themselves and others as performers and audience.	

Table 4: Primary music aims (ACARA n.d.-b, version 8.3).

4.2.1 Primary aims

Considering the generalist teachers who predominantly teach music at this level, the F–2 aims mostly rely on language that the lay-person can understand (see Table 4). The exceptions here are the list of the elements of music—explored in detail in Chapter Five— and the separation of *rhythm* and *beat*. This broadness of language remains the foundation for music aims in the primary bands, although some further musical concepts are introduced. Broadness was also an aspect that several generalist primary teachers

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2010c, p. 10). The weekly time indication is intended to facilitate an easy comparison with the subjects that are taught for the full year.

commented on positively in the 2012 feedback document, although it was defined as a disadvantage by secondary teachers (ACARA 2012d, p. 72). Despite their difference of opinion, both generalist and specialist teachers agreed that the F–2 age range—4–8 years old—was far too broad for a single band of study, particularly because a substantial amount of child development occurs within this age range (p. ii, p. 13).

Even though the language remains relatively generic within band 3–4, the increased detail in some aims may be intended to engender the increasing sophistication of students' musical understanding. The elements of music are referred to twice—the first time through extending the understanding they gained in F–2, and the second time in relation to making and responding to music. There are also three aims that refer to specific technical skills within music: pitch recognition and melody contour, basic understanding of intervals, and recognition of and discrimination between rhythm and beat, an extension of one of the aims in F–2. Finally, the sixth aim introduces the concepts of performers and audiences, which is one of the fundamental distinctions between types of engagement with music that is expanded on considerably in the later bands. The increased specificity within this band carries the implication that teachers need to be able to adequately demonstrate, teach, and assess students' capability with these skills: to teach this material effectively, the teachers themselves would need to be able to match pitch, recognise notes moving by step or leap, and discriminate between rhythm and beat (Dunbar-Hall and Wemyss 2000, p. 56).[7]

After the significant increase in complexity and quantity of aims between F–2 and 3–4, Years 5–6 sees a reduction of aims from the previous band. Progression is implied through usage of phrases such as "further their understanding" or "extend their understanding" (ACARA n.d.-b, version 8.3), but is coupled with the inclusion of some examples of specific musical skills and abilities. Students are now expected to be able to sing and play independent parts against contrasting parts, recognise instrumental, vocal and digitally generated sounds, and the first indication of separation between performing and composing music occurs. In doing so, the ACM avoids referring to any particular styles of music.

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[7] This article focuses on popular music in educational contexts, but makes an explicit point of an arguably given concept for all kinds of music teaching: "…it is necessary to understand something of the music to be taught before a comprehensive curriculum for it can be designed" (Dunbar-Hall and Wemyss 2000, p. 56).

Therefore, despite the challenges of accounting for MUSICS, the primary ACM succeeds in capturing a sense of progression.

4.2.2 Primary achievement standards

The primary achievement standards succeed in expressing inclusivity and progression (see Table 5). There are no references to specific types of music, or activities that are based in individual styles, and students are encouraged to explore the music of different cultures. Progression is evident but requires some interpretation. For example, in band F–2, students "demonstrate aural skills by staying in tune and keeping in time when they sing and play" (n.d.-r, version 8.3); in 3–4, they sing and play with "accurate pitch, rhythm and expression" (n.d.-r); and in 5–6, they are required to sing and play music from different styles with "accurate pitch, rhythm, and expression" (n.d.-r). Therefore, in this example the sense of progression comes from the addition of different aspects of music: accurate pitch and rhythm in F–2, expression in 3–4, and applying these skills to different styles in 5–6.

F-2	3-4	5-6
By the end of Year 2, students communicate about the music they listen to, make and perform and where and why people make music.	By the end of Year 4, students describe and discuss similarities and differences between music they listen to, compose and perform. They discuss how they and others use the elements of music in performance and composition.	By the end of Year 6, students explain how the elements of music are used to communicate meaning in the music they listen to, compose and perform. They describe how their music making is influenced by music and performances from different cultures, times and places.
Students improvise, compose, arrange and perform music. They demonstrate aural skills by staying in tune and keeping in time when they sing and play.	Students collaborate to improvise, compose and arrange sound, silence, tempo and volume in music that communicates ideas. They demonstrate aural skills by singing and playing instruments with accurate pitch, rhythm and expression.	Students use rhythm, pitch and form symbols and terminology to compose and perform music. They sing and play music in different styles, demonstrating aural, technical and expressive skills by singing and playing instruments with accurate pitch, rhythm and expression in performances for audiences.

Table 5: Primary music achievement standards (ACARA n.d.-r, version 8.3).

As the final compulsory band of music, the Year 5–6 achievement standards indicate what could be considered the national standard for Australian music. According to the ACM, all Australians should be able to identify and communicate meaning in music, they should be able to compose, perform, and listen to music, and they should be able to describe how the music of other cultures—as well as historical music—informs their musical activities. More

specifically, Australians should all have knowledge of rhythm and pitch, and be able to use symbols and terminology to engage in musical activities. However, there is no statement about what kinds of symbols should be used, or the types of terminology. Most specifically, students should be able to sing or play with accurate pitch, rhythm, and expression, in a variety of styles and for audiences. Is this a realistic national standard? More to the point, is this national standard realistic for all students to achieve by the end of Year 6 with 12–15 minutes of music study per week and when primary teachers often cannot match the intended standard of their students (Thorn and Brasche 2015, p. 191)? Evidence from the sampled teachers suggests that this is not the case.

4.3 Secondary music—time

I chose to explore secondary music teaching as the focus for this thesis because the variability of musical expertise of teachers would not be a factor. At the secondary level, it can be assumed that all music teachers are specialists in the subject, which means that they have undertaken tertiary study in music followed by relevant teaching qualifications, or specialised in music as part of a Bachelor of Education.[8] The pathway of a Bachelor of Music followed by a Masters of Education takes five years, some accelerated courses that were mentioned in the interviews take around four years, and a Bachelor of Education (Secondary) which specialises in music takes four years. This means that the actual content of the ACM plays a much more significant role in secondary music, as all teachers are experts in their field. This is an assumption that is held across the study of music in many Western countries as well, justified through the status of secondary music as a specialist subject within the ACM, and emphasised within music education literature (ACARA n.d.-r, version 8.3, Philpott and Wright 2012, pp. 441–442). In Australia, students choose to study "one or more art forms in greater detail" (ACARA n.d.-m, version 8.3) in Years 7 and 8, and can specialise in Arts subjects in Years 9 and 10. In the secondary ACM, the specialist status of music has resulted in a significant increase in its time allocation from primary school music.

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[8] For the older and more experienced teachers within the sample, this was a combined music and teaching course through teaching colleges (Denise 2017, Chris et al. 2018). By contrast, one of the younger teachers had taken a Bachelor of Music and then subsequently completed a Diploma of Education (Chris et al. 2018), while the other had taken a combined Bachelor of Music/Diploma of Education course (Alice 2017).

In the secondary years, the Arts are allocated 8% of the year for study—assuming 1000 hours of learning time per academic year, this equates to 80 hours of Arts learning per year (ACARA 2013, p. 9). To contextualise the allocation, Learning Areas like Health and Physical Education and Languages also receive 80 hours per year in the secondary years, while first phase Learning Areas like English and Mathematics receive 120 hours. Therefore, while there is some discrepancy between the Learning Areas, it is not as stark as the difference in the primary allocation. Of course, there are still five Arts subjects to be accounted for within the 80 hours. Although it is not necessary for secondary schools to deliver all five Arts subjects, many schools in Canberra offer more than one.[9] For example, School Two delivers four Arts subjects to its students in Years 7 and 8, and each subject receives the equivalent of 20 hours per year, thus resulting in students fulfilling their 80 hour allocation (Alice 2017, School Two 2014a). Therefore, there is still potential for a considerable discrepancy between the time allocated to music (or any individual Arts subject), and the time allocated to other subjects.

Giving secondary music specialist status implies that it is a worthwhile academic pursuit and supports the stated curriculum goals. Therefore, it should be able to serve as a comprehensive course of study. The ACM supports this by referencing specialisation in Years 9 and 10, but the content needs to back up the claim. To this end, the aims and achievement standards within the ACM can serve as a general road map to plot the course of *what* students are expected to learn through secondary music. Some concessions need to be made when devising a comprehensive music education program in this context, because there are many different kinds of music and not enough time to consider multiple in detail. In the developmental texts this is noted as prioritising depth over breadth of study, and this implies that students should explore a small range of music in significant detail, rather than a large variety of music in passing (ACARA 2013, p. 19). Given these limitations and the examples given by interview participants, it would seem like a logical decision to prioritise music learning within a single cultural idiom, with brief forays into other musical styles.

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[9] In the ACT public sector, there are 19 secondary schools listed. All schools offer multiple Arts subjects: 15 of these schools definitely offer music; there is evidence to suggest that it is likely two other schools offer music; it is unclear to determine whether one school offers music; and one school definitely does not offer music (ACT Government Education Directorate 2018a). There are also 19 non-government secondary schools in the ACT: 16 offer curricular music, it is unclear in the case of one, and two definitely do not offer curricular music (ACT Government Education Directorate 2018b).

Although a curriculum that specified styles of music would not be praxial, it would allow for depth of study. However, as the ACM has set its own benchmark of being relevant to all students, and therefore all types of music (MUSICS), I instead measure it against its inclusivity *and* its depth. For the aims and achievement standards to be successful, they must be inclusive and demonstrate progression.

4.4 Secondary music—inclusivity

To meet ACARA's self-imposed requirement for inclusivity, terms that imply particular musical frameworks cannot be present in the ACM. In the aims and achievement standards, there are no such references. There are sixteen aims in Years 7–8, and fourteen aims for Years 9–10, and within these aims there is little that could be construed as genre-specific: of specific note are the aims that state students will "draw on music from a range of cultures, times and locations as they experience music" (ACARA n.d.-r, version 8.3). In addition, there is a significant increase in music-specific terminology at the secondary level, and the depth of historical and contextual study is expanded upon. Technical skills are mentioned in relation to performance for the first time, and aural skills are also given significant priority. In all of these cases, there is no reference to any specific kinds of music—everything is addressed at the broadest conceptual level possible. Within both bands, the only specific kinds of music that are referenced are those of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, and Asian cultures. These are reflective of the Cross-Curriculum Priorities which are explored in Chapter Nine.

Within the aims, the usage of the term *traditional* is problematic. Students "learn that over time there has been further development of techniques used in traditional and contemporary styles of music as they explore form in music" (n.d.-b, version 8.3); and they "reflect on the development of traditional and contemporary styles of music and how musicians can be identified through the style of their music" (n.d.-b). There is ambiguity here as to what is implied by traditional, as it could mean two things: traditional music in the sense of what is traditionally taught in music classrooms—for example, Western art music (Joseph 2011, p. 44)—or tradition in the sense of different music traditions. Evidently, one reading is far more conducive to an inclusive music curriculum than the other, and further

analysis of the secondary bands indicates that the likely intention is the second version of the term.[10]

The secondary achievement standards give a broad indication of the outcomes that students can be expected to reach through their study. These standards are structured by many of the organising ideas present throughout the ACM. These include the organising ideas of *making* and *responding*, subsequent categorisations of *making* and *responding* such as performing, composing, and listening, and the concepts of elements of music and aural skills.[11] The majority of the achievement standards listed are broad enough to accommodate any musical style: for example, students "evaluate the use of elements of music and defining characteristics from different styles" (ACARA n.d.-r, version 8.3), which acknowledges that elements of music are manifested differently in different styles (Reimer 2003, p. 267) and is consistent with other examples of inclusivity in the ACM. The only stylistically specific term used within the achievement standards for secondary music is *score*, which is not a deliberate subversion of inclusivity but is problematic nonetheless.[12] This will be explored in more detail in Chapter Five. A better term to use in a curriculum-wide context would be *stylistically-appropriate notation*: "students analyse different *stylistically-appropriate notation* and performances aurally and visually" (ACARA n.d.-r, emphasis indicative of changed terminology). If this change were made, then there would be no question that the achievement standards also fit the requirement for inclusivity in the ACM.

Aside from the two anomalies discussed here, the ACM at the secondary level appears to match the provision of an inclusive music curriculum in Australia. There are few references to style-specific terminology, which means that different cultural traditions of music can be considered within the ACM. At a purely conceptual level, ACARA succeeded in designing aims and achievement standards that meet the self-imposed requirement for inclusivity: the

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[10] There is continuous reference to studying a range of music, considering music in international contexts, and exploring viewpoints across the content descriptions (ACARA n.d.-r, version 8.3), supporting this interpretation. The content descriptions will be explored in Chapter Five.

[11] See Chapter Five.

[12] The conventional understanding of score is "a written representation of a musical composition showing all the vocal and instrumental parts arranged one below the other" (in the *Oxford Dictionary of English* 2010), and is commonly used in relation to Western art music. The analysis of scores is an important aspect of this style, but the term does not extend beyond it: many non-Western styles are aurally-based with absolutely no recourse to written notation; and even Western styles such as jazz and popular music do not rely on a fully-realised score.

aims and achievement standards have potential relevance to all students in Australia and recognise the diverse cultural backgrounds that all Australians come from.

4.5 Secondary music—progression
4.5.1 Aims

The following tables illustrate the progression of aims in the ACM. This task was complicated by two factors: firstly, the consolidation of aims in Years 9 and 10 means that there are fewer aims for this band than there were for Years 7 and 8; and secondly, the bands in Years 9 and 10 are presented in a different sequence than those in Years 7 and 8. Therefore, a numerical organisation is meaningless. Instead, I have presented the aims as two tables: Table 6 illustrates the connections between the aims with a clear sense of progression, which I have defined as *developing* aims. Table 7 illustrates the almost verbatim repeat of aims between bands that I have defined as *unchanging* aims. Finally, a single aim is present in Years 7–8 but has no associated aims in Years 9–10 or in the primary aims. I have defined this as an *unattached* aim.

4.5.1.1 Developing aims

The aims in the developing group are clearly indicated through the use of terminology such as "continue to develop," "extend," or "build upon" (n.d.-b, version 8.3, see Table 6). In all cases, the types of activities that involve an active statement of progression are related to making in music: activities, tasks, and concepts that involve active listening, performing, or composing. While there is reference to responding in music within these progressing aims, it does appear to be considerably under-represented in comparison to the making aims, which will be addressed in Chapter Five. For now, in these cases where progression is evident, the ACM clearly prescribes progression without referring to any specific types of music, thereby maintaining the inclusive aspects of the ACM. In spite of this, the secondary ACM is not a particularly good example of a progressive curriculum, because the aims deal with abstract concepts of building on pre-existing skills and knowledge without ever indicating what such skills are. The table shows that there are few tangible examples of progression in the aims of the ACM.

Year 7–8 aims	Year 9–10 aims
Students build on their aural skills by identifying and manipulating rhythm, pitch, dynamics and expression, form and structure, timbre and texture in their listening, composing and performing.	Students continue to develop their aural skills as they build on their understanding and use of the elements of music.
Students aurally identify layers within a texture.	Students extend their use and identification of timbre to discriminate between instruments and voice types.
Students sing and play independent parts against contrasting parts.	
Students recognise rhythmic, melodic and harmonic patterns and beat groupings.	Students extend their understanding and use of more complex rhythms and diversity of pitch and incorporate dynamics and expression in different forms.
Students understand their role within an ensemble and control tone and volume.	Students build on their understanding of their role within an ensemble as they control tone and volume in a range of styles using instrumental and vocal techniques.
Students perform with expression and control.	Students extend technical and expressive skills in performance from the previous band.
Students learn that over time there has been further development of techniques used in traditional and contemporary styles of music as they explore form in music.[13]	Students reflect on the development of traditional and contemporary styles of music and how musicians can be identified through the style of their music.
Students explore meaning and interpretation, forms, and elements including rhythm, pitch, dynamics and expression, form and structure, timbre and texture as they make and respond to music.	Students explore meaning and interpretation, forms and elements, and social, cultural and historical contexts of music as they make and respond to music.
Students consider social, cultural and historical contexts of music.	
Students evaluate the expressive techniques used in music they listen to and experience in performance.	Students evaluate performers' success in expressing the composers' intentions and expressive skills in music they listen to and perform.

Table 6: Developing aims in the secondary ACM (ACARA n.d.-b, version 8.3).

There is a single example of a secondary aim that captures a considered sense of progression, while also retaining inclusivity. The 9–10 aim that students "reflect on the development of traditional and contemporary styles of music and how musicians can be identified through the style of their music" (n.d.-b) is an extension of an unchanging aim from within the same band: that students "learn that over time that there has been further development of different traditional and contemporary styles as they explore music forms" (n.d.-b). This extension is an example of the culturally-inclusive progression that could be evident across the entire of the music curriculum. It encourages an increased depth and complexity of engagement without specifying any particular types of music, while subsuming

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[13] This aim also has an unchanging element: see Table 7.

the entire of its parent unchanging aim. If the other secondary aims had been considered in a similar way, then the ACM aims would have been truly progressive and inclusive.

4.5.1.2 Unchanging aims

Aims for Years 7–8 and Years 9–10
Students draw on music from a range of cultures, times and locations as they experience music.
Students explore the music and influences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and those of the Asia region.
Students learn that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have converted oral records to other technologies.
Students learn that over time there has been further development of techniques used in traditional and contemporary styles of music as they explore form in music.[14]
Students maintain safety, correct posture and technique in using instruments and technologies.
Students build on their understanding form previous bands of the roles of artists and audiences as they engage with more diverse music.[15]

Table 7: Unchanging aims in the secondary ACM (ACARA n.d.-b, version 8.3).

There are six unchanging aims, four of which are concerned with either the intercultural understanding Capability, the Asian Priority, or the Indigenous Priority (see Table 7). Of particular note is the aim that students "learn that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have converted oral records to other technologies" (n.d.-b, version 8.3). There is no depth implied by this aim—students learn the fact, but there is no indication of how or why this occurs. There are two things missing: firstly, a sense of progression in the aim, and secondly, some direct reference to Indigenous Australian musical traditions.[16] A hypothetical progression for this aim in 9–10, such as *students consider how and why Indigenous peoples convert oral records and cultural traditions to other technologies*, would be more in keeping with a continuous and sequential music curriculum. The fact that it has been treated in such a way is troubling and raises concerns about the handling of Indigenous issues throughout the entire music curriculum. Musical traditions from other cultures are neglected too. The Asian Priority is only mentioned once despite the fact it is meant to be a deeply-integrated

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[14] This aim also has a developing element (see Table 6). This is the only unchanging aim that does not repeat verbatim in Years 9–10: "Students learn that over time there has been further development of different traditional and contemporary styles as they explore music forms" (ACARA n.d.-b, version 8.3). However, I suggest that the changes in this aim are merely cosmetic and the content does not display any progression from Years 7–8.

[15] This aim encourages students to build upon previous understanding but repeats the content of the aim verbatim between bands of learning.

[16] This would contradict the first praxial characteristic. However, as an overarching area of national priority, and an area that Australia has failed to deliver promised reform, I suggest specific inclusion of Indigenous Australian music within the curriculum is advisable. This will be explored in Chapter Nine.

aspect of the Australian Curriculum. The terminology within the ACM is inclusive, but the fact that both of these Priorities are dealt with in such unconvincing ways raises real concerns about the inclusivity of the ACM at a more systemic level. It is intriguing that areas of national importance such as these are left static and dealt with in a way that could be considered tokenistic, particularly because these Priorities are so prominent within the broader Australian Curriculum (n.d.-v, version 8.3).

There are two other unchanging aims that raise further questions and challenges. In the first instance, students "maintain safety, correct posture and technique in using instruments and technologies" (n.d.-b, version 8.3), which arguably defies progression: maintaining safety and correct posture is something that should be taught at all levels of music education and should be encouraged throughout the entire ACM. Technique will develop as students gain experience, but this is captured through other developing aims. The other unchanging aim is that "students build on their understanding from previous bands of the roles of artists and audiences as they engage with more diverse music" (n.d.-b). This aim is entirely devoted to progression, yet there is no progression in the level of ability that the aim implies. Instead, it simply deals in abstracts: that students build on their previous understanding and engage with more diverse music without actually indicating what the previous understanding is, or should be, and what music students have previously experienced so that they can diversify. This is the primary point of tension between progression and inclusion when dealing with music: a sense of progression requires some context, but it is difficult to imply context when specifics of musical styles negate the inclusivity of the subject.

4.5.1.3 Unattached aim

> Students identify a variety of audiences for which music is made (ACARA n.d.-b, version 8.3, for Years 7 and 8).

The final aim is unattached—there is no clear link between it and a subsequent aim in Years 9–10, and it is not a progression from a less complex aim in Years 5–6.[17] This is problematic, because students identifying the audiences for which music is made is yet another example of an aim that could have been easily expanded upon to display progression. Students could *identify how and why music is made for different audiences* in Years 9–10, and this

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[17] See Table 4.

hypothetical extension would also be considered inclusive—no particular kinds of music are being inferred. Overall, the secondary ACM aims are indicative of a simplistic notion of progression: that continuous and sequential learning can only be expressed through the specific terms *building on* and *developing*.

For this curriculum to demonstrate a considered approach to progression, I suggest that every aim should increase in complexity between bands. This could be done if students were encouraged to ask how and why questions in the later bands, which would imply progression through deeper understanding, and would not impact on the inclusivity of the curriculum. As with all aspects of the ACM, teachers are ultimately responsible for what students actually learn, and the broad inclusive aspects must give way to context-specific information in the classroom. However, the ACM could aid teachers in the realisation of progressive and inclusive programs by implying a strong sense of progression and inclusion. At present, the aims of the ACM are certainly inclusive, but they fail to indicate meaningful progression.

4.5.2 Achievement standards

The achievement standards for secondary music are presented in Table 8, which separates and compares individual sentences to establish the presence of progression. There are few examples of an increase in sophistication of understanding between these achievement standards. In the first paragraph, the most obvious difference is the inclusion of score and performance analysis by the end of Year 10. If it were not for the reference to scores, then I suggest that the remaining content of the first paragraph for both bands is entirely interchangeable. As already noted in this chapter, the introduction of score analysis is not inclusive, although this could be rectified by a slight change of terminology. The second paragraphs are also mostly interchangeable, although there are several points where progression appears to be implied. For example, in 9–10, it is stated that students "interpret, rehearse and perform" music in a "range of forms and styles" (n.d.-r, version 8.3), which was not included in the previous band. Students are also expected to perform with stylistic understanding in 9–10, in addition to the technical and expressive skills that are introduced in 7–8. Finally, it could be argued that there is progression in composition, as students

Year 7–8 achievement standards	Year 9–10 achievement standards
Paragraph one	
By the end of Year 8, students identify and analyse how the elements of music are used in different styles and apply this knowledge in their performances and compositions.	By the end of Year 10, students analyse different scores and performances aurally and visually.
	They evaluate the use of elements of music and defining characteristics from different musical styles.
They evaluate musical choices they and others from different cultures, times and places make to communicate meaning as performers and composers.	They use their understanding of music making in different cultures, times and places to inform and shape their interpretations, performances and compositions.
Paragraph two	
They interpret, rehearse and perform songs and instrumental pieces in unison and parts, demonstrating technical and expressive skills.	Students interpret, rehearse and perform solo and ensemble repertoire in a range of forms and styles.
	They interpret and perform music with technical control, expression and stylistic understanding.
They use aural skills, music terminology and symbols to recognise, memorise and notate features, such as melodic patterns in music they perform and compose.	They use aural skills to recognise elements of music and memorise aspects of music such as pitch and rhythm sequences.
Students manipulate the elements of music and stylistic conventions to compose music.	They use knowledge of the elements of music, style and notation to compose, document and share their music.

Table 8: Progression of achievement standards (ACARA n.d.-r, version 8.3).

compose, document and share their music in 9–10 in addition to simply composing music in 7–8. This is despite the term composing be re-contextualised specifically for the ACM to refer to any act of creating music (see Chapter Five). The ACM's inconsistent application of its own definitions is a key criticism I explore in the next chapter.

To conclude, it is worth linking my suggestions to several points of feedback from the curriculum design process. The present ACM achievement standards do little to specify a level of achievement, illustrating little progress from the drafting stage. One teacher who provided feedback to ACARA stated that the draft standards involved nothing other than students displaying "vague creativity" (2012d, p. 74), and it appears this was not addressed. However, within a student-centred framework such as the praxial approach, an external measurement of standard is actively discouraged: another teacher in the same feedback document said that the inclusion of standards, even in a vague sense such as their present iteration, brought up the "processes versus products" debate in music education (p. 74). The tension between products and processes in music illustrates just how uneasily a praxial framework fits within a predominantly product-based, standardised curriculum. This is a point of irreconcilable tension: satisfactory achievement standards would negate the praxial underpinnings of the ACM, but music's presence in the Australian Curriculum required some

sense of standard.[18] Therefore, their removal is not an option. As such, I suggest the same solution that I recommended for the aims: rather than students building on or developing their pre-existing standard, an inclusive but progressive option is to indicate increased depth of understanding through asking deeper how and why questions.

4.6 Discussion

The aims and achievement standards of the secondary ACM are an inclusive element of the curriculum. They make no references to specific musical styles or genres, and do not prioritise any particular kinds of musical engagement. The requirement for inclusion does make indicating progression difficult, and although there are attempts to address this by referring to building on or developing pre-existing skills, this is a simplistic and inadequate solution. There are also several instances where aims and achievement standards do not indicate progression at all. Both of these issues could be easily rectified by illustrating increased depth and sophistication of understanding by asking how and why questions about the existing content. In this way, there would still be no abstract statement of standard, but there would be an obvious increase in the requirements of engaging with music. This would match both requirements that the ACM sets for itself: that it is relevant to all students, and it is continuous and sequential.

The issues surrounding primary school music provide important context for the present thesis. The fact is that students do not meet the minimum standard for engagement in secondary school music. This is in part a consequence of the small percentage of total time for the year music receives in the curriculum (ACARA 2013). Generalist music teachers are commonly understood to be undertrained when it comes to music teaching, reducing their confidence to deliver the ACM (Butler 2015, pp. 31–35). The problem of teacher training is beyond the scope of the ACM itself to resolve, but it can play a role. In the curriculum development process, some secondary teachers commented on how broad and generic music curricula may seem attractive to generalist teachers because anything goes, but are in fact more difficult to deliver because they require musical understanding to interpret satisfactorily (ACARA 2012d). Therefore, it would be advisable for the ACM to provide more prescriptive guidance for music in the primary years to give generalist teachers an

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[18] All Learning Areas/subjects in the Australian Curriculum include achievement standards.

appropriate reference point. This would undermine the praxial potential of the primary ACM, but although the praxial approach can certainly be considered best practice in music education, it appears that it is not the most constructive practice for primary music in the Australian context.

In conclusion, the intentions for the aims and achievement standards in the ACM are philosophically sound, but their execution is problematic. Delving deeper into the content and structure of the ACM reveals that problems in the execution of the ACM are not isolated to aims and achievement standards. The next chapter goes into greater detail about this by analysing the content of the ACM against the praxial characteristics. It is here that inconsistencies within the ACM go beyond semantics and start to become truly problematic.

Chapter Five: Elements, knowledge and skills, and content descriptions in the ACM

5.1 Introduction

This chapter analyses the content of the ACM to ascertain whether or not it aligns with its own objectives and recommendations from music education literature. As the previous chapters illustrated, the ACM was designed to be an inclusive curriculum, relevant to all students in a multicultural society, but it struggles to articulate any meaningful sense of progression in music through its aims and achievement standards, contradicting some of the key recommendations about best practice in music education. Many of the ideas that are present in the ACM met resistance during its drafting phase, indicating significant points of tension between music teachers and curriculum writers that were not resolved. Tension is also evident in the content of the ACM, which includes the organisation of learning activities, the elements of music, viewpoints and materials, and the content descriptions. A deep understanding of the ACM's content provides context for the subsequent analysis of how some teachers have responded to the ACM and is valuable in its own right to determine whether the ACM is well-grounded in the context of music education philosophy.

I argue that the content of the ACM exhibits problematic characteristics that contradict its intentions and the recommendations of the literature. All activities in the Arts are conceptualised as *making* or *responding*, and these terms are replaced by discipline-specific terminology within individual subjects. In music, these specific terms are *perform*, *compose*, and *listen*. Despite ACARA's attempts to re-define these terms for the ACM, in their implementation they can carry connotations towards the dominant cultural paradigm of Western music traditions, which can present challenges for the ACM's relevance in a culturally diverse society. Furthermore, the ACM's usage of the terms *perform*, *compose*, and *listen* is inconsistent with its newly-contextualised definitions of the terms, further compromising its own intentions. Indeed, the use of language in the ACM can be seen as a catalyst for debate amongst curriculum designers and teachers, as seen in the development documents (see Chapter Three). Inconsistency is also exhibited in the content descriptions, which emphasise different ways of engaging with music, but often fail to represent their intended focus. The examples of knowledge and skills within the ACM are a prescriptive anomaly within an otherwise general document, again perpetuating in a seemingly unaware

and unquestioning manner the dominant Western musical paradigm (Drummond 2010, p. 117, Hess 2018, p. 129) while also appearing unrealistic given the time allocated to music study. I argue that knowledge and skills are indicative of tensions between the inclusive models of curriculum championed by contemporary music education literature and the prescriptive nature of a national curriculum.

I have ordered this chapter hierarchically, starting with the least specific organisational criteria. I start with an analysis of the terms *making* and *responding*, and their realisation as *performing*, *composing*, and *listening* in music. I then consider knowledge and skills: the elements of music, viewpoints (or contexts) of musical study, the types of music to be studied, and the materials used in music learning. I introduce the idea of *rogue terminology*, or pre-existing language and terms that were not appropriately contextualised for the ACM, in this section. The second half of the chapter deals with the content descriptions and elaborations, considering each of the seven description categories against the praxial characteristics. To conclude, I provide practical suggestions on how the ACM could be amended to retain its national curriculum requirements while also remaining consistent and philosophically sound.

5.2 Making and responding in music

The broadest description of knowledge in the Arts is that of *making* and *responding*, and these two concepts are referred to as being interrelated and interdependent (ACARA n.d.-o, version 8.3). They are used when describing engagement with the Arts as a whole and are also used to organise content descriptions. They were poorly received by teachers in the Arts drafts and have since been elaborated upon within each individual subject. Within the Arts, making and responding are defined as follows:

> Making includes learning about and using knowledge, skills, processes, materials and technologies to explore arts [practices] and make artworks that communicate ideas and intentions.

> Responding includes exploring, responding to, analysing and interpreting artworks (ACARA n.d.-o, version 8.3).

The interrelation of these two ideas is well situated within the praxial framework, capturing the integration of *techne*, *theoria*, and *poiesis* that is the foundation of the sixth characteristic: a praxial curriculum should give equal emphasis to contextually-relevant

practice, theory and analysis.[1] Furthermore, the definition of making also supports the suggestion made by the *National Review* that processes and products should be considered in equal measure (Department of Education, Science and Training 2005, p. 83).[2] However, the realisation of making and responding within the ACM does raise concerns.

In the ACM, both the making of and responding to music are expanded upon through the use of music-specific terminology. Making receives the most substantial expansion of the two, and is defined as:

> …active listening, imitating, improvising, composing, arranging, conducting, singing, playing, comparing and contrasting, refining, interpreting, recording and notating, practising, rehearsing, presenting and performing (ACARA n.d.-w, version 8.3).

This is a comprehensive list of activities that serves as an example of the music-specific terminology that feedback respondents identified as missing from the curriculum drafts, although the inclusion of active listening confuses the intention of the category, as listening is a major characteristic of responding.[3] I suggest that the inclusion of active listening is an attempt to highlight the proposed interrelations between making and responding in music. This list of making activities is also the last time that they are written in full within the ACM. Although individual activities are referred to in the content descriptions, some are referred to more than others, which creates a hierarchy.[4] Therefore, while the overall range of making activities is comprehensive, the actual representation of such processes within the ACM is problematic.

It is a similar situation for responding in music, although there are fewer activities specified. Responding in music is defined as:

> …students being audience members listening to, enjoying, reflecting on, analysing, appreciating and evaluating their own and others' musical works (ACARA n.d.-w, version 8.3).

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[1] See praxial characteristics, Chapter Two.
[2] The national review suggested the following: "In broad terms, student learning in music is categorised under two general headings:
- *Music practice* (making music, exploring and developing music ideas, processes, conventions, composing and performing music)
- *Aesthetic understanding* (listening and responding to music, and understanding music's social, cultural and economic significance)

These broad categorisations are not hierarchical but interconnected and learning in one aspect relies on learning in the other" (Department of Education, Science and Training 2005, p. 83, emphasis in original).
[3] For feedback about the drafts of the ACM, see Chapter Three.
[4] See the explanation of the null curriculum, Chapter Two.

The use of the term *musical work* (see Chapter Two) is an example of *rogue terminology* that will be explored later in the chapter. Nonetheless, the activities and processes described are well considered and align with the praxial framework. Of particular note is the provision for students to enjoy their own music and the music of others—a type of engagement with music that is commonly used, but is rarely included in school curricula because listening to music aesthetically has been institutionalised. According to Elliott and Silverman (2014) "The elements-based work-concept of music…institutionalized [sic] the false but widespread assumption that 'musical meaning' resides inside musical form and exists only for listeners' intellectual contemplation, not *felt* enjoyment" (p. 68, emphasis in original). The ACM's attempts to account for enjoyment marks an effort to make music education relevant for all students.

There are few issues with the activities defined within making and responding in music. Those that are listed are inclusive of a variety of genres, and there is no indication that other kinds of context-specific activities could not be included. However, their subsequent use within the ACM is problematic, due to their simplification in music to the three categories of *performing*, *composing*, and *listening*. This undermines the earlier statement that making and responding are interrelated and interdependent because they are now specifically organised into separate categories with defined boundaries.

5.2.1 Performing, composing, and listening

Contradicting the efforts of the ACM's designers, one of the issues that draft feedback respondents identified was that subject-specific knowledge was being simplistically organised into the broad catch-all definitions of making and responding. Although these definitions have since been elaborated on within each subject, the elaborations are exceptionally long and unwieldy. In music, a compromise between the two approaches— broad, and specific—resulted in musical skills, techniques, and processes being articulated as *performing*, *composing*, and *listening* (ACARA n.d.-w, version 8.3).[5] Although this may initially seem like a reasonable approach to address the demands of music teachers, the unreflective and casual use of existing music terminology can cause problems due to the

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[5] There is no set order to these terms, although performing is usually listed first, subtly prioritising it within the ACM.

new definitions required to encompass all making and responding activities, particularly in regard to composition.

Performing is not particularly far removed from its definition as "[presenting] a form of entertainment to an audience," or to "entertain an audience, typically by acting, singing, or dancing on stage" (in the *Oxford Dictionary of English* 2010). In the ACM, performance is defined specifically for a music context, with reference to instruments and singing, solo or ensemble performance, and the range of potential audiences:

> Performing involves playing instruments, singing or manipulating sound using technology, either as an individual or ensemble member. This includes learning instrumental pieces, accompaniments, and works composed by self and others. Audiences can include the teacher, peers in class, the wider school community and public audiences (ACARA n.d.-w, version 8.3).

When compared to the tasks defined under making, all activities that refer to conventional performance activities are mentioned in performing, either directly or by implication. Playing instruments, singing, and performing are all directly referred to, and practising and rehearsing are inferred by the statement "this includes learning" (n.d.-w, version 8.3), which in turn implies refining. There is no reference to musical improvisation, and although improvisation is addressed through composition, performance is a component of improvisation that should also be addressed. The statement that students learn music by *others* also implies interpretation. Therefore, of the three skills, techniques, and processes, performing is the simplest to comprehend.

The treatment of composition is problematic. Composition is defined as to "write or create (a work of art, especially music or poetry)" (in the *Oxford Dictionary of English* 2010). Although the dictionary refers to art forms outside of music, the definition carries implications towards a Eurocentric reading of the term because of the prescription that compositions are written and its reference to the work concept of music. In comparison with its dictionary definition, composition within the ACM fits more comfortably within a praxial context:

> Composing is a broad term for creating original music. In the classroom, this involves improvising, organising musical ideas, creating accompaniment patterns, and arranging and writing original works, either individually or collaboratively (ACARA n.d.-w, version 8.3).

In addition to arranging and writing music, there are a range of activities that do not require notation, or a traditional understanding of composition, contained within the ACM

definition. Improvisation is a key example that is included. However, *composition* does not seem to engage with recording music at all, which is undoubtedly a creative activity and is the dominant method of dissemination for popular music. I question the appropriateness of composition to refer to such disparate tasks, particularly when considering teachers' preference for recognisable terminology. Feedback respondents stated that musical terms are "value-laden," carrying connotations towards specific musical attitudes (ACARA 2012d, pp. 73–74). If composition is commonly understood to mean writing down works of music, then teachers may interpret it in such a way. Therefore, the intention of ACARA to broaden the definition of composition may not be realised effectively. This then marginalises the activities that are not traditionally associated with composition. In turn, this also raises questions about music teacher training, which will be explored in relation to the teacher interviews in Chapter Eight. The ACM's approach to composition can be seen as limiting as it is inappropriate in the context of many musical styles. Given the inclusive intentions of the ACM, a more considered approach to "creating original music" (n.d.-w, version 8.3) would be more effective.

Listening also requires consideration, although this is partly due to the limited nature of its dictionary definition: to "give one's attention to sound" (in the *Oxford Dictionary of English* 2010). In the ACM, listening is defined as "the process through which music is experienced and learnt" (ACARA n.d.-w, version 8.3). Although this may initially seem like a simplistic definition, there is some detail implied through the terms *experienced* and *learnt*. Experiencing music is the overarching term, as it implies everything that one can do with it, including simply enjoying it. Learning music implies the more formal activities of listening to, reflecting on, analysing, and appreciating music. To use the terminology from *making*, this is active listening. Given the status of music as an aurally-based art form, the ability to listen is ultimately what allows anyone to engage with it, and it is therefore the interface through which students engage with the making activities as well. Of the skills, techniques, and processes within the ACM, listening can be considered central.

If composition—the most problematic term—is not used, would another term suffice? *Creating* was suggested in the feedback process, but this then implies that performance-based activities are not creative, which is problematic (Kokotsaki and Newton 2015, p. 493,

ACARA 2012d, p. 71).[6] As evidenced through the design process, leaving these definitions abstract at making and responding would also be inadequate. Another solution would be to update the ACM to reflect the 2014 edition of *Music Matters* and utilise the terms *musicing* and *listening* (Elliott and Silverman, p. 16). *Musicking* (with a k), as a contraction of music making, was originally coined by Christopher Small (1998) and is a definition that can encompass all music making activities, presenting a concise solution, albeit awkwardly spelled: "[Musicking] is to take part, in any capacity, in a musical performance, whether by performing, by listening, by rehearsing or practicing, by providing material for performance (what is called composing), or by dancing" (p. 9). Elliott and Silverman adapted this term (removal of k), which could replace performing and composing. There is little to separate the definition of listening in both the ACM and in a praxial sense, so the implementation of such a term would not prove problematic. The overall benefit of this approach would be the use of unique terminology that does not carry connotations towards musical traditions, but is still specific to music and highlights its status as an aural art form. This would allow the term to encompass all making activities without being affected by teachers' pre-existing understanding. However, such a drastic change would quite possibly face resistance from music teachers given their apparent preference for pre-existing and value-laden terminology.

5.3 Knowledge and skills

The content of the ACM is initially categorised as knowledge and skills before it is re-articulated in content descriptions. There are several examples of knowledge and skills contained within the ACM, with some referred to constantly throughout the document, and others addressed only once or twice. This subtly places value on certain skills and knowledge, which can privilege certain ways of approaching music. Of particular note are the elements of music, which are a central organising idea of the ACM. The most prescriptive aspects of the ACM are the elaborations of the elements of music, all of which come from Western musical traditions. Other examples of ACM content are the statements of

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[6] *Creating* was referred to in relation to concerns about *making*. In this particular discussion, the Music Council of Australia suggested that creating could replace making (ACARA 2012d, p. 71), which would do nothing to imply specificity in music. See also Odena (2012).

viewpoints in music, the types of music that students engage with, and the materials that they use.

5.3.1 Elements of music

The concept of musical elements in an educational setting stems from the comprehensive musicianship framework that was adopted by the New South Wales curriculum in the 1980s (Department of Education, Science and Training 2005, p. 17). By contrast, Elliott and Silverman suggest that music should not be conceptualised through universal elements (2014, pp. 195–203). However, as I suggested in Chapter Two, it is claims of universality that are problematic and not the suggested elements themselves: as long as they are applied with an awareness of cultural differences, musical elements can be a useful pedagogical tool. As it stands, the elements of music are present within the ACM, and so must be considered. And despite Elliott and Silverman's opposition to them, it does appear that they have some benefit for practising music teachers (see Chapter Eight) which raises questions about the practicality of their removal. Therefore, given their significance in the ACM, the elements of music will be considered in detail throughout the remainder of this chapter.

The elements of music within the ACM are rhythm, pitch, dynamics and expression, form and structure, timbre, and texture (ACARA n.d.-w, version 8.3). They are positioned as being essential to all types of music and musical engagement: "the elements of music work together to underpin all musical activity" (n.d.-w). Therefore, the ACM presents them as being universal and at this level of abstraction this is not necessarily problematic. The ACM does not state that all musical elements need to be present in every piece of music, just that they work together. An example from within the interview sample indicates how this can work: the teacher sets an assignment and encourages students to consider each musical element in relation to a piece of music (Alice 2017). This piece of music can come from any style, and it does not matter if an element is not present within a particular style—it is just considered. When an approach like this is taken, there appears to be little harm in the use of musical elements. However, the realisation of musical elements, particularly in relation to the knowledge and skills that students develop, is problematic because it draws solely upon Western examples such as specific time signatures and Western harmonic practices (see Table 9).

Musical element	Years 7–8	Years 9–10
Rhythm	Time signature, semiquaver subdivisions, dotted notes, minim and semibreve rests, quaver rests, dotted crotchet rest.	Regular and irregular time signature and beat subdivisions: triplets and duplets, further time signature. Complex metres, required note groupings: 5/8, 7/8, 9/8.
	Rhythmic devices such as anacrusis, syncopation, ties and pause	Rhythmic devices including syncopation, rhythmic motif, rhythmic augmentation and diminution.
Pitch	Melodic sequences based upon pentatonic, major and minor scales; key and key signatures; major and minor chords and primary triads (I, IV, V) in simple chord progressions; reading treble and bass clefs and ledger lines.	Melodies and chords based on major, minor and modal scales; tonal centres; modulation; consonance and dissonance; chromaticism; pitch devices including riff, ostinato and pedal note.
Dynamics and expression	Dynamic gradations including *mp* and *mf*; articulations relevant to style, for example, glissando, slide, slap, melismatic phrasing.	Dynamic gradations; expressive devices and articulations relevant to style such as rubato, ornamentation, terraced dynamics, pitch bending, vibrato, oscillation, filters and pedals.
Form and structure	Repetition and contrast; call and response; digital sequences; theme and variation; 12 bar blues; popular song structures including verse, chorus, bridge, middle 8, intro and outro.	Structure appropriate to styles and repertoire studied including theme, hook, motivic development, head, sonata form, interlude and improvisation.
Timbre	Recognising instrumental types and groups; voice types; acoustic and electronic sound.	Identifying instruments and voice types by name and method of sound production; use of mutes, pedals, harmonics, digitally manipulated sound, distortion and techniques appropriate to style.
Texture	Identifying layers of sound and their role (accompaniment or melody); unison, homophonic (melody with chords), polyphonic (two or more independent layers played simultaneously).	Horizontal and vertical layers appropriate to styles and repertoire studied; homophonic and polyphonic writing, countermelody and white noise.
Skills (including aural skills)	Recognising rhythmic patterns and beat groupings. Discriminating between pitches, recognising intervals, and familiar chord progressions. Identifying and notating metre and rhythmic groupings. Aurally identifying layers within a texture. Imitating simple melodies and rhythms using voice and instruments.	Singing and playing music in two or more parts in a range of styles.
	Performing with expression and technical control, correct posture and safety. Understanding their role within an ensemble, balancing and controlling tone and volume. Using technology as a tool for music learning and to record their music.	Performing with expression and technical control and an awareness of ensemble.
	Holding and playing instruments and using their voices safely and correctly.	

Table 9: Examples of knowledge and skills in music (ACARA n.d.-f, version 8.3).

Each ACM band prescribes examples of knowledge and skills that are considered level-appropriate. The knowledge portion is the most prescriptive aspect of the ACM and is structured through the elements of music. As this thesis is concerned with secondary music, the knowledge and skills for Years 7–8 and Years 9–10 are presented in Table 9. The elements of music found in the ACM are limited to Western styles and concepts of music, and the ACM does not acknowledge any specific examples from the music of other cultures.[7] To be fair, there is nothing that says that non-Western examples cannot be used: there are several instances that specify that the elements are to be explored in a manner that is appropriate to the styles that are to be studied, which is indicative of at least an attempt to acknowledge the music of other cultures.[8] However, by only using examples from Western musical traditions, the ACM perpetuates underlying and implicit cultural biases and positions Western music centrally in the discourse, when in fact all types of music should be considered equally (see null curriculum, Chapter Two).

There are further challenges when the amount of content is considered. Thus far in the ACM, all definitions and statements have been generic and have not dealt with any specific examples. This changes here: 5/8 is a specific time signature, *sonata form* is a specific structure, and *glissandi*, *slides*, and *slaps* are specific examples of expressive techniques (ACARA n.d.-r, version 8.3). There is a lot of content, either specified or implied, to elaborate on the elements of music, and several teachers within the interview sample indicated that meeting these prescriptive requirements within a generic document was difficult (Alice 2017, Chris et al. 2018). However, this was far from a unanimous view, and as such will be explored in greater detail in Chapters Seven and Eight. The most notable feature relevant to the elements of music at this juncture is how prescriptive the ACM becomes when describing them.

There are no easy solutions to these issues within the ACM, because of the reality of the legacy of music teaching in Australia. The most notable advocate for musical elements has been the New South Wales curriculum, which has utilised them since the 1980s.[9] In some ways, they are an ingrained aspect of music curricula in this country. Another issue is that

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[7] The ACM actively avoids referring to any specific musical styles (aside from Indigenous Australian music and Asian music), so these examples of skills and knowledge are the only indication of specific musical skills.
[8] See the Year 9–10 elaborations in Table 9.
[9] See Chapter Two.

most secondary music teachers are trained through a specialised degree in music prior to their teacher training. Music degrees are often centred on Western music, because that is what has traditionally been taught in universities and conservatoria. I have no doubt that the genre-specific terminology present in the examples of knowledge and skills is what some teachers were calling for when recommending recognisable music terminology during the curriculum design process. Therefore, these Western elements are culturally ingrained in many music teachers and their overarching concept of music. A potential workaround could be to refer to the elements elaborated upon in the ACM as an indicative list of musical elements, where teachers are encouraged to replace the examples suggested with stylistically-appropriate alternatives. Although this alternative would not change the fact that the only specific examples in the ACM are from Western styles, it would indicate that they are just examples and can be reconsidered. In this way, the concept of the elements would be in greater overall harmony with the inclusive intentions of the ACM. With that said, an even more (theoretically) appropriate alternative would be to *not* elaborate on the elements of music, leaving any expression of their realisation to teachers. However, this approach would be less helpful to the teachers from a practical perspective.

5.3.2 Viewpoints

Within the Arts, viewpoints are positions from which students can consider and contextualise the various Arts subjects (ACARA n.d.-o, version 8.3). The range of viewpoints that are included as examples within the Arts are social, cultural, and historical contexts, and a range of evaluations, such as personal, philosophical or theoretical evaluations (n.d.-o).[10] When considering music, these viewpoints are used as a tool for students to make "informed critical judgements" (n.d.-f, version 8.3) about the music to which they make and respond. This is an important position for the ACM to take and is in alignment with praxial characteristics. It clarifies that all of these viewpoints are relevant to the study of music, taking the ACM beyond the abstract study of musical products and the accumulation of

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[10] A full list of examples of viewpoints in the ACM is as follows:
- "Context, including: societal, cultural, historical
- Knowledge: elements, materials; skills, techniques, processes; forms and styles; content
- Evaluations (judgements)
- Evaluations: philosophical and ideological; theoretical, institutional, psychological; scientific" (ACARA n.d.-o, version 8.3).

musical skills, and broadening it to a wider variety of contexts. Therefore, this particular concept of viewpoints can be said to match with the praxial characteristics: no specific styles or types of engagement with music are prioritised and the overriding focus on different perspectives centralises music as a "human activity" (Elliott and Silverman 2014, pp. 86–105).

5.3.3 Types of music and *rogue terminology*

The ACM claims to support all types of music. Students are encouraged to begin studying music from "their own lives and communities" (ACARA n.d.-f, version 8.3), and then progressively learn about music from different cultures, times and places at an increasing level of complexity. This framework for learning about music seems to directly relate to Elliott and Silverman's proposal for selecting genres of music to study within a curriculum (2014, pp. 428–432). Initial readings about types of music would suggest that the ACM does not prioritise one genre or style over another, however, the presence of what I call *rogue terminology*—language that has been uncritically and inappropriately applied to the ACM context—undermines this claim somewhat.

As already noted, the ACM has adopted recognisable music terminology, but adapted some of the definitions to be more inclusive. Any of these terms that have been adapted are included in the glossary of the Arts curriculum, with clear definitions and implications for each Art subject wherever relevant (ACARA n.d.-j, version 8.3).[11] Despite this, there are some terms that have not been contextualised for the ACM and places music education within an aesthetic education (MEAE) paradigm. There are few examples of these terms, and the overall intention of the ACM makes them appear as oversights, but their presence is still problematic. Two key examples are the aforementioned references to *works* of music and *scores* (ACARA n.d.-r, version 8.3). According to the *Oxford Dictionary of English*, a score is a "a written representation of a musical composition showing all the vocal and instrumental parts arranged one below the other" (2010) and a work is "a literary or musical composition or other piece of art" (2010). Both of these terms are situated within the MEAE/work-concept paradigm, and while they are both examples of terms that conservatory-trained

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[11] For example, the ACM definition of *aesthetic* does not refer to aesthetic appreciation. Rather, it refers to the characteristics of an individual style.

music teachers would be familiar with, they also refer to Western musical styles more readily than other styles. Therefore, these terms would better reflect the inclusive intentions of the ACM by being re-defined along with the other terms in the Arts glossary.

5.3.4 Materials

The materials required for learning music are relatively broad and straightforward, and are initially defined as the "voice and body, instruments and other sound sources" (ACARA n.d.-f, version 8.3). Other materials are also identified, including practicalities such as the space required for music lessons to occur. This is the maximum extent to which materials for music education are considered within the ACM: it is an insubstantial section which does not address the budgeting constraints that many schools face when implementing music and how this affects the materials they can use. However, by listing voice and body as materials, the ACM does validate voice and body percussion programs, an example of which was used by the interviewed teacher Denise in her formative years (see Chapter Six). Therefore, while they are insubstantial, the materials listed are also inclusive.

In combination, the organisation of musical knowledge and skills—particularly the viewpoints, types of music and materials—can be considered praxially-influenced. However, despite the clear intention for the ACM to be relevant to all students from any background and skill level, the specific examples of knowledge and skills are altogether too prescriptive for the level of abstraction required to appropriately represent all music. Furthermore, the presence of rogue terminology highlights that the uncritical application of existing musical language can perpetuate a monocultural approach to music education, the implications of which will be explored in the following chapters (particularly Chapter Nine). To conclude the analysis of the secondary ACM, I explore the interactions between the different aspects of its content through the content descriptions and elaborations—arguably the component of the ACM of most relevance to teachers.

5.4 Content descriptions and elaborations

The content descriptions are of fundamental importance to this analysis, because they are used by teachers to organise the educational delivery of the ACM. Across the Arts, there are

seven categories of content description, which are then articulated for each band within each subject. These seven description categories are:

1. Exploring ideas and improvising with ways to represent ideas (making)

2. Manipulating and applying the elements/concepts with intent (making)

3. Developing and refining understanding of skills and techniques (making)

4. Structuring and organising ideas into form (making)

5. Sharing artworks through performance, presentation and display (making)

6. Analysing and reflecting upon intentions (responding)

7. Responding to and interpreting artworks (responding) (ACARA n.d.-x, version 8.3).[12]

Five of the categories are related to making, while two are related to responding.[13] While this relationship of making and responding does not necessarily illustrate the intended ratio of tasks associated with each, it does imply that there is less scope to engage in responding to the Arts and that it is secondary to making. Contemporary understandings of the praxial approach indicate that responding activities are an integral component of engaging with any art form, and so practical activities and responding activities cannot be so easily separated (Elliott and Silverman 2014, pp. 98–105). To further complicate the issue of making and responding, there is also a dualistic separation of artistic intentions and artistic products implied by the two responding content description categories. If the broad scope of each of the responding categories is to be kept, then perhaps it would be advantageous to couple them with a statement about how they could be integrated amongst all learning activities.

The categories listed above are generic and have been adapted into each subject using specific terminology. They are also referred to in relation to the different bands of schooling, rather than at an overall subject-wide level. However, the framing of each category implies certain kinds of subject-specific activities. In music, I have defined these as:

1. Improvising

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[12] In the primary years, these seven categories are condensed into four. These are:
1. Exploring ideas and experimenting with ways to represent ideas
2. Developing understanding of [practices]
3. Sharing artworks through performance, presentation or display
4. Responding to and interpreting artworks (ACARA n.d.-x, version 8.3).
[13] In the 2012 Arts Curriculum Draft, there were six making content descriptions and three responding content descriptions (ACARA 2012d).

2. Theory and aural training

3. Practising

4. Composing

5. Performing

6. Musical analysis

7. Contextual analysis

The actual realisation of these content descriptions in context is not as clearly defined as this list, but these simplified representations give an indication of how the categories are intended to be implemented within secondary music subjects.

To explore these content descriptions, I have analysed each description category against its simplified musical equivalent, as well as its realisation for Years 7–8 and 9–10 within the ACM. When analysing the specific descriptions, I have also considered the sense of progression implied by the language used. This aligns the analysis within this chapter to that of the previous chapter. Overall, there is a limited sense of progression through the content descriptions, and this is coupled with an inconsistency between them, as certain activities or concepts are introduced within one category but manifest themselves in the later band within a different category. As a final point of analysis, I have also explored the elaborations of each content description, because these are used to inform teachers about how to implement the content. I consider their potential for inclusivity: do they refer to any specific styles of music?

5.4.1 Description category 1: Exploring ideas and improvising with ways to represent ideas (improvising)

Table 10 illustrates the progression of description category 1, which appears to refer to musical improvisation. The increase in words between the Years 7–8 and 9–10 descriptions visually suggests a significant increase in complexity, implying progression. However, there is a lack of consistency and clarity between the two bands. In Years 7–8, students experiment with texture and timbre, while in Years 9–10, they use aural recognition of texture, dynamics, and expression to enable manipulation of every other element of music, and they improvise and arrange—both aspects of the ACM definition of composition—to explore

Exploring ideas and improvising with ways to represent ideas			
Year 7–8 content description	**Year 7–8 elaborations**	**Year 9–10 content description**	**Year 9–10 elaborations**
Experiment with texture and timbre in sound sources using aural skills (ACAMUM092).	Experimenting with and transcribing pitch contour, beat patterns and rhythm sequences.	Improvise and arrange music, using aural recognition of texture, dynamics and expression to manipulate the elements of music to explore personal style in composition and performance (ACAMUM099).	Using aural skills and memory to identify, sing and notate pitch and rhythm patterns, intervals and familiar chord changes.
	Singing and recognising intervals and melodic patterns to extend music ideas in improvisation and composition.		Improvising with instrumentation, dynamics and expressive techniques to develop the texture of a composition.
	Considering viewpoints—forms and elements: For example—How have the elements of music and instruments ben used in this piece?.		Experimenting with layering of sound to develop a personal style in improvisation and composition.
	Identifying qualities of chords in isolation and experimenting with combinations to create chord progressions.		Applying an aural understanding of key and tonality when improvising and composing.
	Manipulating sound quality by exploring how sounds are produced by different instruments and voice types, for example, manipulating dynamics and timbre in voice or acoustic or digital instruments.		Exploring the use of elements of music in different music styles, including those from other cultures and times, as a stimulus for improvisation.
	Experimenting with texture by layering sound in different ways in composition, for example, by using looping software.		
	Using aural skills to evaluate and improve interpretation of music they read and perform.		

Table 10: Content descriptions and elaborations for description category 1 (ACARA n.d.-r, version 8.3).

"personal style in composition and performance" (ACARA n.d.-r, version 8.3). Therefore, there is no obvious development of improvisation skills between the bands. Despite this, there is a sense of progression buried within this description category: in Years 7–8, the improvisation of students is limited to texture and timbre—a discrete range of variables—while in Years 9–10, they actively improvise with all musical elements to create new music. This description category suffers from attempting to cover too much with unclear

terminology: improvising is used to suggest experimentation with elements of music in 7–8, while it is used as a musical activity in its own right in 9–10. However, using improvisation to support the development of composition skills is problematic, as it implies that improvising is subsidiary to composing despite the "different intelligences" that different types of engagement with music call upon (Reimer 2003, p. 116). Therefore, despite the apparent focus on improvisation in this category, its realisation varies between experimenting with elements and improvising to compose new music.

The elaborations of these content descriptions mostly avoid any specific kinds of music. The elaborations talk to how students can "[improvise] with instrumentation, dynamics and expressive techniques to develop the texture of a composition" (n.d.-r, version 8.3), which does not immediately prioritise any particular style of music, or how students can "[explore] the use of elements of music in…[music] from other cultures and times..." (n.d.-r), which specifically encourages an inclusive approach to music education. However, there are several exceptions: in Years 7–8, an elaboration is for students to "[identify] qualities of chords in isolation and [experiment] with combinations to create chord progressions" (n.d.-r) and in Years 9–10 there are two elaborations that refer to intervals, chords, key and tonality. This implies Western concepts of tonality, although it is also worth mentioning that these are simply examples, not required tasks. Furthermore, as far as Western concepts of tonality go, they are common to folk, classical, and popular styles.

5.4.2 Description category 2: Manipulating and applying the elements/concepts with intent (theory and aural training)[14]

Although I have attributed this category (Table 11) to theory and aural training, it is the most ambiguous content description category. As all making in music will result in students manipulating and applying the elements of music in some way, this category could be applied to virtually any musical task. Therefore, the key term in the description is *intent*: students engaging with contextually-appropriate activities and understanding why they are doing so. This contrasts purely mechanical practice or purely theoretical analysis without recourse to the other type of engagement or to context.[15] Understanding the intention

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[14] Formal *music theory* is a problematic frame of reference that will be examined in the Discussion.
[15] This refers back to the definition of praxis: the integration of *theoria* and *techne* in relation to context (Elliott and Silverman 2014, pp. 43–51).

Manipulating and applying the elements/concepts with intent			
Year 7–8 content description	Year 7–8 elaborations	Year 9–10 content description	Year 9–10 elaborations
Develop musical ideas, such as mood, by improvising, combining and manipulating the elements of music (ACAMUM093).	Using technology to manipulate specific elements such as pitch and timbre to create intended effects in composition or performance.	Manipulate combinations of the elements of music in a range of styles, using technology and notation (ACAMUM100).	Manipulating sound sources and technology to suggest or replicate style.
	Manipulating their voices through timbre and expressive techniques to convey intended style.		Experimenting with and comparing how elements of music are used to communicate musical intentions in traditional, digital and graphic scores from different styles.
	Considering viewpoints—meanings and interpretations: For example—Why does the same piece sound different when different musicians play it?		Considering viewpoints—meanings and interpretations: For example—How do changes in instrumentation and orchestration affect the interpretation of this piece?
	Experimenting with technology to sequence and combine ideas to enhance intentions in compositions and performances.		Creating symbols and using varied traditional and invented notation and technology to communicate how they used the elements of music in composition.
	Listening to and interpreting different types of score conventions from different styles and traditions to develop their own style.		
	Experimenting with different types of notation to communicate and record ideas.		

Table 11: Content descriptions and elaborations for description category 2 (ACARA n.d.-r, version 8.3).

behind how and why things occur in different musical styles is at the root of the praxial approach, and although *theory* and *aural training* are commonly associated with the formal study of Western music, both terms are frequently referred to in the ACM and are the best fit for the overarching description category.

The descriptions themselves do not necessarily denote theory or aural training. In fact, the Year 7–8 description integrates improvisation and seems to be a better fit for the

improvisation description category (n.d.-r, version 8.3, see above). The Year 9–10 description is more focused on composition, with students using technology and notation to manipulate combinations of musical elements in different styles (n.d.-r).[16] If the implied progression from improvisation to notation is intentional, then it is also problematic: it suggests that notating music is a more advanced task than improvising, even though both require sophistication of understanding in different ways. If it is not intentional, then it is an example of poor organisation within the content descriptions. At the very least, it makes the provision of a continuous and sequential curriculum difficult to realise, given that the content descriptions within the same category appear to be unrelated.

The elaborations of these content descriptions provide the clearest indication of intention within the category. Most tasks listed as examples are written in a way that implies practising compositional skills: for example, from Years 9-10, students "[experiment] with and [compare] how elements of music are used to communicate musical intentions in traditional, digital and graphic scores from different styles" (n.d.-r, version 8.3). It appears that this category is primarily concerned with students learning the processes through which they will then compose, in the ACM sense of the term. I believe that this is adequately captured by the term *theory*, which in a praxial sense should be learned in contextually relevant situations to inform students' creativity (Elliott and Silverman 2014, pp. 44–47). While these elaborations provide the clearest indication of the focus of their descriptions, they continue to use the term *score* to refer to music notation, which occurs twice across the two bands and is inappropriate when considering the range of musical styles the ACM represents.

5.4.3 Description category 3: Developing and refining understanding of skills and techniques (practising)

In music, developing and refining understanding easily equates to practising or rehearsing, making this description category the most straightforward (see Table 12). There are some

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[16] Alice explained how she bypassed the use of notation in her school by using technology (Alice 2017, see Chapters Six and Seven). This is another potential reading of the 9–10 content description, although I do not believe that implying technology as an alternative to notation was the intention—if it were, the description would have stated "technology *or* notation." There is tension in the provision of notation in the ACM: two concurrent sentences in the rationale state that "Learning in Music [sic] is aurally based and can be understood without any recourse to notation. Learning to read and write music in traditional and graphic forms enables students to access a wide range of music as independent learners" (ACARA n.d.-u, version 8.3).

Developing and refining understanding of skills and techniques			
Year 7–8 content description	**Year 7–8 elaborations**	**Year 9–10 content description**	**Year 9–10 elaborations**
Practise and rehearse a variety of music, including Australian music to develop technical and expressive skills (ACAMUM094).	Exploring and manipulating the elements of music within given parameters to create new music, and reflecting upon musical ideas used by Australian composers, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists.	Practise and rehearse to refine a variety of performance repertoire with increasing technical and interpretative skill (ACAMUM101).	Rehearsing solo and ensemble repertoire to develop technical skill and musical sensitivity.
	Considering viewpoints—societies, cultures and histories: For example—What is the social context of this piece and for whom would it be performed? What is the cultural context of this piece and what does it signify? What instruments and other features of the music indicate it is from a particular time and place?		Rehearsing and refining solo and ensemble repertoire with an increasing stylistic understanding.
	Rehearsing a range of music in solo and ensemble activities for performance to a variety of audiences.		Considering viewpoints—cultures and histories: For example—How are the elements of music used in this piece to convey a cultural identity? What historical forces and influences are evident in this work?
	Improvising, practising and rehearsing a range of music expressively and with attention to technique.		Working collaboratively to develop ensemble skills and an understanding of the role of each member of the ensemble in a performance.
	Considering and investigating techniques for stylistic features when rehearsing.		Recording and evaluating performances using digital technologies, for example, listening to a recording of their own performances and identifying areas for improvement.
	Practising interpretation of notation in a range of known and unknown repertoire.		

Table 12: Content descriptions and elaborations for description category 3 (ACARA n.d.-r, version 8.3).

issues though: "developing and refining understanding of skills and techniques" (ACARA n.d.-r, version 8.3) could just as easily refer to a composer practising their skills through

compositional exercises, but composition is not referred to by the individual descriptions, which are both focused on practising to develop performance skills. Therefore, the ACM presents a limited understanding of practising.

The descriptions indicate a slight difference in terminology between the bands without actually indicating progression. In Years 7–8, students practise "developing technical and expressive skills" (n.d.-r, version 8.3) while in Years 9–10, they practise with "increasing technical and interpretative skill" (n.d.-r). The distinction between expressive skills and interpretative skills is unclear. This lack of clarity is compounded by the fact that students are encouraged to practise the vague category of Australian music in Years 7–8, but there is no mention of Australian music in Years 9–10. This could have been a prime opportunity to elaborate on the Indigenous Priority in detail, rather than simply listing it as in the 7–8 elaborations. Defining Australian music so vaguely and then removing it from study by more mature students seems counterintuitive at best, and counterproductive at worst.

Despite the limited treatment of the Indigenous Priority, the elaborations for these descriptions illustrate a sophisticated concept of practising. The tasks associated with practising display a surprising depth: students are encouraged to consider the contexts of their repertoire, what is considered appropriate within different musical styles, and to work on their interpretive skills rather than simply developing technical ability on their instruments (n.d.-r, version 8.3). It is in these conventional types of tasks that *viewpoints* become valuable, as they encourage students to integrate aspects of musicology, and potentially theory, in everything that they do. The integration of practice, theory, and context is at the heart of the praxial philosophy. Therefore, the ACM's concept of practising (in a performative sense), as expressed through the elaborations, aligns with contemporary approaches to best practice.

5.4.4 Description category 4: Structuring and organising ideas into form (composition)

As seen in Table 13, structuring and organising ideas into form clearly deals with musical composition, and the descriptions within this category are explicitly related to this. They also serve as examples of progression within the secondary music content descriptions: in Years 7–8, students are simply asked to structure compositions by using the elements of music and notation, while in Years 9–10, they are intended to plan their compositions, organise them

with a contextual understanding of the style they are working within, and engage with the Indigenous Priority (n.d.-r, version 8.3). This indicates an increased sophistication of engagement with composition, but despite the promise of these descriptions, the elaborations illustrate inconsistencies in how the ACM uses composition, undermining ACARA's attempt to re-define the term.

The elaborations refer to students composing (writing down) new pieces of music, or arranging pre-existing music into different styles (ACARA n.d.-r, version 8.3).[17] They do not reference improvisation or creating accompaniment figures, both of which are included within the definition of composition, or recording, which is not referred to by composition at all. The lack of clarity and consistency means that these activities—particularly improvisation—are undermined, and they are not privileged within school music education to begin with (Department of Education, Science and Training 2005, p. xix).[18] Further issues arise when considering the persistent references to *works* of music (ACARA n.d.-r). Inconsistencies in composition severely impact the inclusivity of the ACM and are untenable in both praxial and synergistic frameworks. They position the ACM's concept of composition within the tradition of Western art music. After the lengths that the curriculum writers went to in defining composition for the ACM, this appears to be a retrograde step that entirely negates the first praxial characteristic.

The first explicit reference to the Indigenous Priority in the descriptions themselves occurs in this category. However, its inclusion lacks consideration and detail. Within the description for Years 9–10, students are encouraged to "draw upon Australian music by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists" (n.d.-r, version 8.3), implying that students should appropriate Indigenous Australian music rather than understand it. There are two Indigenous-focused elaborations, which provide some further depth but also raise further problems:

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[17] In Years 7–8, students "[arrange] a familiar piece into a different musical style by manipulating the elements of music;" or they "[create] an arrangement of a known melody" (ACARA n.d.-r, version 8.3). In Years 9–10, students "[compose] and [arrange] music using the elements of music to communicate style and genre…" (n.d.-r).

[18] Recommended actions for improving music curricula include "targeting specific priority needs identified by this Review: music technology, Indigenous music, gifted and talented students, creativity, composition, *improvisation* and inclusive repertoire" (Department of Education, Science and Training 2005, p. xix, emphasis added).

Structuring and organising ideas into form			
Year 7–8 content description	Year 7–8 elaborations	Year 9–10 content description	Year 9–10 elaboration
Structure compositions by combining and manipulating the elements of music using notation (ACAMUM095).	Combining and manipulating the elements of music to imitate a range of styles, using appropriate notation.	Plan and organise compositions with an understanding of style and convention, including drawing upon Australian music by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists (ACAMUM102).	Planning, recording and communicating ideas in different musical styles, including Australian music by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists, using specialised notation and terminology.
	Selecting, combining and manipulating sounds using technologies to create, develop and record music ideas.		Combining and manipulating the elements of music using repetition, variation and contrast to shape compositions.
	Considering viewpoints— evaluations: For example—How effectively are the expressive techniques indicated in the notation of the composition? What are the strengths of this performance or composition?		Composing and arranging music using the elements of music to communicate style and genre, and considering contemporary Australian styles and emerging genres such as Aboriginal hip hop and mash up and classical fusion of instrumentation such as symphonic orchestra and didgeridoo.
	Exploring technology as a tool for creating, notating, recording and sharing music ideas.		Exploring and manipulating combinations of electronic and acoustic sounds to create new works, using technology as a composition tool and a sound source.
	Arranging a familiar piece into a different musical style by manipulating the elements of music.		Considering viewpoints— psychology: For example— How does music used in games or film influence and stimulate an emotional response in an audience?
	Considering viewpoints—forms and elements: For example—What composition devices were used in your piece?		Experimenting with contemporary media and recording techniques to create and refine original compositions and arrangements.
	Creating an arrangement of a known melody.		
	Using style-specific notation software to record compositions.		

Table 13: Content descriptions and elaborations for description category 4 (ACARA n.d.-r, version 8.3).

1. Planning, recording and communicating ideas in different musical styles, including Australian music by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists, *using specialised notation and terminology.*

2. Composing and arranging music using the elements of music to communicate style and genre, and considering contemporary styles and emerging genres such as Aboriginal hip hop and mash up and classical fusion of instrumentation such as symphonic orchestra and didgeridoo (n.d.-r, version 8.3, emphasis added).

The first elaboration contains an explicit reference to notational styles beyond standard Western notation, which is appropriate in the context of considering "different musical styles" (n.d.-r, version 8.3). However, it is inappropriate in direct relation to Indigenous Australian musical styles, which are rarely notated traditions. The second elaboration does include some specific examples of styles students could engage with, but it appears that this is merely a list, with little indication of how or why students would engage with these styles. The consideration of the Indigenous Priority is not continuous or sequential as there are no explicit references to the Indigenous Priority within the Years 7–8 description or elaborations. Instead, there is an oblique reference to "imitating a range of styles" (n.d.-r), which again seems to imply cultural appropriation in place of any deep understanding. The challenges that the ACM faces in articulating a multicultural music education framework are clearly realised through the composition content descriptions.

The composition descriptions and elaborations are contradictory. The concept of composition used within them virtually ignores the ACM's own definition of the term, and the implementation of the Indigenous Priority lacks any real depth. Coupled with reference to *works* of music and no reference to recording music—an integral component of the creation and dissemination of popular music—these descriptions are predominantly monocultural, and within the framework of Western music are only appropriate to a limited range of styles. However, the descriptions and elaborations display the clearest indication of progression through the ACM. Composition and the Indigenous Priority are two of the key challenges identified by the teachers within the interview sample, and they will be explored in significant detail in Chapters Eight and Nine.

5.4.5 Description category 5: Sharing artworks through performance, presentation and display (performance)

Music performance (see Table 14) is a central part of the previous Australian state-based music curricula, and it remains a strong focus within the ACM. Contemporary approaches to

music education, including the praxial philosophy, look to integrate performance with other aspects of music education, because performance tasks and assessments run the risk of being arbitrarily measured against an imposed standard, such as a grade level. Therefore, it is positive that a cultural and stylistic awareness is built into the two content descriptions for secondary performance: in Years 7–8, students perform "using techniques and expression appropriate to style" (ACARA n.d.-r, version 8.3), while in Years 9–10, they attempt to "interpret the *composer's* use of elements of music" (n.d.-r, emphasis added). However, the latter description suggests that all music is composed by an individual and does not accommodate music without identified composers or with multiple composers.[19] Other traditional features of performance assessment, indicated within the elaborations as "maintaining technical control throughout the performance" (n.d.-r) or "performing with correct posture" (n.d.-r), are also included. Therefore, at an overall level, this description category is mostly well-considered, with a considerable range of contextual ideas indicated. However, as well as the issues noted above, rogue terminology permeates the elaborations, and improvisation is entirely ignored despite its relevance to the performance practice of jazz, popular music, and many non-Western musical styles.

The Years 7–8 elaborations do not contain any rogue terminology or problematic references. In Years 9–10, there are two instances of rogue terminology: reference to students performing music from *scores*, and "exploiting musical features of *works* across a range of styles and contexts in performance" (ACARA n.d.-r, version 8.3, emphasis added). In addition, the reference to "reading notation to develop interpretation" (n.d.-r) could have been problematic had it not been coupled with reference to aural skills, validating aural traditions as equivalent to notated traditions in performance. However, it is troubling that the two rogue terms are introduced in the final band of performance within the ACM: if it is an intentional language choice by the curriculum writers, it carries the implication that these terms are more sophisticated than others introduced in earlier bands. Doing so perpetuates and elevates the position of the MEAE framework, and outdated notions of serious and

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[19] By referring to music without identified composers, I am specifically focusing on the dualistic separation of performance and composition, where a performer interprets a pre-conceived composition. Improvised music certainly uses the elements of music, but the *composer* (in the ACM sense) and performer are the same person and they are creating and interpreting at the same time—there is no separation. Furthermore, music that is part of an aural tradition of learning, such as traditional and folk styles, often have no known composer.

Sharing artworks through performance, presentation and display			
Year 7–8 content description	**Year 7–8 elaborations**	**Year 9–10 content description**	**Year 9–10 elaborations**
Perform and present a range of music, using techniques and expression appropriate to style (ACAMUM096).	Using the features and performance practices to interpret a specific musical style.	Perform music applying techniques and expression to interpret the composer's use of elements of music (ACAMUM103)	Performing music from scores made by themselves and others.
	Performing with correct posture, for example, standing or sitting in a way suitable to the instrument.		Considering viewpoints—evaluations: for example—How are these two performances different? Which one was more successful with audiences and why?
	Maintaining technical control throughout the performance of a piece of music.		Exploiting musical features of works across a range of styles and contexts in performance.
	Experimenting with alternative dynamics and expression to enhance performance.		Recognising the influence of social, cultural and historical developments and incorporating these into their performance.
	Considering viewpoints—forms and elements: For example—How have the elements of music and instruments been used in this piece? What composition devices were used in your piece?		Using aural skills and reading notation to develop interpretation as they perform known and unknown repertoire in a range of styles.
	Controlling tone and volume to create a balanced sound in ensemble performance.		

Table 14: Content descriptions and elaborations for description category 5 (ACARA n.d.-r, version 8.3).

popular music, or highbrow and lowbrow music. If the language choice was unintentional, then it is a significant oversight. Either way, the use of these terms is untenable within a praxial curriculum framework.

Within the ACM, the definition of performance does not include improvisation, which overlooks the fact improvisation is often integral to performance.[20] I bring this up here because the previous description category, composition, also did not refer to any

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[20] Elliott and Silverman categorise improvisation as separate from either performance or composition (Elliott and Silverman 2014, p. 16). Reimer agrees: "The combination of original generation of musical ideas, and the simultaneity of doing so within the act of playing or singing, separates improvisation from both composition and the performance of composed music" (Reimer 2003, p. 115).

improvisation activities and improvisation is built into the ACM definition of composition. Despite improvisation seemingly receiving its own description category, it is dealt with unsatisfactorily within it, and is then entirely ignored within the content descriptions that supposedly encompass it. As this is the final making description category, it appears that improvisation is largely neglected within the content descriptions and elaborations, which is ironic given the prevalence of improvisation in all kinds of music—particularly popular music and jazz.

For the most part, performance is handled well in the descriptions and elaborations. However, the continued presence of rogue terminology, coupled with the neglect of improvisation, challenges the ability of the ACM to represent all musical styles in performance. Instead, the ACM perpetuates a dualistic separation of performer and composer, separating creative and interpretive engagement with music. Therefore, the performance content descriptions and elaborations are adequate if a performer is interpreting a pre-conceived piece of music, but do not encompass the combined creative and interpretive activities that occur in an entirely free improvised performance.

5.4.6 Description category 6: Analysing and reflecting upon intentions (musical analysis)

Description category 6 (Table 15) is the first of two *responding* description categories, and its framing as analysing and reflecting upon intentions initially implies that the intentions of composers and performers are under assessment. This is confirmed through the Year 7–8 description, which is primarily concerned with composers' intentions, expressed through their use of the elements of music, and it is extended upon in the Year 9–10 description, where it becomes notably more reflexive and is explored in relation to its influence on the students' own work (ACARA n.d.-r, version 8.3). Although progression is not indicated through increasing sophistication of similar tasks, it is inherent in the broadening of scope that exists between Years 7–8 and Years 9–10. Further analysis of the elaborations reveals that this content description aligns closely with both historical musicology and ethnomusicology, particularly in relation to the interrelation between the elements of music and the music of different cultures. This is articulated as exploring viewpoints in the elaborations. For example, the 9–10 elaboration describes the viewpoints as follows:

Analysing and reflecting upon intentions			
Year 7–8 content description	**Year 7–8 elaborations**	**Year 9–10 content descriptions**	**Year 9–10 elaborations**
Analyse composers' use of the elements of music and stylistic features when listening to and interpreting music (ACAMUR097).	Identifying elements of music aurally and then discussing how these elements, composition techniques and devices are used and manipulated to create a style.	Evaluate a range of music and compositions to inform and refine their own compositions and performances (ACAMUR104).	Analysing how the use and combination of the elements of music defines their developing personal style and how their style is influences by cultural and historical styles.
	Identifying and describing the features and performance practices that help determine a specific musical style or culture.		Listening to, analysing and comparing the performance practices of others to shape and refine their interpretation of a piece of music.
	Considering viewpoints—evaluations: For example—How effectively did the musicians use expressive techniques in their performance? What are the strengths of this performance or composition?		Comparing music from different styles to identify and describe stylistic, cultural and historical practice and inform their own composition and performance practice.
	Following scores while listening to musical works and using these as a tool for interpreting music.		Investigating why and how different traditions, styles and contexts affect the experience and interpretation of a piece of music and taking this into account when interpreting and composing music.
	Accessing and researching music through real or virtual performances to analyse performers' interpretations of composers' intentions.		Considering viewpoints—societies: For example—how is this piece typical of the social context in which it was created? cultures [sic]: How are the elements of music used in this piece to convey a cultural identity? histories [sic]: What historical forces and influences are evident in this work?
			Evaluating the use of the elements of music when listening to and interpreting music.

Table 15: Content descriptions and elaborations for description category 6 (ACARA n.d.-r, version 8.3).

Considering viewpoints—societies: For example—how is this piece typical of the social context in which it was created? *cultures [sic]: How are the elements of music used in this piece to convey a cultural identity?* histories [sic]: What historical forces and influences are evident in this work? (n.d.-r, version 8.3, emphasis added).

The content of the elaborations indicates three levels of intention within these descriptions. The first is obvious, inherent in the overall description category: analysing music to understand intentions. The second level relates to how performers interpret or realise intentions. The combination of these two intentions is concisely—albeit problematically—articulated through an elaboration from Years 7–8: "accessing and researching music through real or virtual performances to analyse performers' interpretations of composers' intentions" (n.d.-r, version 8.3). The separation is somewhat arbitrary and does not fully credit performers with creativity or intention, but it does indicate that performers have choices through their interpretations, and these choices are related to the intentions of the composer. This example also assumes that all music has a known individual composer, thereby implying a score.

Despite the acknowledgement of performers, their subservience to the intentions of composers is a concept that is prevalent in Western art music, which instantly negates concepts of inclusivity: Western art music styles often centralise the composer, presenting their vision of a composition as idealised and unrealisable, with other styles being more stylistically- or performance-based (Talbot 2000, p. 172). The third level of intention relates to societal and contextual factors that influence the stylistic intentions of musical genres— again from Years 7–8, "identifying and describing the features and performance practices that help determine a specific musical style or culture" (ACARA n.d.-r, version 8.3). There is a stark contrast between this third inclusive level of intention and the work-centric focus on composers' intentions in the first two. Therefore, the overall treatment of this description category is not praxial in nature. Inclusion is further challenged by the inherently dualistic separation of intentions, as described in this category, and the implied musical products that are explored next.

5.4.7 Description category 7: Responding to and interpreting artworks (contextual analysis)

The final description category is somewhat misleading: the category implies that students' response to and interpretation of artworks is the focus, but the music-specific descriptions indicate that students' understanding of different contexts is the focus (see Table 16). In order to explore different contexts, Years 7–8 students "identify and connect specific features and purposes of music from different eras" (ACARA n.d.-r, version 8.3), while Years

9–10 students "analyse a range of music from contemporary and past times" (n.d.-r). In terms of their content, these are some of the more easily reconcilable descriptions within the praxial framework. Despite this, there is a lack of clear progression, as both bands indicate the exact same content with slightly different terminology: the only difference between the two is the inclusion of music in international contexts in Years 9–10. This is also the only description category where the Indigenous Priority is referred to in both bands, but again is dealt with in a limited way.

The implementation of the Indigenous Priority lacks depth in this description category. In both bands, students are simply encouraged to include the music of Indigenous Australians within their study of contexts; and in both cases there are no elaborations that indicate the types of tasks students could undertake to meet this Priority.[21] Instead, elaborations highlight the reflexive nature of music study: students "identify roles and responsibilities in music-making activities," they "[identify] personal preferences in the music they listen to and the reasons for them," and they "[discuss] different opinions and perspectives about music and strategies to improve and inform music making" (n.d.-r, version 8.3, all from Years 9–10).[22] These are not problematic elaborations in and of themselves, but they do not give any specific indication of the treatment of the Indigenous Priority, and this is the only set of content descriptions that explicitly refers to the Priority. This represents a missed opportunity to articulate clearly how Indigenous music could be taught in schools.

The content descriptions and their categories are an attempt to give a broad, overarching, and comprehensive outline to the study of music (MUSICS) in schools, but they revert to Eurocentric concepts of music steeped in the Western art music tradition too often to achieve this successfully. The persistent use of rogue terminology, the lack of clarity in progression, and the inadequate implementation of the Indigenous Priority all contribute to undermine the inclusive intentions of the ACM. Finally, the inconsistency of the composition

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[21] The ACM highlights the autonomy of teachers in delivering music. Therefore, it is ultimately the responsibility of teachers to interpret this Priority and include Indigenous music. However, as will be explored in Chapter Nine, all teachers within the sample struggle with the delivery of this Priority, and some suggested that more prescriptive guidance would be advantageous (Denise 2017, Alice 2017, Matthew 2017, Chris et al. 2018). Given that Australia failed to "Close the Gap" (Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet 2018) in Indigenous Australian education, it is possible that this is an issue elsewhere in the Australian Curriculum too.
[22] Descriptions and elaborations of this nature were not well-received by the teachers at School Four, who equated them to "social science" rather than music (Chris et al. 2018).

Responding to and interpreting artworks			
Year 7–8 content description	**Year 7–8 elaborations**	**Year 9–10 content description**	**Year 9–10 elaborations**
Identify and connect specific features and purposes of music from different eras to explore viewpoints and enrich their music making, starting with Australian music including music of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples (ACAMUR098).	Identifying roles and responsibilities in music-making activities and contexts as both performer and audience member.	Analyse a range of music from contemporary and past times to explore differing viewpoints and enrich their music making, starting with Australian music, including music of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, and consider music in international contexts (ACAMUR105).	Evaluating and comparing stylistic interpretations of a range of music to develop aesthetic awareness.
	Identifying personal preferences in the music they listen to and the reasons for them.		Comparing and evaluating audience responses and performer roles across a broad range of formal, informal, virtual and interactive settings.
	Making judgements about music as audience and articulating the reasons for them.		Evaluating their own and others' music, and applying feedback to refine and improve performances and compositions.
	Discussing different opinions and perspectives about music and strategies to improve and inform music making.		Discussing the influence of music on the development of personal and cultural identity.
	Considering viewpoints— evaluations: For example—How effectively did the musicians use expressive techniques in their performance? What are the strengths of this performance or composition?		Considering viewpoints—critical theories: For example— How has the rise of technology changed the nature of music? How has technology impacted on audiences, the music industry and the way we consume music?

Table 16: Content descriptions and elaborations for description category 7 (ACARA n.d.-r, version 8.3).

definition requires review, because as it presently stands, improvisation is neglected within the ACM despite its apparent inclusion within composition.

5.5 Discussion

The structural aspects of the ACM are well-intentioned, but their execution is imprecise. The categories of *making* and *responding* were met with considerable backlash by music teachers (see ACARA 2012d), and subject-specific terminology was introduced in response. The simplified presentation of this music-specific content—*performing*, *composing*, and

listening—is problematic because these terms are value-laden in music, and their re-definition within the ACM is unclear and inconsistently implemented. For the purposes of this curriculum, terms that are recognisable as being specific to music, without carrying the value of pre-existing terminology, would be ideal. Elliott and Silverman's application of Small's *music[k]ing* is an example of such a term. In addition, amendments to teacher training that raise awareness about multiculturalism in music education could offer deeper and more systemic change on a larger scale. Teachers' desire for pre-existing and "value-laden" (ACARA 2011b) musical terminology is understandable, but the uncritical usage of some terms can unintentionally instil exclusive and monocultural musical values within students as teachers reinforce the dominant cultural paradigm (Drummond 2010, pp. 119–121).

The elements of music are a difficult phenomenon to reconcile within a multicultural Australian context. They are actively discouraged by Elliott and Silverman (2014, pp. 396–402), but remain an integral part of music education in Australia. The main issue with the elements is any claims to their universality in all music: that rhythm, pitch, dynamics and expression, form and structure, timbre, and texture are essential in all musical styles. The ACM does not make any such claims, but a monocultural view of the elements is perpetuated by exclusively representing Western musical styles. The implication is that Western interpretations of the elements are universal, which is not a philosophically defensible position (Hess 2015, p. 336). However, the reality of Australian music education is that the majority of teachers study Western musical styles in their tertiary training, meaning that they are well-versed in the suggested elements but their training does not reflect the cultural diversity of Australia (Joseph and Southcott 2010, pp. 69–71). A way around this could be to state that what is implicit in any suggested elements is indicative of Western music and is not universal to all music. This approach would not negate the fact that the examples of elements stem from Western music alone, but it would validate the inclusion of examples from other cultures in the practice of individual teachers.

Despite attempts to re-define existing terminology specifically for use in the ACM, there are still some rogue terms present within the ACM that have not been considered. Their uncritical use in the ACM is consistent with their dictionary definitions, but these definitions themselves are problematic because they reinforce the work concept of music, a stalwart of

the MEAE ideology. Therefore, I suggest that rogue terms should be re-defined and explained in the ACM glossary, to ensure consistency in how they are used and to enhance inclusivity in the ACM.

As the method of articulating the tasks that students should engage with, the content descriptions have an important role. There appears to be a slight disconnect between the broad focus of each category and how it is manifested within each band of learning. For example, what initially seems to be a category focused on improvisation actually addresses improvising in a process-based sense—experimenting with techniques during practice. This could be symptomatic of the issues encountered when transferring from a broad, Arts-wide category to a specific manifestation of that category and highlights that many tasks and processes of music learning are difficult to distil into a single, simplified category. Similarly, the elaborations of the content descriptions are usually good at indicating the kinds of activities that should be engaged with, but are poor at indicating depth or breadth of study. Furthermore, the sense of progression within the content descriptions is inconsistent, with some clearly indicating increasing sophistication of understanding between the bands, and others appearing to be barely related.

At a deeper level, there is a significant under-representation of *responding* tasks within the content descriptions. This may be an attempt to prioritise a practical approach to music learning, but it undermines the depth of study. Indeed, the differentiation between making and responding is potentially unhelpful at the level of content descriptions, because it implies and encourages a dualistic approach. A more effective approach would be to state that *making* and *responding* are integrated within every type of engagement with music and are relevant in every description. This is articulated by the Small/Elliott/Silverman term *music[k]ing*, which simply refers to all active musical engagement and dispenses with dualistic categorisation.

The proposed definitions of *performing* and *composing* are problematic in their implementation. Despite the scope of their activities being defined in a much broader sense than their dictionary definitions, they are then implemented narrowly within the content descriptions, to the point where improvisation—a supposed component of composition, and an acknowledged point of weakness in Australian music education (Department of Education, Science and Training 2005)—is ignored entirely. If this terminology is to be

utilised, then it needs to be implemented consistently, and match its own definition within the ACM. As it stands, this is not the case.

It is worth noting the limitation of the term *theory* in describing the second description category. The formal study of music theory is situated within the study of Western music and traditionally explores the styles and works of Western composers (see Molk 2019). According to David Molk, such styles are overwhelmingly represented in music theory textbooks and courses—and therefore the understanding of music teachers—which then perpetuates Western cultural hegemony in the music classroom. Molk calls for "a broad musical foundation" which "recognises that Western art music is not the pinnacle of human achievement, but simply one among many equally valid forms of artistic musical expression" (Molk 2019) and de-centralises Western music as the focus of *music theory*. My usage of the term *theory* is intended to align with Molk's idealistic views, and I suggest that the widespread adoption of this altered definition should be encouraged more broadly.

While the intentions of the ACM are evidently influenced by praxial theory, its content still refers to MEAE-influenced terminology and approaches. Therefore, the content of the ACM does not always align with a praxial concept of best practice in music education. The inconsistent application of the ACM's own definitions may be unintentional, but is not benign and actively marginalises aspects of musical study that are not central to Western styles, so perpetuating the dominant position of Anglo-Celtic culture in multicultural Australia (Hess 2015, pp. 337–339).[23] This raises several questions. Is this inconsistency in definition and persistent use of rogue terminology demonstrative of a lack of conviction, or a lack of self-awareness, on the part of the curriculum designers? Does it illustrate an incomplete understanding of the implications of praxis, and even synergistic positions, on their part? Or does it display the effects of pressure from a general body of secondary teachers who do not like change?[24] Regardless, what results is a seemingly unconscious perpetuation of cultural hegemony that has the potential to prevent the ACM's own aims for inclusivity in music.

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[23] Hess makes a similar argument within the context of Canada's music curriculum. There are striking similarities between the ACM and Hess's description of Canada's curriculum, particularly the "emphasis on elements of music that are decidedly Western" (Hess 2015, p. 336).

[24] See Chapter Three for evidence supporting the statement that teachers do not like change. See Randles (2013) for more information about implementing change in school music programs.

Chapter Six: Teacher background

6.1 Introduction

In the first section of this thesis I sought to determine whether the ACM aligned with best practice in music education using the praxial characteristics as an analytical framework. This analysis revealed that there were clear statements indicating a strong praxial influence on the Arts Learning Area in the earliest phase of curriculum development, but that the clarity of the ACM's philosophical position diminished so that what is presently published is unclear. Although it claims to include all students through being equally applicable to all kinds of music (MUSICS), the ACM exhibits some design traits that are not always inclusive of all music, thereby allowing for the possible perpetuation of an unconscious and ongoing cultural hegemony in music education. It also claims to enable a continuous and sequential model of music education but fails to indicate depth in its examples of progress. There are irreconcilable philosophical tensions between the intentions and the content of the ACM which makes the task of delivering best practice in music education very difficult.

In this chapter I will introduce the seven interview participants from four Canberra schools who participated in the interviews for this thesis. They are Denise, Alice, Matthew, Chris, Sam, Lorraine, and Jody, all of whom teach music in secondary schools.[1] The schools themselves are numbered from one to four in chronological order of the interviews taking place, and I also introduce the demographic and socioeconomic context in which each school is situated and establish key analytical points about the schools when relevant. This thesis is concerned with how the teachers have initially responded to and implemented the ACM, but I argue that before this analysis commences, it is important to first understand who the teachers are and why they do what they do. Past experiences affect the habitus of teachers—their pre-existing dispositions and experiences that inform how they will act in response to new stimuli (Bourdieu 1996, p. 17, Cui 2017, p. 1155)—and how they manipulate the discursive gap, or sites for potential change and individual agency in the implementation of curricula (Bernstein 2000, pp. 29–32). Therefore, understanding who the teachers are is important before assessing their responses. This sample shows that each teacher's personal history in music and education has a strong influence on their

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[1] These are pseudonyms to comply with the requirements of the ACT Education Directorate and to protect the privacy of the interview participants.

Category	Codes
Teacher background (Chapter Six)	Perpetuation of previous experiences: *teachers actively or subconsciously using methods that they were exposed to in their education and training.*
	Rejection of previous experiences: *teachers actively or subconsciously rejecting methods that they were exposed to in their education and training.*
Program identity (Chapters Seven and Eight)	Practical: *programs that are described as being practical, either through a focus on performance or through practical engagement with all kinds of musical activities.*
	Conventional: *programs that are described as being organised in discrete sections (performance, theory, analysis, aural, context).*
Identity of ACM (Chapters Seven and Eight)	Broad: *responses to the ACM that highlight its broadness and capaciousness in terms of its structure, the language it uses, and its relevance.*
	Prescriptive: *responses to the ACM that highlight elements that are rigorous and prescriptive, are comparatively more structured than previous curriculum frameworks, or point to benefits of a curriculum that can only be realised if the curriculum is standardised.*
Non-musical elements (Chapter Nine)	Straightforward to implement: *responses to the General Capabilities in the ACM which are considered easy to implement or are dismissed because they are considered to be inherent to the act of teaching.*
	Difficult to implement: *responses to the Cross-Curriculum Priorities in the ACM which are challenging for music teachers to deliver because of limitations they identified in their training, limitations in the ACM, or a combination of both.*
Music education (Chapters Seven, Eight, and Nine)	General: *Responses about the general state of music education, including primary school music education.*
	School-specific: *Responses or offhand comments that provide detail about the status of music within the school.*

Table 17: Categories and codes identified within the teacher interview responses.

interpretations of the ACM. I sourced the information about each teacher from the interviews themselves, individual background summaries provided through later private correspondence, and in one instance, the teacher's professional website. Lorraine was the only teacher who did not provide significant background information.

The chapter is divided into four sections, with each section allocated to one of the four schools. They are presented in chronological order, starting with Denise from School One, Alice from School Two, Matthew from School Three, and Chris, Sam, Lorraine, and Jody from School Four. The background of each teacher is presented as a narrative, with the intention to uncover how each teacher presents their individual history, and how they feel that their history influences what they do in the present. To conclude the chapter, I briefly discuss some of the implications that the interview responses have for the implementation of the ACM, although this is explored in far more detail in the next three chapters.

Teacher background	
Teacher	Analytical notes
Denise	Denise exhibited an awareness of how her background influenced her present practice. She explicitly rejected the traditional model of music education training that she received at university.
Alice	Alice exhibited an acute and reflexive self-awareness of how her background influenced her present practice. She could specifically identify elements of her own secondary school experience that she either perpetuated or rejected.
Matthew	No self-assessment on the influence of prior experience given.
Chris*	Chris identified several points throughout his teaching career when the influence of others changed his overall approach. He rejected approaches that encouraged the separation of music education from its context: for example, teaching theory through theory booklets.
Sam*	Sam rejected the methods of music teaching he experienced as a student in secondary school. He attributed his present, highly structured approach as a reaction to the lack of structure in his school's music program.
Lorraine	No self-assessment on the influence of prior experience. Lorraine did note in the interview that that, in relation to teaching Indigenous Australian music, she has prior experience in Javanese Gamelan and can teach more effectively to that particular non-Western experience.
Jody*	Jody identified her background as a performer as the most significant influence on her present practice. She also attempts to give music the same academic rigour as other subjects.

Table 18: Overview of teacher interview responses pertaining to their background. Teachers marked with an asterisk (*) returned a short questionnaire that specifically asked them how their previous experiences influenced their present practice. The questionnaire is provided in Appendix D.

6.1.1 Interview coding and analysis

To interpret and analyse the interview data I coded responses and organised them into categories, which then informed the sequence of chapters. Table 17 is a presentation of these categories and codes. Due to its relevance to the discursive gap, the perpetuation of past experiences in music education was a particular focus that emerged from the interview responses. Table 18 illustrates whether the teachers reflexively determined whether they accepted or rejected their background, if such information was available, which then contextualises the following narrative discussions. Finally, demographic information about the schools was compiled from the My School website (ACARA n.d.-s). Table 19 categorises each school and provides a brief overview of the music courses available.

6.2 School One (Denise 2017)

School One is a government secondary school, with 1117 students across Years 7–10. Denise is the Head of Music at this school and has been teaching there for over twenty years. She was born and raised in Wollongong, New South Wales (NSW), and she started learning piano at four years of age. At the end of Year 12, she was the recipient of a scholarship for music education at the Alexander Mackie College of Advanced Education in Sydney in the first year that they offered a degree course. This was a unique opportunity: prior to the year of her

School name	Type	Demographic information	ACM-based music program details
School One	Government, 7–10 (secondary)	1117 students; 2% Indigenous students; 33% language background other than English; school ICSEA value of 1140[2]	Sequential curricular ensemble (Concert Band Program)
			Non-sequential classroom program (Performance Music)
School Two	Government, 7–10 (secondary)	672 students; 3% Indigenous students; 17% language background other than English; school ICSEA value of 1077	Non-sequential classroom program (various electives)
			Curricular ensemble alternative (Year 7/8 only)
School Three	Government, 7–10 (secondary)	879 students; 2% Indigenous students; 27% language background other than English; school ICSEA value of 1126	Sequential classroom program (performance and music industry electives)
			Sequential curricular ensemble
School Four	Non-government, F–12 (primary, secondary, senior secondary)	1913 students; 0% Indigenous students; 23% language background other than English; school ICSEA value of 1194	Sequential classroom program

Table 19: Demographic information about sampled schools, sourced from the My School website (ACARA n.d.-s).

enrolment, it was rare for an Australian institution to offer degrees for education, instead offering diplomas. As well as being one of the first institutions to offer Bachelor degrees for education in Australia, it was also one of the first institutions to offer its trainee teachers the opportunity to specialise in music teaching at both primary and secondary levels. Denise took this opportunity, prioritising her secondary specialisation, and in so doing graduated as a specialist music teacher. During her degree, she was also required to continue her music study, and her instruments of choice were classical piano and classical voice.

Following her graduation, Denise immediately moved to a small town in country NSW and began to teach classroom music in the local secondary school. The school only had a piano, a guitar, and a record player for her to use in the delivery of the NSW music syllabus, which imposed standards on music education that proved difficult to meet with such limited resources.[3] Through necessity she developed a new approach, and focused on delivering a program that emphasised singing and body percussion to allow all students to engage with practical music making activities. Although she did attempt to meet the syllabus requirements, her overall intention was to get students to engage with music at a practical

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[2] The Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) represents the level of educational advantage students at a particular school experience, determined by students' family backgrounds and school-level factors such as geographical location and the number of Indigenous students (ACARA n.d.-i). The average ICSEA value is 1000, so all schools in the present sample can be considered to be above average on a national scale.
[3] See the brief explanation of the NSW syllabus course *Music One* in Chapter Nine.

level, and to build the profile of the subject at the school. It is difficult to assess the long-term effects of her brief tenure at this school, because she moved to Canberra after only one year. However, her adjustments to the program did have the desired effect in the short term. When she arrived at the school, music was a compulsory subject for Years 7 and 8; when she left, she stated that music was in high demand, and the school began to offer elective music courses for all year groups.

Upon moving to Canberra in the mid-1980s, Denise began teaching at a government secondary school, and it was at this time that she claims the foundations of her present approaches were laid. Taking influence from her experiences in rural NSW, she was intent on designing music programs that were as practically-based as possible. This was enabled further by the curriculum framework that was in place in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT), which was far less prescriptive than the NSW syllabus. With the combination of more curriculum freedom and better resourcing for music, her classroom programs became focused on the concert band which she saw as a vehicle through which students could engage in practical instrumental learning, as well as applied theory and musicology. Denise noted, with some irony, the disconnect of her education and training as a classical pianist and vocalist and her eventual position as the conductor of school concert bands.

When Denise arrived in Canberra, the ACT curriculum operated as a school-based system, which gave broad guidelines for teachers to implement it in a way that best suited their context. Despite several local curriculum changes since then, Denise noted that the ACT curriculum has been broad for her entire time in Canberra, functioning more as a loose framework than a clearly defined syllabus. This approach to curriculum design still informed the most recent ACT framework, *Every Chance to Learn* (ACT Government, hereafter ECTL), which was even more generic than the ACM.[4] Because of this, the introduction of the ACM caused little concern for Denise, although she was concerned about the direction the ACM was taking in the consultation process. She was actively involved in this process, and submitted feedback whenever possible, both as an individual, and as part of the group of

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[4] ECTL attributes nine total pages to the description of student engagement with the arts—"including dance, drama, music, visual arts and media" (ACT Government n.d., pp. 72–81). Interestingly, despite its broad and non-specific scope, this concept of the arts is entirely situated within Western traditions, as evidenced by the name of the essential learning achievement (equivalent to a Learning Area in the Australian Curriculum):"The student creates, presents and appreciates *artistic works*" (p. 72, emphasis added).

teachers at her school. The initial proposals and drafts of the ACM were quite broad and generic with clear philosophical positioning, but there was a considerable amount of negative feedback from some teachers who wanted a more prescriptive curriculum (see Chapter Three). This feedback was particularly pointed in the final draft of the ACM, and Denise did not agree with it. She was concerned that the curriculum designers would take this on board and significantly alter the proposed ACM. When the approved curriculum was published, she was relieved to find that it had retained its broad and non-prescriptive identity.

During the curriculum design process, Denise also had a unique perspective on the overall scope of opinion across the entire of the ACT. As a founding member of a network of music teachers in Canberra, she could gauge the opinions of all members of the network. She identified two broad camps within this group: those who wanted the ACM to be broad, and those who wanted the ACM to be prescriptive. According to Denise, in most cases those in the broad camp were government school teachers, and those in the prescriptive camp were non-government school teachers.[5] While the targeted scope of the present thesis does not allow generalisations of this magnitude, my findings align with Denise's observation.

6.3 School Two (Alice 2017)

School Two is also a government secondary school, with 672 students across Years 7–10. As well as being a specialist music teacher, Alice is the executive teacher for the Arts and Design, which means that she oversees all teachers for these Learning Areas and has an awareness of the curriculum content for them all. She holds this demanding role in spite of the fact that she is a relatively inexperienced teacher, having worked at this school for less than five years at the time of her interview. She was born in England and started learning music between the ages of six to eight. Her first instrument was the recorder, which she initially learned through an ensemble. After gaining some experience, she began to receive private instrumental lessons on the recorder, which continued for several years. She progressed from the recorder to the oboe when she was nine, and this remained her sole instrument for two or three years, before she started studying the piano. She was initially attracted to the piano because of its harmonic capabilities and she continued to study these

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[5] The exploration of emergent trends for secondary music in Chapter Ten supports Denise's generalisation.

two instruments throughout the remainder of her time at school. When she was twelve, Alice moved to Canberra with her family. Her choice of school was partly determined by the strength of the music program, as she was highly invested in her music education at this point. She went to an all-girls private school that offered a comprehensive music program that allowed her to continue learning both her instruments. Before the end of Year 12, she had participated in as many music ensembles as she possibly could, playing in school orchestras and bands. She also joined these ensembles on interstate and international tours, which allowed her to collaborate with orchestras and bands from other schools in rehearsals and performances. In addition, she continued to have private lessons on both instruments and decided to pursue a career in music.

Alice was also heavily involved with school sport, with a focus on swimming. It was from her involvement as a swimming coach that she initially thought about becoming a music teacher, as she could see some parallels between coaching swimming and teaching music. With the benefit of hindsight, she believes that she would not have been a strong enough performer to realistically pursue a solo career, as she suffered from acute performance anxiety when required to perform solo. Her preference was for ensemble performance. One of the teachers at her school was involved with tertiary music teacher training and advised her to enrol in a combined Australian National University/University of Canberra (hereafter ANU and UC, respectively) music teaching degree. The specialised music elements were taught at the ANU School of Music, while the teaching requirements were taught at the UC. This combined degree took four years to complete, which is equivalent to the duration of the traditional pathway of a three-year Bachelor of Music, followed by a one-year Diploma of Education.[6] The benefit of this combined approach was that the highly specialised performance aspects of the music degree were minimised so that educational study could be pursued in greater detail than in the Diploma. Therefore, students who knew that they wanted to be a music teacher from the outset received a more targeted course that better suited their needs.

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[6] This pathway has been phased out: specialist music teachers now need to complete their three-year degree, along with a two-year Masters of Education. Alternatively, they can participate in the Teach for Australia program, which accelerates the study of education through on-the-job training, although it requires trainee teachers to work in low socioeconomic areas. See Teach for Australia (2018).

During the fourth year of her degree, Alice undertook a practical placement for the first semester that led to her being invited back to the school to fill in for another teacher for the second semester.[7] Upon graduation, she took up a six-month contract at her present school, which was subsequently extended, and following this she was made a permanent member of staff. At the time of this interview, she had been promoted to the role of executive teacher for the Arts and Design.

As Alice had been teaching for a relatively short amount of time, she did not have significant exposure to ECTL. Although she used it for the first few years of her career, at the time of the interview she had spent more time working with the ACM.[8] Because she did not have established programs and courses at the time of the transition, she did not find it particularly difficult to adapt to the new curriculum. Alice stated a preference for the ACM, defining herself as a person who prefers a structured outline with defined boundaries. She delivers her music programs with distinct separation between activities, similar to the way that she was taught music in school. She has found that the ACM's clearly defined elements of music lend clarity to her teaching by providing a consistent framework from which to explore different aspects of music.

This interview saw the introduction of one of the themes that recurred in the remaining interviews, particularly with the teachers at School Four: namely the effect that student achievement in primary school music has on their secondary study. This was not a particularly in-depth discussion, unlike the conversation with Chris, Sam, Lorraine, and Jody, but there were some common elements between the views expressed by all five individuals. Alice believes that students not achieving the suggested standard in their primary school music course seriously affects what she can teach them once they reach secondary school. Nevertheless, she is sympathetic to the primary school teachers, noting that they face considerable overcrowding in the primary curriculum.

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[7] Alice stated that trainee teachers are able to work in classrooms in the last six months of their degrees, prior to graduating.
[8] As noted in the Introduction, teachers were able to commence their implementation of the ACM earlier than the dates advised by ACARA or the ACT Education Directorate.

6.4 School Three (Matthew 2017)

School Three is the final government secondary school in the sample, with 879 students across Years 7–10. It is unclear how long Matthew has been a teacher at this school, although he was very well-established in his role. At the time of the interview he gave the impression that he was the only music teacher on staff, but this may also be inaccurate as there were significant time constraints placed on this interview. Therefore, I targeted most of my questions to his response to the ACM and how he implements music in the classroom. He could not be contacted again due to non-response and limitations placed on the time frame for data collection, but he is an active composer and has an artist website that includes a comprehensive biography. The following narrative is compiled from the small amount of background information he did provide during the interview, and his artist biography.

Matthew was born in Slovakia in the 1960s and began to learn musical instruments at the age of six. He did not specify which instrument he initially learned, but he commenced classical guitar lessons when he was around the age of ten, and this has remained his central instrument. His studies varied as he continued in school, and he explored a variety of different styles across different instruments. As well as his musical studies, he also had an international running career, following which he studied a Bachelor of Education in Slovakia, graduating in 1991. His primary study was as a music specialist, and his secondary study was in Civics. Following his graduation, he moved to Australia in 1992.

When he arrived in Australia, Matthew started working as a guitar teacher in Canberra, where he continued instrumental tuition until 2000. He also enrolled in a composition course at the ANU and began to compose professionally. He has composed a variety of pieces on commission for different ensembles and instruments: solo classical guitar, opera, and symphonic music as examples. He has achieved considerable success as a composer, winning several significant national and international awards throughout his career. He is also an active performer and is the founding member of a guitar quartet that focuses on performing original music by its members. Matthew is the most active musician outside of his teaching within the present sample, and there is little indication of his teaching career within his artist biography. During the interview he did indicate that he has been a classroom music teacher since 2002, and since then he has had the opportunity to implement several

different curriculum frameworks. As a composer, his perspectives on the ACM are unique within the present sample.

Matthew highlighted the similarities between the ACM and ECTL. In his opinion, the ACM formalised many elements of the preceding framework and provided comparatively rigorous standards. He liked having more direction, although he still considers the ACM to be a malleable curriculum. He stated that there is significant scope for teachers to interpret the ACM in their own way, and he is aware that some teachers find this style of curriculum to be too broad. Matthew is not one of these and appreciates that he can use the outcomes and achievements—his example was "achieving a practical level of performance" (Matthew 2017)—and tailor the actual standard and outcome to individual students. In a clear instance of the discursive gap at work, Matthew likes that the ACM states the broad outcomes for music learning but leaves the methods of achieving these outcomes up to the individual teacher, thus embracing the potential for individual interpretations.

6.5 School Four (Chris, Sam, Jody and Lorraine 2018)

School Four is a non-government combined school with 1913 students across Foundation–Year 12. This immediately introduces new ideas and perspectives that the other teachers within the sample did not have: while this study focuses on secondary school music, the four teachers at School Four have a deeper understanding of primary school music, and pre-tertiary music (Years 11 and 12) than their government secondary school counterparts. This is because they interact with primary school teachers, and they often teach pre-tertiary students as well. As such, they have strong views on the effectiveness of the primary school curriculum. Chris is the Head of Music at this school and has had significant prior experience teaching the NSW music syllabus in Sydney. Sam is another highly experienced secondary teacher and appears to collaborate with Chris when designing new courses. Lorraine is the newest teacher within the group, having only recently completed her tertiary qualifications. However, she often acts as a reference for the other teachers by reminding them of the content of the ACM. Finally, Jody is a primary music teacher whose input was valuable given the context of the discussion.

Time constraints meant that this interview was conducted in a group, which introduced some unique challenges in the collection and analysis of data. Because time was limited I

provided each teacher with an individual questionnaire sheet after the interview, in which they provided their professional background information. Despite several attempts at collecting this information, Lorraine did not return her questionnaire. This is unfortunate, as there were some similarities between her responses, and those of Alice, that could have been explored in greater detail had contextual information been provided. Any specific background information about Lorraine has been sourced from the interview: for Chris, Sam, and Jody, I have used their questionnaire responses as the basis of their narratives.

Chris started learning the piano when he was five and the trumpet at eight. In his formative years, he participated in local eisteddfods around Sydney. He also participated in music classes at school, but due to the small student population, there were limited options. He was the only senior music class student in Years 11 and 12, and the school offered a choir that had seven participants, and a string group that had six. At the end of Year 12 he had no clear idea of his career path, but the father of one of his friends suggested that he consider at a Bachelor of Music Education from the NSW Conservatorium. He decided to follow this career and graduated from his university course in 1985. At the time of the interview, Chris had thirty years of experience, teaching in Sydney for fifteen years, and at his current school in Canberra for fifteen years. His experiences in Sydney were particularly influential: he was initially trained to teach in a content-based approach, but the Head of Music at his school in Sydney encouraged him to educate students through a concept- or process-based model. This school also encouraged performance, original composition, and integration of "Australian music" (Chris 2018), which have become central components of the music program at School Four.[9] Indeed, Chris explicitly mentioned that he rejects the highly regimented separation of musical activities that reflects the way that he was taught at school. As well as his teaching career, Chris has retained an interest in his own music performance and completed his most recent exam—a Licentiate Diploma in classical piano through the Australian Music Examinations Board (AMEB)—in 1997.

In contrast to Chris, Sam did not have a clear and direct path into music teaching. His initial music experiences came from a very informal music class at his high school, which involved students working with little guidance, and Sam found that this lack of structure and planning was disappointing in terms of his skill development and knowledge attainment.

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[9] Chris did not specify what kind of Australian music was emphasised in his school in Sydney.

Despite this, he decided to specialise in music because he enjoyed it upon perceiving it as a source of income. His father was a guitarist, so he managed to learn some more specific content that way, and he participated in AMEB exams, eisteddfods and competitions, and studied pre-tertiary music in Years 11 and 12. During this time, he also started tutoring younger students which he enjoyed. However, he also felt that his own skills were lacking at the end of Year 12, and so enrolled in a preparatory course at the ANU before commencing his Bachelor of Music in classical guitar performance. He was aware that teaching music in some form would be a part of what he would do as a musician, and he also had an awareness of the fact that he enjoyed teaching—as well as his guitar tutoring, one of his classes in high school involved creating lesson plans for younger students in sport class, and he enjoyed this experience. Following graduation from university, Sam worked as a freelance performer and guitar tutor for many years and commenced his formal training in teaching when he was 37 years old. He graduated with a Diploma of Education and has been teaching full time in secondary schools ever since. Like Chris, Sam has stayed active as a performer in addition to his teaching career. The driving force behind Sam's desire to be a music teacher stems from him loving music and wanting to share it with students.

Similarly, Jody also became a music educator because she loved music. She started playing the French Horn when she was in Year 5, and she also studied a Bachelor of Music at the ANU. Initially, she enrolled in a music education course at university because she did not audition well enough to enter the performance course but transferred into performance at a later date. Throughout her degree, she was a member of several Canberra ensembles, most notably the Canberra Youth Orchestra, and the ACT Junior and Senior Concert Bands. In addition, she was a member of the Australian Youth Orchestra. Since graduating, Jody has worked as a casual player in various orchestras, concert bands, musical theatre productions, and community groups, with the latter two primarily for her enjoyment. In addition to her performance work, she has also been a private instrumental teacher. She only did a Diploma of Education because she was advised that tutoring students in schools would require some form of educational qualification. While this stipulation has never materialised, she was able to start working in classrooms upon completion, but she has found it to be difficult to gain long-term employment as a classroom music teacher in Canberra and she continues to work as an instrumental teacher in addition to her classroom work. She expressed considerable

frustration at the status of music in Canberra schools, which she saw as a barrier to permanent employment as a classroom teacher. When teaching she emphasises that theory and aural training are highly beneficial to students' development in and enjoyment of music. Her strategy for building a sense of music's value amongst students and parents is to give the coursework academic rigour equal to that of other subjects, such as English or Mathematics. This is coupled with a strong emphasis on practical music making that she attempts to introduce to all students.

Lorraine is the most recent addition to the music staff at School Four, and she acts as a foil to the other three. Whereas Chris, Sam, and Jody all had experience teaching other more prescriptive curriculum models, such as the NSW music syllabus, Lorraine's only exposure has been to the ACM itself, or some of the drafts that were published while she was studying. She completed a Diploma of Education and teaches music and history. This combination has given her a unique perspective on the ACM within the context of the broader curriculum. The history department was required to make drastic changes to their history courses to match with the Australian Curriculum in History, and as such, Lorraine believes that the implementation of the ACM was much easier to do than the National Curriculum in more content-heavy Learning Areas. As a relatively new and inexperienced teacher, Lorraine made use of the ACM as a guide to her professional practice. When discussions about curriculum take place at School Four, Lorraine ensures that the other music teachers at least consider the ACM.

School Four is uniquely situated in terms of its implementation of the ACM. It is obliged to three different frameworks for curriculum, as it offers the NSW High School Certificate (HSC) for its pre-tertiary programs and to the International Baccalaureate (IB) for primary students and pre-tertiary students. As such, the only years that are affected by the Australian Curriculum are Years 7–10, but because of the pre-tertiary requirements, Chris indicated that they use a hybridised combination of curriculum frameworks to design their programs. In saying this, the teachers indicated that the different curriculum models are similar, and that the ACM is the broadest of the three that they use. In matching the requirements of the other two, they easily fulfil the requirements of the ACM. Interestingly, all four teachers, including Lorraine, do not particularly like the ACM.

A large portion of the interview with these teachers related to the issues surrounding primary school music education in Australia. While these issues are not the result of the implementation of the ACM, evidence suggests they have not been resolved by its introduction (Crooke and McFerran 2015, Crooke 2017). The teachers at School Four suggested that the achievement for Year 6 is the minimum standard for secondary music, but they find that students in Year 7 are almost always unable to engage with music at the standard defined by the skills and knowledge of the ACM (see Chapter Five). They were critical of the fact that the issues in primary school music are well-documented, but the ACM has not addressed them. This implies that there is a serious disconnect at this transitional level of the ACM.

6.6 Discussion

The four schools within the research sample implement music in very different ways, which is indicative of the discursive gap in action. With that said, all schools are similar in that they have effective music programs, and all of the teachers are primarily trained in Western art music. In the cases of Denise, Alice, Chris, Sam, Lorraine, and Jody, the influence of their personal background is evident in their music programs: in particular, Denise's practice-based approach is a direct result of her time teaching with limited resources in rural NSW; Alice has retained the sense of organisation in music that was present in the way that she was taught at school; and to contrast this, Chris has rejected such organisation because of his teaching experiences in Sydney. The influence that Matthew's past has upon his teaching is less clear, as his biography was presented in relation to his career as a composer. However, his no-nonsense approach to comprehensively teaching students at their own level is potentially a result of his expertise as a composer. Across the board, all teachers are implementing the ACM and matching the content descriptions and achievement standards, but as will be examined in the next three chapters, this does not necessarily mean that the ACM has actually exerted any significant influence on how these programs have been designed. Conceptualising teachers' actions through the lens of habitus lends further clarity: even though the ACM has arguably been designed to apply some kind of change in Australian school music education, "habitus can be seen as much as an agent of continuity and tradition as it can be regarded as a force for change" (Costa and Murphy 2015, p. 4).

Some of the actions of the teachers—informed by their backgrounds—resist the intentions of the ACM which illustrates how teacher's habitus can perpetuate (potentially problematic) traditions in music education.

In at least two schools, the structure and focus of the music programs pre-dates the implementation of the ACM. At School One, Denise has developed a reputation for delivering a high-quality and respected concert band program since at least the 1990s—far earlier than any conception of the ACM—and she acknowledged that all she did to align the concert band program with the National Curriculum was to re-organise her original content descriptions and achievement standards.[10] Likewise, the teachers at School Four also matched achievement standards and content descriptions but did nothing else of note to accommodate the ACM. Their stance—that the ACM is so broad that virtually anything will work within it—demonstrates a certain disregard for the National Curriculum. In contrast to both of these schools, Alice has used the ACM to influence how she teaches music, but has the lowest-status music program within the sample.[11] The very nature of the way that she approaches composition and musicology has changed since the ACM was introduced, and although she faces the most severe time constraints of any of the teachers within the sample, this change in approach has allowed her to engage students who would otherwise struggle with music.

The degree of influence that the ACM has had on Matthew's program is unclear. He almost unreservedly likes the ACM, but he also noted that it matches his way of teaching. It is possible that he was already teaching in this way prior to the introduction of the ACM. He also made an interesting point: teachers who were implementing strong music programs prior to the introduction of the ACM would just continue to do what they were doing anyway. This is certainly reflected in the approaches of Schools One and Four. Although this is not necessarily problematic in schools with a strong pre-existing music program, it does have some troublesome implications for schools that do not, and according to the *National Review* (2005) and Crooke (2017), there are many secondary schools that are underperforming in music.

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[10] The importance of retrofitting pre-existing courses to match the ACM will be explored in Chapter Ten.
[11] By analysing Denise and Alice's programs in-depth, Chapter Ten will explore the correlation between adherence to the ACM and the strength of a music program.

Within the present sample there is no representation from schools that struggle with music, which is a limitation because I suggest that such schools would benefit most from a strong ACM. School Two comes closest to struggling with music by virtue of its timetabling arrangements (see Chapter Ten), but its music programs appear to be resourced adequately. This lack of representation is an acknowledged drawback of the present sample. Nevertheless, the next three chapters explore how the teachers initially responded to and implemented the ACM in their classrooms, drawing upon their pre-existing dispositions and previous experiences to manipulate the discursive gap.

Chapter Seven: The dominant interview narratives

7.1 Introduction

In this chapter I analyse the dominant narratives that emerge from the interview sample. The teachers' responses to the ACM were mixed, but they all commented on the broadness of language and structure in the ACM. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that despite its pedagogical inconsistencies and problematic aspects, the ACM succeeded in providing teachers a capacious framework from which to build their own programs. Some teachers highlighted a benefit of broadness as the freedom to interpret the ACM in a way that was relevant to their students, while others used broadness as a reason to question the relevance of the curriculum. The focus of this chapter is to explore both viewpoints from a variety of perspectives, thus interrogating some of the underlying assumptions the teachers made about the nature of the ACM, and music more generally. Furthermore, this chapter assesses the perceived impact that the ACM had on the teachers' music programs and extrapolates from this to argue that those who will benefit most from a strong ACM are inexperienced teachers.

Despite all participating teachers expressing a desire to implement inclusive and engaging programs, I argue that they are undermined by systemic issues in music education that are beyond the scope of a curriculum alone to solve—namely, inadequate teacher training and the evident lack of value placed on music education in schools. However, these issues are not unrelated to the curriculum, and the ACM has a role to play in solving them. Teachers can also be enabled or compromised by their own dispositions and experiences in their interpretation and implementation of the ACM. Analysing the sample responses shows the significant influence of past experiences on teachers' present music programs through the acceptance or rejection of the pedagogical methods that the participants were exposed to when they were training. A common theme amongst all responses, however, is the centrality of Western art music to the teachers' practice. Although some teachers made attempts to integrate music from broader cultural backgrounds, they nevertheless perpetuated a monocultural approach to music education through the unconscious reproduction of Western concepts of music and music making. In the present thesis the interrelationship between habitus and discursive gap can be seen to enable change in

pedagogical methods while perpetuating dominant cultural paradigms, an idea that will be explored more fully in Chapter Nine.

I start by appraising how the different teachers identified broadness within the curriculum. This is followed by an exploration of the different interpretations that the teachers brought to bear upon the curriculum. These interpretations use the same curriculum terminology in different ways, which matches with the suggestion that a "one-size-fits-all" curriculum serves as a set of "helpful guidelines" (Goodlad 1994, p. 131, in Elliott and Silverman 2014, p. 394). Conceptualising the ACM as a guideline has enabled some teachers to create student-centred programs that attempt to tailor content to individual students. However, the combination of inconsistent usage of terminology and what the teachers defined as the questionable relevance of the ACM challenges the curriculum's usefulness as a guideline and reveals further pedagogical confusion within the ACM.

7.1.1 Categories and coding

The present chapter elaborates on the codes indicated in Table 20. The full table of categories and codes can be seen in Chapter Six.

Identity of ACM	
Code	**Analytical notes**
Broad	All teachers commented on the ACM being a broad curriculum in some way. Some teachers were positive about this characteristic and indicated that it allowed them significant freedom to interpret it in their own way. Other teachers indicated that broadness in language and structure made the ACM overly generic and therefore irrelevant.
Program identity	
Code	**Analytical notes**
Practical	Denise and Chris identified their programs as being *practical*, although with vastly different interpretations of the term. Denise's interpretation of practical was performance, while Chris and Sam explained practical to mean practical experiences in different kinds of tasks.
Conventional	Alice and Matthew both organise their courses into discrete sections that are interrelated but do not overlap. For example, students' performances are separate from their theory, although the links between the two are explained.

Table 20: Overview of codes that are extrapolated in the present chapter.

7.2 Broadness of language

The broadness of language within the ACM was the single aspect universally referred to by all teachers within the interview sample. The curriculum design documentation reveals that language was an important consideration, and the initial intention was for even broader

terminology so that every teacher could engage with the ACM, regardless of experience.[1] The present sample of teachers derived two benefits from language. Firstly, generic terminology and broad statements of content allowed for the teachers to interpret the ACM in a way that suited them, and secondly, the teachers could adapt content to match the ability of individual students.

Denise supported a broad curriculum from the start of the ACM design process. This preference stems from her previous experiences with different Australian Capital Territory (ACT) curricula, all of which followed a school-based model of implementation, as well as her formative experiences in regional New South Wales (NSW).[2] She also pointed out that during her time in Canberra, all curricula have been school-based, meaning that they have "never had a syllabus, [they have] only ever had a framework" (Denise 2017). This means that ACT music teachers in the last twenty-five (or more) years have worked from curriculum documents with broad outcomes and guidelines and with little in the way of prescriptive elements or concepts. This is exemplified in the previous ACT curriculum, *Every Chance to Learn* (hereafter ECTL, see Chapter Six).[3] Given that this was the basis for curriculum design within the ACT, Denise's preference for a broad national document is understandable.

The music programs at School One are varied but they share a common thread in the amount of time dedicated to practical work. According to Denise, students have instruments in their hands for 80%–90% of their classroom lesson time, which is a significantly greater percentage than the other schools within the interview sample.[4] Denise was aware of the discrepancy between the time allocated to practice within School One and other schools, and believed that the broadness of language within the ACM allowed for her practical

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[1] See Chapter Three. As noted, it was secondary music teachers who argued for more specifically musical language in the ACM. They also suggested that primary generalist teachers would struggle to interpret ACARA's initial curriculum framework.

[2] Despite the prescriptive NSW syllabus in the 1980s, Denise was required to improvise a practical music program in her first year out of tertiary education, and this improvised program was highly successful (see Chapter Six).

[3] When examining the ECTL document, this broadness is apparent: the most specific example of "essential content" that students are expected to learn within this framework comes from the "early adolescence" band of development, which states that students learn "technical terms (e.g. elements, concepts, forms) and structural principles (e.g. composition, perspective) appropriate to the art form" (ACT Government, p. 77).

[4] None of the other teachers gave as precise an indication as Denise did, although logical conclusions based on the information provided places their allocation of practical time at somewhere between 50%–66%.

program, and what she characterised as traditional programs, to co-exist within the same curriculum framework.

> AC: How broad is [the ACM] to you?…Is there scope for a traditional sort of syllabus based off it? Is there scope for a more practical base?
>
> Denise: Yes. Yes, absolutely. So what I know of School Four is [that what they are] doing is quite traditional. I'm sure they push the boundaries to some extent, but it's quite traditional [and] they can teach it within [the ACM]. I don't know [if] they're doing Baroque in Year 8, I don't know that, but they could (Denise 2017).[5]

Denise's understanding of the ACM is that it can encompass virtually any type of music learning framework, thereby including different styles of teaching. She situated her programs as being *practically* based, and those of some other (particularly non-government) schools to be *traditionally* based.[6]

By contrast, Alice worked with ECTL for a limited period of time before the ACM's implementation and was still experimenting with how she would teach music when it was introduced. Therefore, she did not have many issues with the transition, and was open to different ideas. Her concept of broadness in the ACM was directed towards the language about performance. She used the example of terms that indicate the type of engagement students are intended to have with music, but do not indicate any standard of achievement.

> Alice: I like the terminology they use for performances…So they use "practice and refine," and they have "technical and expressive skills," and I like that that's a little bit broad. So I can have kids in Year 7 that can do a fantastic "A" standard, and then I can have kids in 9 and 10 that have only just learned an instrument…and I can still use that same criteria, without putting AMEB grades on it or anything like that… (Alice 2017).

This means that raw beginners and more advanced players can be assessed against the same criteria, because there is no arbitrary or external standard with which to measure students. School Two faces significant time constraints in the delivery of its music programs, so the variability of student ability is a real concern.

Matthew's experience of the ACM is similar to Denise's, in that he saw the document as a guide that could be interpreted and applied in a variety of ways. Of the seven individuals within the interview sample, Matthew was the most concerned with meeting the requirements of the ACM and accurately designing courses based on it. He had one of the

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[5] The interview with Denise occurred before I had considered teachers from School Four as potential participants. Denise referred to this school without knowing of their involvement.
[6] Denise's interpretation of *traditional* is explored within the present chapter.

more in-depth descriptions about how the ACM functions as a guide. He stated that the ACM has very clearly defined achievement standards and outcomes, but this was contrasted with loosely defined content. To Matthew, this gives teachers the freedom to "operate within…[their] own environment" (Matthew 2017).

> Matthew: In our area of music, it's not so prescriptive, because it [does not tell] you [to] cover [precise content]. It doesn't even tell you [that] you have to do [an] AMEB…level in theory…It doesn't match the expectation with solid documents or grades like AMEB grades, which is…good. It can give you the freedom to operate…within your own environment, and within the way you operate as a person. It doesn't put your hands in cuffs… (Matthew 2017).

Matthew was alluding to both the freedom that teachers have to implement programs in their own way, and also towards a student-centred approach where content and standards are dictated by the ability of the students. Therefore, this example illustrates that the ACM allows for the implementation of virtually any type of music program, including student-centred programs that align with those suggested by Elliott and Silverman (2014), Reimer (2003), and others.[7]

The four teachers within School Four were critical of the ACM, but they noted that it works well as a general framework that can contain other curricula. This is important because School Four's senior secondary curriculum follows the International Baccalaureate (hereafter IB) or the NSW High School Certificate (hereafter HSC), and their junior school is also based on the IB. The different curricula need to be able to flow into each other to support student progression. The teachers suggested that all three approaches to music curricula are similar, but the HSC and IB are more prescriptive than the ACM. In matching the HSC and IB, they would easily meet the requirements of the ACM.

> Sam: So, interestingly at this school, we are obliged to the [ACM] [for Years] 7–10, currently, and then we switch to either the HSC or IB in 11 and 12. So, given the looseness…of the [ACM], and the flexibility with that, we sort of have come up with this concocted combination…of HSC [and] IB that would clearly tick all the boxes in the [ACM] (Chris et al. 2018).

Although the other schools do not use other curricula, some continue to deliver pre-existing programs. Given the strength of music at some of these schools, their pre-existing standards of achievement are more robust than those prescribed by the ACM, which would put them

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[7] For example, see Barrett (2005), Bowman (2012), and Smith and Lovat (2003).

in a similar position to the different curriculum frameworks of School Four.[8] The ACM can enable the continuation of existing music programs if that is what teachers want, while also accounting for the diversity of student ability and interest. This is the main benefit of the broad and non-specific framework, and it illustrates how a praxial approach can enable as many students as possible to engage with music.[9] Therefore, while some teachers may not necessarily like the ACM, they have all derived some benefit from its broad and non-specific nature, even if only to be able to continue their pre-existing programs with little change.

7.3 Different interpretations

7.3.1 *Traditional* programs and *practical* programs

The scope that teachers have to interpret the ACM in their own way was identified as a strength by six of the seven interview participants: only Alice did not directly state that she found this beneficial. The remaining teachers all emphasised the freedom that they had to deliver the programs that were most advantageous for their students' musical development or that matched their previous models of curriculum implementation.

Denise has developed strong classroom music programs across different focuses and styles, but of particular note is the class-based Concert Band Program (hereafter CBP).[10] This program is central to the overarching music program at School One, and it is unlike ensemble programs offered in other ACT schools.[11] Rather than being a co-curricular elective, the CBP is offered in class time. There is also a classroom-based program that is structured around solo or small ensemble performance, called Performance Music.[12] Denise spoke to the high retention rate within the CBP, highlighting that music is one of the most popular and successful subjects within the school.

> Denise: And then the real backbone of our program is our [CBP], which is also school-based, but assessed on the music achievement standards. So the [CBP] is huge, it's crazy, it's got

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[8] In particular, the Band Program at School One (explored in detail in Chapter Ten) pre-dates the ACM, and the only changes in response to the ACM that Denise identified were the structure and wording of the achievement standards.

[9] Accounting for student diversity and interest can also be seen in Reimer's suggestions for a general music program, in which the majority of the course is targeted towards students being *aficionados* of music, but experiencing elements of *amateur* and *professional* engagement too (2003, p. 255).

[10] For a detailed exploration of the structural elements of the music program at School One, see Chapter Ten.

[11] An overview of music programs in the ACT is included in Chapter Ten.

[12] In addition, this school offers electives in senior years that integrate other art forms, such as the integration of music and drama in musical theatre. Although music is a component of these, they are not based on the ACM and are therefore beyond the scope of the present thesis.

> [100] kids, it's massive…and about three quarters of them go on. It's unbelievable (Denise 2017).

Although the retention rates for other programs and subjects were not discussed, Denise believes that the main reason music is popular within her school is that music is practical. This is a design ethos that she used within a variety of ACT curriculum frameworks, most recently ECTL, and it remains viable within the context of the ACM. However, Denise also pointed to the programs offered by other schools as examples of how the ACM can also encompass traditional approaches based on a more even split between theory and practice—or as she put it, "chalk and talk" (Denise 2017)—and are delivered in a conventional class-based format.

In determining the implications for the ACM, it is first necessary to understand what Denise means by the terms *practical* and *traditional*. She likens traditional methods of music education to what she experienced in her university degree: a focus on theory and music appreciation that remains distinctly Western in nature, with a focus on classical styles that start at the Baroque period and end in the twentieth century, and with limited exploration of music from other cultures. Furthermore, such traditional programs offer few opportunities for students to engage in performance-based activities.

> AC: Just before we go any further down the curriculum line, I just wanted to [find out], just in your mind, what the *traditional* sort of music education that you thought a prescriptive curriculum would [be]?
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> Denise: You do the Baroque period in Year 8, and then in Year 9 you do the Romantic period, and that sort of stuff.
>
> AC: So, traditional Western classical music as the priority?
>
> Denise: Absolutely. And to be *really out there*, we might do some music of other cultures (Denise 2017, emphasis added).

This view of traditional music education is akin to the *music education as aesthetic education* (hereafter MEAE) framework (Reimer 1970).[13] Despite what appears to be a continued emphasis on traditional music education in the United States, Australian music education has been structured upon the idea of comprehensive musicianship since the 1980s, and so

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[13] For an overview of the development of two contrasting approaches to music education philosophy (MEAE and praxis) see Chapter Two.

has not perpetuated the MEAE paradigm to the same extent (Department of Education, Science and Training 2005, pp. 17–18).[14]

In spite of the fact that MEAE has not been as influential on Australian education as it has elsewhere, aspects of the philosophy permeated Denise and Chris' education. They both reacted negatively to their educational experiences, and this reveals more similarities between their approaches than Denise, who believed that non-government schools tended to perpetuate traditional approaches, believed were present.

> Denise: In 2004 I started [a music teacher's feedback group], and so a lot of stuff was done through there, and there were two camps there: the group that really wanted a prescriptive curriculum, basically a syllabus, *that was very much like I was taught at uni*. You know…what you would teach in the [19]80s, *the very traditional, which really frightened me*… (Denise 2017, emphasis added).

> Chris: …*I try to really avoid offering music the way it was offered to me when I went through school*, which was you had to do an AMEB theory grade, and…your theory grade was completely divorced from any other experiences you had, so it was just like pulling teeth, it was just…ridiculous, how you had to learn all this stuff (Chris et al. 2018, emphasis added).

Despite Denise's assumption that School Four would be a good example of her concept of a traditional music program, Chris's comments suggest that hers is an extreme perspective. While the School Four program is undoubtedly more conventional than what has been implemented in School One, it is not the traditional program that Denise assumed would be present. In fact, Sam claimed that the program at School Four is also practically based.

> Sam (directed at Chris): …you've *really promoted a practical focus*, particularly in the early years, which I really support…people are *playing music*, and they're *creating music*, and *everything else is justified through that*, which gives it meaning (Chris et al. 2018, emphasis added).

The program at School Four encourages an equal integration of performance, composition and listening tasks in a classroom format, which seems to be in stark contrast to the "80%–90%" (Denise 2017) performance focus at School One. Implicit in this assumption is that the term *practical* is commonly used to describe performance activities by music teachers—for example, both Denise and Alice referred to "prac" when describing students playing their instruments (Denise 2017, Alice 2017). Sam's usage of the term, however, encompasses other activities: from his perspective, all activities can be taught practically.[15]

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[14] See Chapter Two.

[15] I also used *practical* as an alternative to *performance* when I interviewed Denise. Bowman (2005b) discussed how performing seems to be utilised to describe practical music-making: "Moreover, 'performing' seems at times to serve as a kind of shorthand for productive engagement in general (musicing), leaving open important

Denise interpreted practical in a very literal sense, where students have their instruments in their hands for as much time as possible. In such a scenario practical and performance are interchangeable terms. Aspects of music that are conventionally taught in a more academic setting, such as theory and composition, are taught in practice. Denise believes that this style of teaching is more valuable for the students, although admitted that some activities, such as composition, can be difficult to deliver adequately. By contrast, Chris works with a less literal interpretation of practical that reflects a praxial understanding of the term. In the classroom programs at School Four, courses are structured to equally address the three elements of the ACM: listening, performing, and composing.[16] Instead of interpreting practical to simply mean playing an instrument, this school has adopted an approach that equates practical to engaging with music in an approximation of how real-world practitioners use knowledge and skills, which aligns with the seventh praxial characteristic: a praxial curriculum should encourage approximations of real-life musical practice.[17] This is best captured through Chris's approach to theory and composition: instead of teaching theory through abstract and isolated theory booklets, he has structured courses so that theory is taught through composition exercises.

> Chris: What we try to do is teach the theory component through composition, and composition exercises. If we're looking at a particular topic, they're going to do…a twelve [or] sixteen bar composition, in a particular style or a topic. But your composition [has] got to show your understanding of these things, which we have pulled from the [ACM] (Chris et al. 2018).

There is always a musical outcome from theory work, and it is not positioned as an exercise in abstract theoretical understanding: Chris is strongly opposed to the notion of teaching theory in a way that is separate from any kind of practice at all, such as through the use of theory booklets. Therefore, despite external assumptions, the music program at School Four is in line with contemporary trends in music education and could even be described as being praxial in its approximations of real-world musical engagement.[18] By contrast, School One

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questions as to the nature of significance of performance proper as opposed, for instance, to things such as composing and arranging" (p. 144).

[16] This is not elements as in the *elements of music*. Rather, this is the terminology used by Chris to describe the organising strands of the ACM, making and responding. While some of the terminology at this school gets confused because of the unique curriculum arrangements, categories of performing, listening, and composing (sometimes referred to as *creating*) are common across all curriculum documents that they use.

[17] See Chapter Two.

[18] In saying this, the sense I got from the group interview is that music at School Four is based in Western art music traditions, and it does not satisfactorily deal with improvisation (see Chapter Five). Without course documentation, I cannot be conclusive about this supposition.

offers a practical program, but in a far more performative sense of the term that also approximates real-world engagement with music, this time in ensemble performance settings. Both schools produce successful music programs and prioritise music within the school culture more generally, but have achieved their success through different interpretations of the curriculum documents. Therefore, Denise's assertion is correct: different types of programs can be implemented under the auspices of the ACM.

7.3.2 Interpretation by non-teachers

The question of interpretation raises a point from Matthew, who was alone in highlighting that students and parents may have trouble interpreting the ACM or reports based on it. He felt that clarity of information was potentially lacking in the curriculum because of the generic terminology and the looseness of the achievement standards (see Chapter Four). Prior to the implementation of the ACM, reporting at School Three was very clear and precise, but since the introduction of the ACM the assessment of music has been presented through rubrics. These often repeat the ACM content descriptions and achievement standards verbatim, and Matthew believes that some of the clarity has been lost.

> Matthew: I think when the students look at the reports...and you've got the different levels [on the rubric], it sometimes...might not be clear to the parents or to the students...Some parents and guardians will not read [anything], just look...They just look at it as A, B, C, D, E on the report card, and that's all they want to know (Matthew 2017).

Matthew's criticism of the ACM was coupled with a critique of the ways in which he believes parents and students approach their reports, which needs to be qualified. It is important to note that the primary audience for the entire Australian Curriculum are teachers (ACARA n.d.-w, version 8.3) and that it would be difficult for the ACM to be written to take students and parents into account, as well as satisfying the professional requirements of teachers.[19] The choice to present reports as rubrics is not the responsibility of the ACM, as different jurisdictions and schools are responsible for assessment design and reporting.[20] The

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[19] The curriculum states that "The primary audience...is teachers. The curriculum is concise and is expressed in plain language while preserving a complexity appropriate for professional practitioners" (ACARA n.d.-w, version 8.3). This is coupled with the statement that the Australian Curriculum "makes clear to teachers, parents, students and others in the wider community what is to be taught, and the quality of learning expected of young people as they progress through school" (n.d.-w).
[20] Jurisdictional responsibility in assessment design is indicated through the statement that "The Australian Curriculum can be used *flexibly* by schools, according to jurisdictional and system policies and schedules, to develop programs that meet the educational needs of their students and that extend and challenge students"

beneficiaries of the ACM are ultimately the students, so their comprehension of the curriculum materials is important. If Matthew's assertion is correct and parents and students do not read reports in detail, then this revelation is problematic. However, his critique of parents veils the fact that his target is, in fact, the clarity of the ACM.

7.3.3 Curriculum as guideline

Matthew and the teachers from School Four explicitly mentioned that the ACM is a good guideline, which recalls the earlier statement from Goodlad: that a national curriculum cannot be anything more than a "helpful guideline" (1994, p. 131, in Elliott and Silverman 2014, p. 394).[21] Matthew described this as the ACM indicating reasonable achievement standards while leaving the curriculum content up to individual teachers, whereas Chris and Sam suggested that the outcomes of the ACM are "suggested minimum standards" that are "idealistic" (Chris et al. 2018).

Defining the ACM's outcomes as suggested minimum standards requires some clarification. Chris stipulated that these standards are *suggested* because students entering Year 7 at School Four are very rarely able to understand music at the Year 5–6 standard, which is the minimum standard because it is the final band of learning where all five Arts subjects are compulsory (ACARA n.d.-x, version 8.3). These teachers emphasised the links between primary and secondary programs, which will be explored further in Chapter Eight.

> Chris: And so that's one of the problems of having such [a] defined content and skill level…we do have kids who [achieve it], but…ten times out of ten…they're having private instrumental lessons and they're gaining all of that knowledge and content outside of school, not inside school…I don't know any kids who have come out of, particularly our junior school, who don't learn an instrument and still hit those marks, *because of what they've come out of their classroom program [having learned]* (Chris et al. 2018, emphasis added).[22]

At School Four, the music teachers do not enforce standards upon students in Year 7. Their primary concern is to instil a sense of enjoyment in music making in their students. To do

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(ACARA n.d.-l, version 8.3, emphasis added). In addition, students complete "summative assessment for the purposes of twice-yearly reporting *by schools* to parents and carers on the progress and achievement of students" (n.d.-l, emphasis added).

[21] Goodlad's statement referred to "a curriculum dreamed up out of one head" (1994), which is obviously inaccurate when referring to the ACM. In the context of *Music Matters*, his point is directed at curricula devised by subject matter experts who do not teach in the classroom.

[22] In referring to "such [a] defined content and skill level" (Chris et al. 2018), Chris was referring to the anomalous knowledge and skills of the ACM, discussed in Chapters Five and Eight.

this, they establish the ability of each individual student through pre-testing, and from this they assign students work that will challenge them while still allowing them to feel successful.[23] However, this work is designed to match the categories of the achievement standards in the ACM, which serves as a guide. This led to Sam's statement that they consider the achievement standards of the ACM as an idealistic indication of what students should be achieving, but they ultimately use the pre-tests to determine what is actually realistic for students to achieve.

As students progress through their music studies at School Four, the focus shifts from the realistic, student-led standard of Year 7, to actually meeting the indicated standards for Year 10. This is due to the unique position of School Four within the interview sample: as an independent non-government school, students can continue through to Year 12, rather than moving to external senior secondary colleges at the end of Year 10.[24] Therefore, in designing their secondary curriculum, the teachers at School Four are aware of the standards required for successful engagement in music in Years 11 and 12.[25] This focus on pre-tertiary study is a defining characteristic of the music program at School Four, as the standard for Year 10 is the starting point for pre-tertiary music. Therefore, it becomes imperative for students to actually reach the achievement standards towards the end of Year 9 and Year 10, and as such the program becomes less flexible.[26]

In contrast to the progressively less-flexible program at School Four, Matthew believes that teachers and students should aim for the achievement of the requisite standards from the start of Year 7:

> Matthew: I think if you are a teacher who really wants to cover all the areas you should…And really, if you think about it, say if you're taking…the Year 9–10 [classes], you

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[23] Elliott and Silverman (2014) outline how students can feel successful in a praxial context. The challenges they face in their learning must be balanced against their present levels of musical understanding: too easy, and students experience boredom; too difficult, and they experience anxiety or frustration (pp. 378–380).

[24] In Canberra, government secondary schools cover Years 7–10. For Years 11 and 12, which are defined as *senior secondary* or *pre-tertiary*, students attend colleges that only cater to those two year levels. By contrast, independent schools have the capacity to cover all years of primary, secondary, and senior secondary schooling.

[25] It appears they are more aware of this than teachers from schools that do not continue through to Year 12—the only references to music beyond Year 10 I encountered in other interviewees were two oblique references to students studying music at university by Denise and Alice.

[26] The approach these teachers take with Year 7 and 8 students is also an example of student-centred learning, discussed below.

should have covered the appropriate level of music theory, aural training, music history…
(Matthew 2017).

His interpretation of the document as a guideline stems from the fact that learning activities are not specified within the ACM: the suggested elaborations of content descriptions are simply examples. However, the detailed skills and knowledge are comparatively prescriptive, and is what I suggest Matthew referred to when he stated that there is "no doubt" about what needs to be taught (Matthew 2017). Therefore, Matthew's freedom of interpretation comes down to different ways that teachers can work towards the same objectives.

Matthew made explicit reference to his belief that the ACM is well-suited to his style of teaching. However, he conceded two points about it: firstly, that it is a broad document, implying other teachers with different approaches may find different benefits in it; and secondly, that different teachers are likely to continue working to their strengths, instead of the content within the ACM.

> Matthew: What I like about the…Australian Curriculum [is that] I can put those specific outcomes to any of the year groups, because they're so nicely broad…the range and kinds of outcomes, they apply across Year 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, [and] 12. They're just varying degrees…And I know there are schools around which will concentrate [on their strengths], because the teachers often teach to their strengths. So if someone is really good at performance, [they] might not be [as good at other areas], and they'll find all kinds of reasons to justify [performance] (Matthew 2017).

The fact that Alice has far more rigidly defined programs but has also found the ACM to be highly beneficial supports Matthew's inference that teachers will derive different benefits from the ACM. His suggestion that teachers may work to their strengths and neglect other areas is supported by the responses of the teachers at School Four, particularly in relation to composition.[27]

In adapting School One's pre-existing programs, the idea of "school-based subjects" (Denise 2017), or subjects designed by schools without reference to an external curriculum, was introduced by Denise. She explained that they have been prevalent within the ACT for a long time, and that there is provision for school-based subjects within the ACM.[28] Within the

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[27] Chris identified composition as the most challenging component of music education—see Chapter Eight. In addition, Lorraine found difficulty in connecting with the Indigenous Priority, and prefers to work with Javanese Gamelan music instead—see Chapter Nine.

[28] I have found no explicit reference to *school-based subjects* in the ACM. I suggest that it is inferred through the suggestion that Arts subjects can be integrated: "The Australian Curriculum: The Arts Foundation–Year 10 enables exploration of the dynamic relationships between arts subjects. This can involve students making and responding to artworks in traditional, contemporary and emerging forms, using materials, techniques and technologies from one arts subject to support learning in another. In this twenty-first century arts curriculum,

interview sample, all participants spoke about adapting the ACM in some way to meet their needs, although School One certainly had the most strongly defined school-based programs. These included an elective course for the school musical, a writing and performance course for an original music theatre production, and a music production course that covers sound reinforcement, staging, and lighting. Each of these courses took elements from the ACM, but were all assessed against different achievement standards: for example, the musical theatre courses were assessed against the drama achievement standards, while the music production course was its own separate entity run as a trade qualification. School Two and School Three also have a music production course, but their versions utilised the ACM achievement standards. Music production is not a specifically articulated component of the ACM—it is inferred by reference to the ICT capability and students using technology—so this indicates that some teachers are willing to take advantage of technology in their music classrooms, despite their lack of prior training. In particular, Matthew referred to the fact that he is not particularly well-trained in music production, but he knows enough to teach students about a topic that they are interested in. All of these school-based courses from any school are introduced in Years 9 and 10, and usually require students to have studied a music course in Years 7 or 8.

At School Four, there appear to be no current school-based subjects such as those encountered in the government schools. Sam made previous attempts to integrate music and mathematics, but he found that it was unsuccessful because the music component was overshadowed by mathematics. The issue with this subject was that students had no opportunity to learn the fundamentals of each discipline in isolation—they were integrated from the start. The fifth praxial characteristic—that music should be taught as a specialist subject—is relevant here. Within it, I suggested that the integration of art forms is advisable when appropriate but is reliant on students having already developed an understanding of each art form. It would appear that the successful combined subjects seen in the government schools ensure that students have a pre-existing understanding of each individual discipline before their integration.

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students explore innovative and hybrid art forms which extend and challenge art making and combine practices of two or more art forms" (ACARA n.d.-r, version 8.3).

7.4 Student-centred learning

As explored in Chapter Two, student-centred learning is one of the main emphases of a process-based model of curriculum. The idealised praxial characteristics—also introduced in Chapter Two—fit comfortably within a process-based model too, and although I did not include an explicit *student-centred* characteristic, it is implied through the consistent consideration of appropriate frames of reference for study. Alice attempted to teach a student-centred program via three methods. For theory work, she took advantage of resources created by an external teaching content provider to give each student work that will be of the most benefit to them. Rather than having to create an individual work plan for each student, the externally-sourced resources are presented at a variety of levels, so she can simply give students individually appropriate materials. In performance, she took advantage of the language that describes types of engagement with music, rather than specific outcomes. In this way, students of different levels of technical ability can be assessed from the same criteria. Finally, the separation of the concepts of composition and notation allowed Alice to assess the ability of students to organise and structure a piece of music without being reliant on their ability to notate music.

> Alice: I do like the composition [description], because you don't have to mark them on the theory element at the same time. My [Year] 7s and 8s do a GarageBand composition, so they don't actually have to write any notes down. So I can grade them on how well they can make a piece fit together, how well they can reflect a story, that sort of thing. And in GarageBand, they just play on the [virtual] drum kit, play on the [virtual] piano, and it records it for them. Then the theory element is separate, so that kids that really struggle to put a note on a piece of paper can still get the GarageBand bit… (Alice 2017).

This is enabled through the ACM's rationale, which states that music is aurally-based and can be understood without recourse to notation (ACARA n.d.-u, version 8.3). However, there is an inherent contradiction in that the Year 7–8 content descriptions relating to composition make specific reference to students' ability to notate scores.[29] This is an obvious reference to the use of notation, but Alice's stance captures the essence of the rationale and also reflects real-life challenges and tensions around notation. Prior to the introduction of the ACM Alice made her students compose with notation which resulted in "compositions that were just random notes drawn on a page" (Alice 2017). By changing the nature of composition to reflect the organisation of original musical ideas by any means, the students'

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[29] See Chapter Five.

ability to compose can be assessed appropriately in relation to their understanding, and meaning and intent can be brought back into composition-based activities.

As seen in Chapter Four, the achievement standards in music are descriptive. There is no stipulated standard that students need to meet in their performance, a point that some secondary teachers in the curriculum review process were opposed to (ACARA 2012d).[30] However, the present time allocated to primary school music would make a prescribed level of achievement impractical (ACARA 2013).[31] Music is offered as a compulsory subject in either Year 7 or 8 at School Two, and it is highly likely that many students will have had limited musical experiences in primary school. Conversely, there may also be students who have significant musical experience, so it is important that assessment is relevant for such a diverse range of ability. For Alice, this means broad language relating to performance is essential. She believes that the ACM is suitably broad: terms that are used to describe music performance are descriptive with no stipulation of standard implied (ACARA n.d.-r, version 8.3). For example, the terms *practise* and *rehearse* or *perform* and *present* are used interchangeably. This descriptive terminology is expanded upon further: students practise to "develop technical and expressive skills," with no mention of standard, and they perform "using techniques and expression appropriate to style" (n.d.-r). Alice was particularly happy with this positioning of performance in the ACM, because the variable ability of her students meant that a stipulated standard would be an unrealistic goal for many students.

> Alice: The performance stuff…[is] easy…because we've always done [performance]. It's quite similar to…ECTL…because they had the *making* and *reflecting*…you've always done performances at school, everybody does them in schools, and because the outcome is quite broad, it means it's really easy [to apply it to] kids that have never done [music] before, [and the] kids that have done [music] before… (Alice 2017).

When students have some experience with music, Alice defines success in performance assessment as how well they selected their repertoire to match their abilities and how they interpreted the music, instead of attaching a grade level to each band of learning. In this way, students are not encouraged to choose music that is beyond their level of ability to

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[30] For example: "The achievement standards for Year 10 music demand nothing of students other than vague creativity, free from a knowledge-based context. At this level, after 11 years of a music curriculum, they should be showing highly developed musicianship with very specific and tangible outcomes" (Secondary teacher, NSW, in ACARA 2012d, p. 74).

[31] For an overview of primary school music in Australia, see Chapter Four.

meet an arbitrary standard.[32] However, Alice acknowledged that a difficulty that stems from this broad language is finding a sense of progression, which will be explored later in this chapter.

Student-centred learning is also important at School Four, where the suggested minimum standards of the ACM are adapted to the needs of individual students. This caters to the wide range of abilities present in the School Four music classrooms: the students for whom the ACM's standards are unrealistic, and those who find them too simplistic (Chris et al. 2018). However, despite the benefits of broadness for secondary teachers, Jody highlighted that flexibility is a significant problem for generalist teachers.

> Chris: Well that's what I said, that was the "experiences in sounds and silences" that came out, remember that?
>
> Jody: Yeah, yeah.
>
> Chris: And for every [band], that's all it said, various experiences in sounds and silences…
>
> Jody: And that doesn't mean anything. And I think they've kind of done that because people have gone, well, you know, "if you're not a specialist teacher, how do you teach that?" And it's like, well, *that's kind of the problem*… (Chris et al. 2018, emphasis added).

Here, Jody is suggesting that generalist teachers lack the specialist knowledge to interpret non-specific curricula. As a newly-trained teacher, Lorraine defended the capabilities of primary school generalist teachers, and all teachers at School Four acknowledged that primary teachers face challenges that are outside of their control. However, the broadness of the ACM, combined with the lack of expertise of generalist teachers, means that even if they attempt to teach music, they may not do so with intent or understanding. The teachers at School Four see the flexibility of a student-led curriculum as the cause of many problems in primary school music education, an opinion which echoes the responses of secondary music teachers in the ACM development process (see Chapter Three). However, the same flexibility is also a solution for these problems in secondary school; as secondary teachers are specialists in music, a broad curriculum can be interpreted adequately. As I noted in Chapter Four, I am unsure that a broad curriculum framework is the best approach to ensure consistent achievement amongst students in primary school: while idealistically a praxial curriculum may be best-practice across all levels of schooling, it may not be the most constructive practice in actuality.

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[32] See Elliott and Silverman's concept of progression in music (2014, pp. 378–381).

7.5 Negative reactions to broadness of language

One of the inherent challenges in a broad curriculum is that the language used within it must also be broad, and some teachers pointed to inconsistencies in the descriptive terminology used for the content descriptions and achievement standards. Alice identified this phenomenon as a cause for concern because much of this descriptive language relies on interpretation, and she believes that teachers will manipulate the discursive gap and interpret such terms differently. The teachers at School Four took a hard-line stance on the issue, and they suggested that the ACM may be irrelevant because of the overly generic terminology and language used within the document. They believed that it did not tell teachers anything. This was not an opinion that was shared by any of the other teachers within the sample.

7.5.1 Inconsistent language

Among the government school teachers, Alice was the most critical of the language in the ACM. Her main issue with it was the fact that language used in the responding content descriptions is inconsistent, and it does not actually indicate what students are supposed to learn.

> Alice: …analysis and evaluate and judge all get to…a grey area. It's like [ACARA] tried to use fancy words, but they're not really telling you what they want the kids to learn…for 7s and 8s they've [said] analyse the music, and then 9s and 10s…they've [said] evaluate it, judge it, and trying to find the distinction between what they actually mean [is challenging]. They haven't defined those terms anywhere, and lots of people interpret them very differently (Alice 2017).

While Matthew also found some issues with the language, he indicated that preference for particular terminology is a matter of personal taste. However, he did not give any examples of wording that he would like to be changed:

> Matthew: …it's a matter of taste, personal taste, some of the wording could be changed a little bit, but in essence everything is there (Matthew 2017).

At School Four, the teachers expressed their issues with the language of the ACM by describing it as vague. Indeed, this is how they characterise the entire document. It is apparent that the teachers here—particularly Chris—were hoping for a prescriptive national curriculum, and the ACM is comparatively vague in relation to the HSC and IB frameworks

already used at this school. Therefore, their characterisation of the ACM is understandable in context.

A specific instance of vagueness within the ACM occurs through some of the responding content descriptions. As a combined music and history teacher, Lorraine could see parallels between these content descriptions, and the language used in other learning areas. However, Chris did not see how these were relevant to music.

> Lorraine: In some ways, it's almost like a social science. "Identifying roles and responsibilities in music making activities and contexts as both performers and audience members" (Lorraine's direct quote from the ACM, ACARA n.d.-r, version 8.3).
>
> Chris: Yeah, what the hell is that? (Chris et al. 2018).

This interaction between the most recently trained member of staff, and a teacher with over thirty years' experience, indicates a difference of opinion between these two teachers from different generations. The content description that Lorraine quoted is an example of students learning through music—a contemporary perspective that is considered part of best practice, and encourages the use of music as a tool to teach transferrable knowledge, perspectives, and skills (Bowman 2012, pp. 31–33).[33] However, Bowman also pointed out that learning through music needs to be coupled with discrete learning in music—learning about music for the sake of developing music-specific knowledge and skills (p. 32). Lorraine's recent completion of her teacher training may indicate she was introduced to these concepts in her courses. However, Chris completed his teacher training over thirty years ago, and although he acknowledged that he has changed his approach from a product focus to process focus, his goal appears to be teaching music for the sake of students learning musical skills. This highlights a disconnect between the expectations that these two teachers had for the ACM, and the vagueness of language within the ACM only appears to exacerbate this issue.

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[33] Bowman (2012) defined educating *in* music as *educare* and educating *through* music as *educere*. He stated that "*educare*…has become more or less the default setting for institutionalized [sic] musical instruction, while…*educere*…is generally presumed to follow" (Bowman 2012, p. 31). He equated *educare* with training: "[developing] and [refining] the skills and understandings necessary to achieve clearly specified outcomes." By contrast, he equated *educere* with educating: "…the kinds of teaching and learning that have *growth* as their ultimate aim" (Bowman 2012, pp. 31–32, emphasis in original).

7.5.2 "Irrelevant document"

Most teachers within the present sample indicated that the freedom to interpret the ACM in their own way was a benefit. They noted that they could utilise their pre-existing programs that, without too many amendments, matched the ACM. Chris did not disagree with this; however, he also gave some further insight into the curriculum design process that frames this benefit in a different light.

> Chris: …the National Curriculum is really a mishmash of all the other curriculums around the place…New South Wales absolutely refused to change their curriculum…and Victoria said the same thing, and Queensland said the same thing, then South Australia, and so [on]. What they've ended up with is…almost an irrelevant document (Chris et al. 2018).

Parts of the curriculum design process support this narrative. There were several instances where feedback respondents suggested their own state-based curriculum as an ideal framework from which ACARA could develop the ACM (ACARA 2011b, 2012d).[34] Stating that the ACM is irrelevant is a strong claim, but there is logic behind it. The "mishmash" (Chris et al. 2018) of the ACM could have drawn from the best elements of the pre-existing state curricula, but this arguably did not occur. At present, there is little guidance for implementation and plenty of freedom for the selection of content, but the specific and prescriptive skills and knowledge do not support the overarching objective of the ACM. Arguably, specifically-mandated time allocations and total freedom in skills, content and knowledge would have been a better way to organise the ACM. Consequently, the ACM has been of little influence within at least two schools in the present sample. In this narrative, the ACM is incapable of doing anything better than any of the previous state curricula. For example, ECTL captured a process-based model of curriculum far more comprehensively by offering teachers total freedom to work with the different Arts subjects in any way that they wished (ACT Government). By contrast, the NSW curriculum offered prescriptive guidance and mandated hours, and although it did not limit its focus to Western styles of music, it made no claims of being representative of MUSICS either (NSW Government). It is this contradiction of pedagogical methods within the same curriculum framework that underlies Chris's assertion of irrelevance.

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[34] For example, a secondary music teacher from NSW stated that "The existing NSW Board of Studies Stage 5 Music curriculum is excellent for Year 10 students with detail, specifics, terminology, symbols, skills, tools and processes" (ACARA 2012d, p. 75). To be fair, this teacher also mentioned the benefits of the Queensland and Western Australian music curricula.

Although Matthew had little in the way of criticism for the ACM, his perception of how other teachers do and should engage with and implement the curriculum does call into question its relevance. Matthew believes that teachers will ultimately teach the programs that they wish to deliver: if they want to accurately deliver the ACM, they will, and if they do not want to deliver it, they will not.

> Matthew: And I guess *[teachers in] every specific school,* or different level, will do *whatever they want…* (Matthew 2017, emphasis added).

This statement, coupled with Matthew's earlier comments about teachers working to their strengths, suggests that the ACM could be easily ignored. From Matthew's perspective, if teachers do not want to accurately deliver the ACM, there is little to stop them. The moderation procedures that schools engage with do enforce some level of consistency across the outcomes at small clusters of schools, but this is only related to assessed items of work.[35] While this process is useful for ensuring consistency in outcomes across schools, it does not inform course structure or content. Consequently, in three of the sample schools the teachers were delivering programs that were very similar to what they delivered prior to the introduction of the ACM, although I do not suggest that these teachers ignored the curriculum. However, from the perspective of program design, the ACM has been of little influence.

To put this scenario in perspective, the accurate delivery of the curriculum is a secondary consideration for Denise. Due to her involvement with other music teachers in Canberra and her considerable experience, she had a unique opinion about the relevance of curriculum documents generally. In her view, forming positive relationships with the students and providing music programs that they can engage with and relate to was more important than adhering to the curriculum.

> Denise: You just need to have great relationships with your kids, and you have to create a product that the kids want. Now, over time you can mould that to something that they need, but if you start off with something that they want, then you've got your building blocks… (Denise 2017).

If the ACM had enforced a prescriptive, class-based structure, I suggest that Denise would have continued to deliver her programs as they presently exist. Her music programs are an

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[35] In the ACT, government schools moderate results through small "clusters" of schools. Matthew indicated that within his cluster all music teachers agree on about "95%" of the outcomes. This process is to ensure that what is considered an "A" at one school is equivalent to what another school considers an "A."

engrained facet of music at School One and are evidently "products" (Denise 2017) that the students want. The strength of the relationships between her and the students is further evidenced by a community concert band, also run by Denise, that is comprised of many ex-students after their graduation from School One. Although Denise likes the ACM, it has had little influence on the music programs at her school.

It is interesting to note that the two least-experienced teachers within the sample took the most influence from the ACM. Lorraine encouraged the teachers at School Four to at least consider the content descriptions and achievement standards of the ACM in their course design. In her own classes, she also referred back to an earlier ACM draft that was used during her study to become a teacher. She preferred the draft because it was more concise and precise than the present curriculum. She took on the role of a foil to the other three teachers here and ensured that even though the others did not prioritise the accurate delivery of the ACM, they at least accounted for it within their course documentation.

Alice took the most influence from the ACM. Her programs are reliant on the elements of music and the separation of notation from composition, and she also acknowledged that she prefers the firmer guidelines than those presented in ECTL. However, it would be interesting to consider her response to the ACM if its introduction had been delayed for a few years, because Alice also acknowledged that she was still developing her approach to music teaching when the ACM was introduced.

> Alice: So I only had [ECTL] for the first two years…of teaching…I was still developing programs anyway, and I think the national curriculum helped streamline those programs a little bit more. It just put a little bit of guidance in there.
>
> AC: Has [the ACM] changed much of what you're doing?
>
> Alice: It obviously has, but I wouldn't be able to tell you a specific part of it that I've gone, "because the national curriculum prescribed that I do this, I do it this way." I think, for me, it's just been natural. As I develop as a teacher, I'm developing down that path instead of this one (Alice 2017).

So, dismissing the ACM as being irrelevant is too simplistic. Some teachers have been influenced by it to varying degrees, and some have not. According to Matthew, this would be the case regardless of how prescriptive the curriculum actually was. However, the underlying sentiment of Chris's point is valid because there are no mechanisms in place to ensure that teachers are accurately implementing the ACM. In addition, the ACT's moderation procedures are useful for ensuring consistency in standard between different

schools, but they cannot ensure that schools are delivering what the ACM actually says. The fact that some schools choose to continue to deliver their pre-existing programs with slight amendments, while others completely reconsider how they deliver music, highlights that the influence of the ACM is inconsistent. This undermines the authority of the ACM, despite Matthew's suggestion that it carries the weight of being the national curriculum.[36] Ultimately, the relevance of the ACM is determined by each individual teacher, and there appears to be some correlation between the amount of experience a teacher has, and how much influence they take from it. Further research investigating a larger sample size would be able to determine the extent to which this occurs.

7.6 Discussion

The broadness of the ACM aligns well with praxial approaches to music education, which can also be seen in the responses of the teachers, particularly through an emphasis on student-centred learning. Their understandings of best practice appear to be based on knowing what works best for their students and is also undoubtedly influenced by the shift to contemporary approaches to teacher training that reflect a praxial influence (Roy, Baker, and Hamilton 2012, pp. 18–19). Regardless, the prevalence of praxial ideas in the interviews—through practical, student-centred learning—make clear its accepted position as contemporary best practice in music education.

According to the teachers, there is scope for a wide variety of interpretations of the ACM: Denise's CBP fits, as do Alice's variety of elements-influenced electives, and even School Four's program that is derived from the IB and HSC does little to contradict the national curriculum. Therefore, within the present sample, it appears that anything goes, and anything can work. Despite this, there are also noted issues with such a broad framework, particularly in relation to the consistency of language and the overall relevance of the curriculum. There are potential ramifications for these issues in schools that teach music but do not have strong or well-defined music programs. Given the obvious freedom that the sampled teachers have in delivering their programs within the ACM, the next two chapters will explore why much of what the teachers do is remarkably similar.

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[36] See Chapter Eight.

A noted limitation of the present sample is that it represents schools that have strong music programs and that are listed as *above average* on the OECD scale (see Chapter Six). This indicates that the majority of students in these schools are from socioeconomically privileged families. Given the status of school music in the *National Review* (2005), and the lack of evidence suggesting that this has changed in the intervening years (Crooke 2017), it is reasonable to suggest that many schools in the ACT, and across Australia more broadly, struggle with music. The closest to this status within the current sample is School Two, and Alice is also the teacher who took the most influence from the ACM in designing her programs. While she attributed this scenario to her relative inexperience in teaching, it is also possible that it occurred because the music programs at School Two are not as well-established as those in other schools. For example, School One's programs are engrained in the school culture, and Denise explicitly stated that she would prioritise her existing program structure over any curriculum framework (Denise 2017). By contrast, School Two is not renowned for its music culture. Alice's experiences could indicate that teachers with limited experience, or in schools that struggle with music are more likely to use the curriculum documents for guidance. Alice and Lorraine both expressed some frustration with the limited guidance of the ACM: it appears that guidance for those who want it is not always articulated within the ACM. I suggest that the lack of guidance partly stems from the inconsistencies in the ACM as discussed in Chapters Three, Four and Five: for example, the underlying bias towards Western styles of music stemming from the uncritical usage of rogue terminology (see Chapter Five), and inherent tension between implementing highly prescriptive content within an otherwise broad curriculum framework.

Chapter Eight: The implications of prescriptive elements and the challenges of composition

8.1 Introduction

The dominant narrative that emerged during the interviews was that the ACM is a broad document that can be interpreted in a variety of ways. Its broadness is reflected in both its language and its structure. Regardless of whether they liked the ACM or not, all of the interviewed teachers made some comment about its broadness and how it affected their interpretation of it. By linking these interpretations to the teachers' prior experiences in music and education, it was also possible to gain an understanding of how they had manipulated the discursive gap which allowed for significant range of pedagogical approaches to be implemented. All teachers believed that they were adequately and accurately delivering the ACM, and it is the broadness of the curriculum that allowed this to occur.

In this chapter I will examine the interview responses that did not conform to the dominant narrative of broadness. These responses were usually directed at the examples of skills and knowledge that were established as being prescriptive in Chapter Five. The presence of prescriptive examples in an otherwise generic document is jarring and polarised opinions within the interview sample. The examples were also seen as the underlying cause of primary school students' inability to attain the achievement standards for music, and Alice highlighted the apparent impossibility of delivering all of the secondary content in a limited timeframe. However, some teachers commented on how examples give them a set of clear outcomes that they can work towards, and that the two-year band system enables flexibility in the realisation of the ACM, meaning that the teachers have derived benefits from standardised approaches. In addition, Matthew discussed how the national curriculum carries authority and standardises the implementation of music across the country, but this claim contradicts much of what he said in his interview so is examined in considerable detail. The pedagogical positioning of the ACM resists standardisation, thereby undermining its authority in Matthew's sense. It appears that Matthew was discussing a hypothetical, idealised realisation of the ACM that conforms with his own vision for music education.

Composition is also examined in this chapter because it is considered challenging to implement by the majority of the interviewed teachers, which contrasts with the apparent

ease with which they implement performance tasks. Indeed, the teachers at School Four stated that the most challenging aspect of teaching music is composition, because they claim that the majority of music teachers are not adequately trained in it. Examples from the other schools support this claim. However, the School Four teachers are considering composition in a conventional sense, and not its broader ACM-sanctioned definition. Therefore, the challenges associated with teaching composition are interrogated further, particularly the role that the ACM has in addressing them.

In this chapter I argue that the issues associated with both the prescriptive elements and composition are indicative of compromises in pedagogical approaches that are often incompatible. I begin by exploring the various responses to the prescriptive elements of the ACM and continue by assessing the implications that these prescriptive elements have on primary school music, which was a central topic of discussion at School Four. I then explore the various opinions relating to the clarity of outcomes based on the ACM, particularly in comparison with the previous ACT curriculum framework, *Every Chance to Learn* (hereafter ECTL). Matthew's comments regarding the benefits of a national curriculum are then explored. Finally, the challenges facing composition are elaborated. The fact that composition remains problematic is troubling as it was indicated as an area for improvement within the *National Review* (2005). It indicates a lack of action in Australian music education policy.

Identity of ACM	
Code	**Analytical notes**
Prescriptive	All teachers stated that the ACM was more prescriptive than the previous ACT curriculum framework for music. All teachers commented on the impossibility of addressing all prescriptive content in the ACM in the time allocated to music.
Program identity	
Code	**Analytical notes**
Practical	Denise stated that the system of banding years, and the clear outcomes associated with this method of curriculum organisation, aligns well with her practically-based Concert Band Program.
Conventional	Matthew elaborated significantly on the perceived benefits of having a national curriculum for music, including its validity across the entire country and its authority in the classroom.
Music education	
Code	**Analytical notes**
General	The teachers at School Four spoke at length regarding their ability to implement the ACM given the variable standard of students entering Year 7. Chris identified composition as a significant challenge in any music education program.

Table 21: Overview of codes that are extrapolated in Chapter Eight.

8.1.1 Categories and coding

The analysis in this chapter draws on teacher responses that highlighted the limited but pervasive prescriptive elements of the ACM, and the subsequent challenges or clarity that these brought to the teacher's programs. The full table of categories and codes can be seen in Chapter Six. The codes that are elaborated in the present chapter are listed in Table 21.

8.2 Prescriptive aspects of the ACM

Despite its broadness, the ACM is certainly more prescriptive than ECTL, in which the entire Arts learning area was allocated ten pages and every subject or learning area was divided into four sections: early childhood, later childhood, early adolescence, later adolescence (ACT Government, p. 16; pp. 82–92).[1] The allocation of subjects was not actually covered within this document, as the learning areas were presented as "essential learning achievements" (pp. 16–18) that all students should learn. As the Arts was presented as a collective, there were only passing references to music, and no specific content or standards were suggested. Therefore, for teachers whose foundation was ECTL, the introduction of the ACM gave them a more rigorous framework, because it contained music-specific content descriptions, achievement standards, and skills and knowledge. Of these three aspects*, skills and knowledge* is by far the most prescriptive.

The suggested *skills and knowledge* within the ACM were explored in Chapter Five. This information is divided into categories that stem from the elements of music: rhythm, pitch, dynamics and expression, timbre, texture, and structure. Each of these is expanded significantly for each band of schooling, so that teachers are given specific examples of what students should be learning. In this way, they almost function as elaborations of achievement standards, although it is important to note that they are presented with the caveat that they are suggested, and not compulsory. Regardless, they remain examples of specific types of musical engagement that are often taught through music theory. Alice found this content impossible to deliver.

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[1] In ECTL the term *learning area* was not capitalised. Therefore, I have avoided capitalising it in this brief discussion.

In School Two, the nature of students' rotations through Arts and Technologies subjects means that they only have one term of music in either Year 7 or 8.[2] It is a school-based choice to organise subjects in this way, but it is certainly influenced by the number of subjects and amount of content that the Australian Curriculum suggests all students should engage with. This limited timeframe means that students only receive ten weeks of classroom music across the entire 7–8 band, meaning that Alice faced a significant structural challenge:

> Alice: I think some of the requirements are a little unreasonable…they expect that kids in Year 7 and 8 will be able to identify major scales, know the bass clef, treble clef, ledger lines, do tonic triads, know dotted rhythms, compound time signatures…There's no way that you can teach them all that stuff in ten weeks, it's just impossible (Alice 2017).

The teachers at School Four also indicated that they found it impossible to achieve the prescribed standard despite their more generous time allocation in Years 7 and 8. At this school, music is a compulsory semester-long rotation in Year 7, which means that it is delivered for twenty weeks. Students can then elect to study music as a full-year subject in Year 8. Despite this, the teachers here were still unable to deliver the prescribed content of the ACM, which indicates a deeper, more systemic issue at play. The level of musical understanding that students attain through primary school is a factor here, and the teachers at School Four discussed this issue at some length.

In the majority of cases, the teachers at School Four deal with students entering Year 7 who cannot match the prescribed standard for music in Years 5 and 6. This is the starting point for music in Year 7—what these teachers characterise as a "suggested minimum standard" (Chris et al. 2018)—and of the students who can perform at the prescribed level, Chris was unable to identify anyone who has attained it through classroom music alone in primary school. Because of this, Sam elaborated on his concept of the role of the curriculum. He described the outcomes and achievement standards of the ACM as being an "idealistic" suggestion of minimum standards (Chris et al. 2018), with more realistic content being delivered when appropriate (see Chapter Seven). One of Sam's aims was to "reveal the gift of music" to students (Sam 2018), and so he avoided arbitrarily delivering the prescribed outcomes just to tick boxes. Chris agreed: he will not "beat [students] into absolutely hating music so [the teachers] can tick a box to say 'yeah, we actually got you to [the correct

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[2] See Chapter Ten.

standard for Years] 7 and 8, and now you hate music…'" (Chris et al. 2018). Therefore, the prescriptive elements of the ACM are considered, but not enforced. Apparently, most students arrive at Year 7 with their level of musical understanding matching the Year 3–4 band, so the accurate delivery of the Year 7–8 examples would be idealistic for the majority of students at School Four.

8.2.1 Primary school music in the ACT

The teachers at School Four have direct exposure to primary music and senior secondary music within their own school, which is a unique perspective within the present sample. As such, they potentially had a greater understanding of the limitations of primary school music, and its effects on what they and their students can do in Year 7, than the other teachers did. Given the priority Chris, Sam, Lorraine, and Jody placed on discussing the implications of primary school music in the interview, they stated that many of the issues with music education nationally stem from primary music education. In particular, they highlighted that there is no mandated time allocation for music within the ACM.

> Chris: I think one of the big [reasons] why we're getting kids coming out of Year 6 who just can't do…the level they're supposed to do, [is] because there's [no] mandated [time allocations], [they're] just suggested (Chris et al. 2018).

School Four is obliged to the HSC and IB for its senior secondary curriculum, and hourly allocations for different subjects are mandated within the HSC. This also extends to the NSW secondary curriculum, where students need to do at least "120 indicative hours" per year of learning in music if they elect to do the subject (Board of Studies NSW 2009, p. 27). According to Chris, mandated hours are also part of the primary curriculum in NSW. By contrast, there are no mandated hours for any subject at either primary or secondary levels in the Australian Curriculum, merely suggestions. As explored in Chapter Four, the hourly suggestions are complicated further within the Arts because the time indicated is for the entire Learning Area. There is no guidance for schools about how they should implement individual Arts subjects (ACARA 2013, p. 9). In primary schools, further complications are caused by the ways that primary generalist teachers handle music, and the Arts more broadly.[3] As such, the range of musical experiences for primary students are variable.

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[3] See Chapter Four for a more detailed overview of primary school music.

Sam attributed the issues with music education to this variability, coupled with the lack of time and musical expertise that generalist teachers are challenged with.

> Sam: A lot of primary schools can choose where they put their allocations, and a lot of them don't have a music teacher so they're relying on classroom teachers to do a sing along… (Chris et al. 2018).

As established by Butler (2015), many generalist teachers lack the confidence to even deliver basic music tasks (pp. 31–36). This can be attributed to systemic issues in the music education of trainee teachers that prevents many of them from feeling confident in delivering music in the classroom, which were introduced in Chapter Four. This has a severe impact on what specialist secondary music teachers can teach their students: at School Four, the teachers generally need to start from the Year 3–4 band, not the idealistic Year 7–8 band. There appears to be a considerable disconnect between the idealistic achievement standards of the ACM and what is actually happening in the classroom, which highlights shortcomings in both the ACM and in teacher training. As it presently stands, the ACM does not reflect realistic achievement in music, and primary teachers arguably often cannot accurately implement the ACM.

8.3 Clear outcomes

A key point of difference between the ACM and ECTL is the increased clarity of outcomes and achievement standards in the ACM, with some teachers pointing to the increased clarity as a benefit for their own teaching.[4] For example, Alice found the increase in prescriptive content to be beneficial to support her responsibility as executive teacher for Arts and Technologies at School Two, while both Alice and Sam pointed to the elaborations of content descriptions as key components of their teaching style. Matthew believes that the ACM leaves "little doubt" about what is supposed to be taught (Matthew 2017). However, Lorraine was critical of the elaborations and suggested potential improvements in their application.

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[4] ECTL is characterised by the learning area of the arts being conceptualised as "the student creates, presents and appreciates artistic works" (ACT Government n.d., pp. 72–80). It is divided into four bands of development: early childhood, later childhood, early adolescence, and later adolescence. Achievement standards are called *markers of progress*, and must refer to the five subjects of the arts, not just one.

ECTL did not align with Alice's preferred level of guidance for a curriculum. She was essentially left to her own devices when designing programs, and she struggled to deliver these areas in satisfactory ways. The introduction of the ACM, and particularly the elements of music, had a dramatic effect that informs her current practice. All aspects of her programs are now based on these elements, so that the different activities or ways of engaging with music are treated as lenses through which students explore the elements of music.

> Alice: I like how it's all revolving around the elements of music, so that's in all of the achievement standards, all the content [descriptions], everything relates back to those five elements (Alice 2017).

The idea of common elements of music clarified her thinking in relation to what she would otherwise consider to be disparate aspects of musical study. As a secondary student, she was taught in a way that separated aspects of music learning—performance, composition, theory, and musicology—from each other, with no clear or explicit links made between how each area interacted with the others. Although Alice created a program that organised these different aspects individually, the elements of music allowed her to clearly express the links between each aspect to her students.

Despite the benefits that she derived from the elements of music, Alice stated that the ACM's skills and knowledge, while clear, were impossible to deliver in her program timeframes. This content is entirely based in Western concepts of music—a point that was not acknowledged by any of the teachers—and was referred to as *theory* by Alice.[5] The clarity of this content was also supported by Matthew and Sam, although Sam shared similar reservations about the realities of implementing it. Therefore, despite its clarity, the implementation of the skills and knowledge was viewed as a challenge of the ACM within the present sample.

The views of Alice and Sam aligned frequently. They both liked to refer to examples to stimulate critical reflection and inspire their own practice.[6] However, as the only music teacher in her school, Alice was not in a position where this was possible and pointed to the

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[5] The assumption that Western approaches to music are universal to all types of music in education is explored in the Introduction. The perpetuation of this in the ACM is explored in Chapters Four and Five. I account for some of the issues surrounding *theory* in Chapter Five, but for more information see Molk 2019. The sampled teacher's approaches to non-Western music are explored in Chapter Nine.

[6] Sam stated that "as a teacher I always enjoy the freedom to bring my strengths to a structure, but it's really good to have examples and materials…that [accompany] a structure like that" (Chris et al. 2018).

elaborations attached to each content description as a substitute. As an executive teacher with limited prior experience, these elaborations provided some guidance.

> Alice: I like that they've now put up some examples of the skills and assessment stuff. They hadn't done that for a little while. It was all English, Maths, they all had examples, but it's nice to see at least one example of where you're aiming for (Alice 2017).

This is similar to a suggestion made by Lorraine regarding elaborations and the Priorities, which will be discussed in the next chapter. It is also relevant to composition, which is another area where the majority of the sampled teachers lacked expertise. Generally, the teachers suggested that the ACM should provide guidance to support areas in which they knew they lacked expertise or had low "self-efficacy" (Smith and Lovat 2003, pp. 148–150), and such guidance could be provided by detailed elaborations.[7]

Matthew did not provide clarification about his statement that all teachers would clearly know and understand what would be expected of them in the implementation of the ACM.[8] This is a point that contradicts the dominant narrative, so its implications require attention. As explained in Chapter Four, the achievement standards of the ACM do very little to indicate the level of ability that students are expected to reach, but they do stipulate the types of activities that students are to engage with. Furthermore, the skills and knowledge that support the achievement standards are prescriptive. When these two areas are read in conjunction a clearer picture of student achievement emerges, and I suspect that this is what Matthew was referring to. However, there is a further contradiction: Matthew expressed an awareness of the complexities associated with cultural diversity in music education through a discussion about world music, but he failed to recognise that the ACM's examples of skills and knowledge are entirely based in Western styles (see Chapter Nine). This illustrates just how culturally engrained Western musical concepts can be in some teachers, which is a further challenge that teacher training and curriculum design should overcome in the pursuit of an inclusive curriculum framework.[9]

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[7] Smith and Lovat (2003) drew from the research of Bandura (1982), as well as Smith's own work (1983a, b) to explain that teachers "will decide to use those strategies and activities that [they] believe [they] can manage successfully and have worked well in the past. [They] will avoid using those activities and strategies that [they] do not believe [they] manage very well" (p. 148).

[8] Matthew stated that "logistically what's nice…[is that] there's no doubt about what it is that we have to teach" (Matthew 2017).

[9] According to Elliott and Silverman (2014), there are three common assumptions made about music by Western audiences and teachers. "First, [all examples] assume that music = "works" of music…Second, the work-concept claims that the nature and value of music-as-works lies completely in the *musical elements* of a

8.3.1 Band system

Although it was met with some criticism during the development phase of the ACM, the system of organising year groups into two-year bands was described as a positive aspect by two of the teachers in the interview sample.[10] Denise found it a useful way to structure the Concert Band Program (hereafter CBP) so that ensembles were organised by the year group of the students and not by their level of musical or technical ability, while Matthew found it to be a useful guide to developing work that met the standard of his more traditional classroom-based courses.

The CBP at School One is the central part of their curricular music program, unlike the concert bands from other schools within the sample.[11] Denise found that the band system of organising the curriculum was a good starting point for structuring content for the year-based CBP (see Chapter Ten for a detailed analysis of this program). However, she also stated that her goal for all of the music programs at School One was "inclusivity" (Denise 2017, in a different sense of the term than I use), with little emphasis on the level of ability students display.

> Denise: …it's all about inclusivity in our program. It's everyone. We have learning centre kids, we have kids with physical disabilities, with intellectual disabilities…We have kids from disadvantaged backgrounds, from advantaged backgrounds, the true sense of the word inclusive. It's an inclusive program. All in. And we make it possible for everyone, regardless of whatever their limitations are, and I'm really proud of that… (Denise 2017).

While Denise's examples reveal other valid definitions of inclusiveness—indeed, they align with the ACM's own definition of the term (ACARA n.d.-y, version 8.3)—they do not account for cultural diversity. This will be examined further in Chapter Nine. Furthermore, grade allocations for music in the concert bands are an integral part of the course documentation at School One, calling Denise's claim that achievement standards "mean nothing" (Denise 2017) into question. This will be examined further in Chapter Ten. Perhaps what Denise defines as inclusivity can be better expressed by the term *equal opportunity*: because there

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work…The third assumption…is that when listeners focus their attention exclusively on the musical elements of a work of music…[they] will undergo what work-centred philosophers call 'an aesthetic experience'" (pp. 66–67, emphasis added). This may explain why Matthew did not notice how culturally specific the ACM's examples are.

[10] The criticism of the bands of learning is explored in Chapter Three.

[11] At other schools, concert band is often an optional elective for advanced students, or an extra- or co-curricular option. In these cases, there is no requirement for the bands to match with the ACM.

are no flagship ensembles where all of the elite players are based, there is equal opportunity for all students to engage with the same music activities within this school. For example, the Year 10 Concert Band has the most public performances and embarks on the most significant annual tour, and all students who choose to participate in the Band Program through to Year 10 all receive the same opportunity to engage in these activities.

At School Three, Matthew also acknowledged that he likes the ACM's organisation of year levels, but again, he did not clarify why. Because of the lack of time in the interview and being unable to make contact again, I have drawn parallels between Matthew's point and some of the suggestions made by other teachers that were not necessarily complimentary in their own context. At School Four, the teachers advocated for a selective approach to meeting the achievement standards: for example, because there are two-year bands, there is no reason for students to fully meet the Year 7–8 achievement standard at the end of Year 7.

> Chris: …if [we have] kids…in Year 7, and they're only doing music for a semester, and they're not going to go on and do music in Year 8, then there's no way in the world that they're going to cover [bands] 7 and 8 in a semester. So how much of the content and the prescribed stuff do we actually try and make them hit [in Year 7]? (Chris et al. 2018).

This approach involves separating two years of content and allocating it appropriately to each individual year, with the added flexibility of being able to adapt the complexity for each year group (see Chapter Seven). Matthew was also aware of this flexibility: although he did not indicate that he altered the standard implied by the curriculum, he stated that there is nothing to stop teachers from separating content within band levels and interpreting it in their own way. Indeed, the course documents at School One separate the content and allocate it to individual year levels: the prescriptive lists of skills and content for each band are divided in two and attached to individual years of schooling.[12] In so doing the teachers are essentially creating their own negotiable single-year achievement standards, centralising the role of the teacher in curriculum discourse—a role that is acknowledged by ACARA (ACARA n.d.-x, version 8.3) and the Australian Department of Education (Department of Education and Training 2017), and emphasised by Elliott and Silverman throughout their entire book (2014). Although these examples may not be precise representations of

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[12] For a full list of the skills and knowledge in the ACM, see Chapter Five. To see how Denise allocated skills and knowledge to individual year levels, see Chapter Ten.

Matthew's approach, or indeed the reason why he liked the ACM's organisation of year levels, his focus on student-centred learning implied that he made use of the flexibility inherent in the banding system to cater to the individual students in his classes.

8.4 Benefits of a national music curriculum

Matthew was alone within the interview sample to mention any benefits in having a national music curriculum. He listed several: in the classroom, he believed that telling students they are working from a national curriculum gave him a sense of authority; out of the classroom, it meant that teachers could design programs based on the ACM once, and then tweak those programs slightly to fit into different school contexts; and if students were moving around the country, he highlighted that *if* the ACM was implemented the same way in different schools and jurisdictions, students would have consistency in their music learning.

For Matthew, the authority of the ACM was most beneficial when implementing unpopular aspects of music. He used the example of aural training to highlight the point.

> Matthew: But I feel…you have to give [the students] everything whether they like it or not. It's [like] the [vegetables], it's good for you but you might not like it, so just have it…yesterday I had a discussion about aural training. "Oh I don't want to do it." "Nah, you're going to do it. It's good for you." If you want to be a [musician]…it's good for you (Matthew 2017).

This example was coupled with a hypothetical scenario. Matthew referred to using the ACM as a "bogeyman" (Matthew 2017) to hide behind when implementing unpopular aspects of a music program, as a way to negate any questions or dissent by students by saying that "it's the national curriculum" (Matthew 2017). As seen through the previous quote, he is blunt in the delivery of formal and potentially unpopular aspects of music education. Therefore, a sense of external authority would doubtlessly be beneficial.

To Matthew, the supposed authority of the national curriculum extended to assessment and reporting. He believed that the use of a national curriculum, and a clear and transparent understanding about what is required by students, would make any appeal process against a course outcome easier for teachers to deal with.

> Matthew: So [the students]…know exactly what they're getting at and why. And it's good because you also stop people from appealing, if they know their grade and they know why…If there's [an] appeal process…it's just very easy. There's the evidence, and there is what the students got, and it's all there… (Matthew 2017).

When considering this point, it is important to note that Matthew was dealing entirely in hypotheticals: he had never actually dealt with a student appeal before. It would be interesting to test the veracity of this claim in the process of an actual appeal.

The national curriculum framework is applicable across all schools within many, but not all, Australian jurisdictions. Matthew suggested that if teachers move from one school to another, their ACM-based program documents could be used anywhere.

> Matthew: …you can go from school to school as a teacher, and you can take your curriculum with you, and implement it at another school, because it's the same (Matthew 2017).

There are some limitations to this benefit, which are illustrated by School Four. If a teacher takes up a new role in a school with an existing, strongly defined music program, it is likely that they will need to adapt to the pre-existing system. At School Four, all teachers contributed to the development of the music program but conformed to its overall identity as defined by Chris. Therefore, this benefit would be most applicable in schools where music was not well established. In such schools, teachers may be given considerable freedom to work in the way that they determine to be best, as illustrated by Alice at School Two.

A further benefit of a national curriculum relates to students changing schools. At School Three, there were a substantial number of students who had moved from Queensland. It was unclear why they had moved, but Matthew believed that if the ACM was implemented "properly" (Matthew 2017), then students could expect to be learning music at approximately the same level in any school across the country.

> Matthew: I think [the Australian Curriculum] was good…[to] give some good structure across the country. So if you go from WA to Queensland or whatever…I think it's great to know "well, if I do music in Year 7, in Brisbane, I [can] come here to Canberra to pretty much the same level…" (Matthew 2017).

The proper implementation of the ACM is a contentious point given the variability of interpretations that illustrate the potential of the discursive gap, even within such a small sample. Matthew's suggestions appear to be at odds with those of the other teachers, and he contradicts himself on numerous occasions. Presumably, Matthew was referring to an interpretation of the ACM in line with his own. Furthermore, the ability of secondary teachers to deliver "pretty much the same level" (Matthew 2017) of material in different schools is limited by students' prior learning, and in a student-centred program such a

standard would be largely irrelevant anyway.[13] This highlights an internal contradiction in Matthew's interpretation of the ACM: he claimed to implement student-centred music programs which defy standardisation, but suggested benefits to a national curriculum that emphasise standardisation. This parallels the contradiction between the intention of the broader Australian Curriculum, which is standardisation of student learning, and the inclusive, praxial claims of the ACM, which defy standardisation. If the ACM were to take on a more prescriptive form, and if the issues in primary school music were to be resolved, then standardised content and achievement could result, but at the expense of aligning with best practice. Therefore, I do not suggest that this is a desirable outcome for a national curriculum in music: in relation to best practice and praxis, the ACM's strength is in its capaciousness.

8.5 The challenges of composition

Composition was almost unanimously raised as a point of difficulty in classroom music. While this is not entirely the fault of the ACM, the concept of composition within the curriculum is confused and does not help strengthen the implementation of composition tasks, although composition has historically been an ambiguous term in Australian school syllabi (Dunbar-Hall 2002b, p. 96). In Chapter Five, I explored how *composition* has been re-defined to refer to the creation of music through any means, including notating scores, improvising and arranging. It is considered separate from *performance*. There are inconsistencies in the use of composition within the ACM itself, as it invariably reverts back to the conventional sense of composing—writing and notating scores—in most of its appearances in the curriculum. This is the concept of composition that all teachers referred to during their interviews and, unless otherwise noted, it is the concept of composition that is discussed in the remainder of this chapter. Chris believed most schools struggle with composition in this conventional sense.

> Chris: I think most schools…struggle with…composition…because most music teachers are performers, and have performance degrees…Very few secondary music teachers would have some serious composition experience… (Chris et al. 2018).

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[13] As noted in Chapter Seven, a student-centred program relies on the ability and interests of individual students to dictate the content and standard of their study.

Chris did not provide any evidence to back up this claim about teacher training, but it was mostly accurate for the interview sample. Only Matthew had any significant composition experience, as the rest of the teachers followed a performance-focused pathway into music teaching.[14] Consequently, the teachers have used the interpretative freedom of the discursive gap to realise the ACM in a (mostly) performance-centric way. The homogeneity of their collective backgrounds in performance can be seen to influence a range of programs that are remarkably similar in intention, if not execution (see Chapter Ten). This narrative is supported by evidence from the *National Review* (2005), which stated that composition (and improvisation) needed to be strengthened in Australian music education (p. x). Because many music teachers are not adequately trained in composition, they are not as comfortable in implementing composition-based tasks in the classroom.

However unwittingly, the teachers perpetuate cultural norms and ideologies by teaching music programs that marginalise composition activities. Matthew alluded to this within his interview, although unlike Chris, he was critical of those who struggled with composition (Matthew 2017). In Schools Three and Four, the programs were conventional in their structure: they were based in the classroom, and emphasised a balanced development of practical skills, theoretical knowledge, and contextual knowledge. As such, they delivered the most conventional composition tasks in a primarily Western context. By contrast, Schools One and Two appeared to deliver programs across a broader range of styles or were structured in unique ways. This meant that composition cannot be understood as easily at these schools.

In support of Chris's claim, Denise acknowledged that she struggled with implementing composition in School One, although she stated that this had less to do with her background, and more to do with the structure of her program.

> Denise: Composition is a real challenge for us. Just on our structure...the challenge around composition is you're working in these massive groups. Even melody writing, it's hard. Really hard (Denise 2017).

The Concert Band Program is class-based, but every class is a large ensemble, so composition tasks are challenging to deliver. Of course, composition is not an inherent component of real-world concert band rehearsals and performances, so this program aligns

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[14] See Chapter Six for a full summary of each teachers' training.

with the praxial characteristics in this regard.[15] Within the conventionally structured music courses in School One, composition was not considered as much of a challenge.

> Denise: [Composition is] easy through our Performance Music strand, really easy there…I don't think we do [composition] as well as we could, or should, but we're doing the best we can, and we're trying, always, to get ideas and share ideas, and try and make it better. But I think we're not there yet (Denise 2017).

In this instance the influence of teacher training is unclear. Denise acknowledged composition was difficult in the CBP but easy in the conventional class program, and she was trained in performance. However, as will be examined in Chapter Ten, composition-based tasks do not seem to be adequately represented in the course documents for School One, calling Denise's claim of composition being "easy" (Denise 2017) within a conventional classroom program into question.

Like Denise, Alice also acknowledged a weakness in composition, and she linked this weakness to her background and training as a performer. However, she still implemented composition tasks. As noted in Chapter Seven, Alice took advantage of the separation of composition and notation in an attempt to provide an alternative composition solution. Her approach appears to focus on developing creativity in her students rather than any specific skills or outcomes, aligning it to contemporary understandings of creativity—and thereby composition—in the music classroom (Kokotsaki and Newton 2015, pp. 492–494). While there appears to be some correlation between the assertions of Chris and Matthew and the experiences of the other teachers within the sample, Denise and Alice both displayed an awareness of their limitations in composition, and Alice gave an example of a satisfactory alternative solution to compensate.

While composition is undoubtedly a problematic component of music education more broadly, alternative strategies that go beyond a conventional understanding of the term are promising. After all, the ACM defines composition in such a way that it refers to all types of creative engagement and makes no reference to notation, although subsequent usage of the term reverts to a conventional definition. As can be seen through Alice's approach to composition, alternative solutions to composition are possible and may provide a gateway

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[15] See Chapter Two for the praxial characteristics. In particular, the seventh characteristic states that music education should be designed to be an approximation of real-world musical engagement. This is elaborated further in Chapter Ten.

for performance trained teachers to more fully engage with composition activities. The role of the ACM is to ensure that such alternative approaches are presented as being equally valid as conventional examples, which would require the consistent application of the ACM's own terminology. The issues surrounding composition also highlight a shortcoming in Australian music teacher training. If Chris's assertion is true nation-wide, and most music teachers are primarily trained in performance, then their training should be amended to include enough education in composition to realise it within the ACM adequately.

8.6 Discussion

Most of the interviewed teachers disliked the prescriptive aspects of the ACM. As the more experienced teachers were familiar with an entirely capacious framework, the introduction of prescriptive requirements was especially significant for them. Furthermore, the challenges of time, training and school program structure mean that these prescriptive components were in many cases impossible to deliver. In addition, composition remained a challenging area for many of the teachers within the sample, although there were some promising approaches—for example, the separation of notation from composition at School Two—that broadened its usage and came closer to reflecting the ACM's own definition of the term.

Within the predominantly broad structure of the ACM, the skills and knowledge are overly prescriptive. A benefit of a broad and generic framework is that teachers can implement viable music programs across a variety of timeframes, but the introduction of prescriptive requirements negates this. The prescribed skills and knowledge are very specific: they indicate time signatures, key signatures, rhythmic figures and devices, and other theoretical aspects that are all entirely situated in a particular Western paradigm. As well as being specific, there is also a lot of content.[16] Here is a fundamental disconnect within the ACM: it was intended to be broad enough to allow all students to engage with music, but the introduction of specific skills and knowledge without a mandated hourly timeframe per year means that it is impossible for teachers to deliver the prescribed content. Ironically, the specialist music teachers who suggested the inclusion of more

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[16] See Chapter Five for all of the skills and knowledge required in secondary music.

prescribed content need it less than their generalist primary counterparts do.[17] Therefore, in addition to being a contradiction to the overall nature of the ACM and being centred in Western musical styles, the skills and knowledge have not been adequately targeted to those who need prescriptive guidance.

Matthew's unconvincing assertion that the benefits of standardisation apply to the ACM highlighted an inherent contradiction within his own approach, as well as the uneasy compromise between the individualised, praxially-influenced ACM and the standardised nature of the broader Australian Curriculum. The nature of both concepts means that for a praxial curriculum to be presented within a national framework, it cannot say anything specific about any particular kind of music because it needs to be inclusive. The prescriptive skills and knowledge take the ACM away from being merely a framework, or "helpful guidelines" (Goodlad 1994, p. 131, in Elliott and Silverman 2014, p. 394) and impose something of a standard on the ACM. This should be well-suited to a standardised national curriculum model, but because of the lack of mandated time, it is an impossible standard for the interviewed teachers to attain. Because the implementation is so disparate, even within a single jurisdiction, it is also barely a form of standardisation. The present state of the ACM attempts to compromise two diametrically opposed viewpoints, but in doing so presents an unsatisfactory, watered down version of both.

Composition represents a perpetual challenge for music teachers. As explored in Chapter Five, the ACM does little to rectify this problem—in fact, it probably further confuses the issues through the poorly-executed appropriation of existing terms. However, the ACM does encourage a separation of *composition* and *notation*, which has allowed students who would struggle with a conventional sense of composing to engage with it. Attempts to highlight further alternatives to conventional composition tasks through the consistent usage of the ACM's own terminology could help to strengthen composition in Australian school music education.

Through exploring the practice of teachers, it appears that the ACM's praxial intentions are undermined by its attempts at compromise. In particular, indicating specific outcomes without mandating a minimum yearly time allocation for music provides teachers with

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[17] See Chapter Three for a detailed overview of the feedback that specialist music teachers provided to ACARA.

significant pedagogical and structural challenges. However, the practice of teachers raises concerns of its own, particularly in their lack of awareness of cultural homogeneity within the ACM. While some teachers discussed cultural diversity in their interviews, no teachers recognised that the prescriptive examples in the curriculum were exclusively representative of Western musical practices. This is particularly concerning when considering the overarching intercultural focus of the national curriculum through engaging with Indigenous Australian cultures and Asian cultures. It points to the persistent misconception that all styles of music can be understood through Western elements, and highlights how engrained this phenomenon is in the practice of music teachers. The next chapter elaborates on these issues further through an analysis of the teachers' approaches to the General Capabilities and Cross-Curriculum Priorities.

Chapter Nine: Responses to Cross-Curriculum Priorities and General Capabilities

9.1 Introduction

In the introduction to this thesis I referenced the two curriculum-wide dimensions to be implemented in every Learning Area and subject. These are the Cross-Curriculum Priorities (hereafter Priorities) and the General Capabilities (hereafter Capabilities). The Priorities are areas of acknowledged national importance, while the Capabilities are a combination of utilitarian skills and desirable dispositions that have been determined essential for students to function in society or are seen as some of the generic outcomes of education. The Australian Curriculum is clear: the Priorities and Capabilities do not need to be a centralised aspect of every Learning Area or subject, but they are required to be considered and delivered in some way (ACARA n.d.-e, i, version 8.3). Consequently, all music teachers should be delivering the Priorities and Capabilities as well as the highly prescriptive skills and knowledge of the ACM. Given the time constraints many music teachers face, coupled with the confusion inherent within the ACM, the delivery of the Capabilities is considered straightforward but the delivery of most of the Priorities is problematic.

In this chapter I analyse the teacher responses to the Priorities and Capabilities. The Priorities are of particular importance to music and the Arts: they are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures (hereafter the Indigenous Priority), Asia and Australia's Engagement with Asia (hereafter the Asian Priority), and Sustainability. As areas of cultural study, the Indigenous Priority and the Asian Priority should be relatively easy to address in music but were inconsistently implemented. For the majority of the teachers, the introduction of specific cultural styles and concepts of sustainability was arguably the most significant change to their teaching practice stipulated by the ACM. I argue that the challenge of implementing these Priorities stems from the underlying cultural bias towards Western musical styles in the ACM, a general lack of clarity in the curriculum about how the Priorities should be implemented, and an underlying inadequacy in music teacher training— which I define as the Bachelor of Music and tertiary teaching qualifications—which combine to manifest as resistance to change. By contrast, the Capabilities were dismissed as a part of what music teachers do, with Matthew suggesting that their inclusion within the ACM was somewhat redundant.

I start by addressing the opinions that the teachers have about cross-curricular teaching, which informs the respective approaches that the teachers have taken. The consensus is that all teachers, regardless of subject, will teach in a cross-curricular way when it is relevant. I then indicate which Priorities and Capabilities the teachers found easy to implement, difficult to implement, or did not discuss. I continue by exploring the responses to Capabilities, which are all considered an integral part of teaching. I then focus on the two Priorities that were unanimously considered difficult to implement—the Sustainability Priority, and the Indigenous Priority. Finally, I consider the Asian Priority, which is also contentious. I conclude by considering the implications of these responses and suggesting improvements to the ACM and to teacher training.

9.2 Opinions about cross-curricular teaching

Matthew made a point about all teachers, regardless of subject. He suggested that to not teach in a "cross-curricular" way (Matthew 2017) was impossible, implying that doing so would somehow be a dereliction of duty.

> Matthew: This is the thing, cross-[curricular teaching]…I can't imagine that there's a teacher who would not teach in a cross-curricular way, because it's impossible…Some might do it to a wider extent, some to a smaller [extent], but you do it. If you don't…I can't imagine how it could not [happen] (Matthew 2017).

The implication is that the inclusion of Capabilities and Priorities in the curriculum is redundant: Matthew believes that teachers will just do it. His sentiments were partly shared by Alice, particularly in relation to literacy and numeracy. With this said, there was a difference of opinion in relation to each of the Priorities or Capabilities. Furthermore, the teachers (including Matthew) acknowledged that they face challenges when attempting to implement the Priorities as they lie outside the mainstream cultural paradigm. They also expressed an implicit understanding that the Priorities—particularly the Indigenous Priority—are inherently political and bound up with issues of cultural identity in the way that they approached them in conversation. Attempting to address cultural diversity in the music classroom is acknowledged as being challenging by a number of contributors (Schippers 2010, Hess 2018). The teachers usually spoke about the Priorities with a high degree of caution, being very careful to qualify statements that could be interpreted as contentious.

Priorities	Easy to implement	Difficult to implement	Inconclusive	No opinion offered
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures	n/a	Denise, Alice, Matthew, Chris, Sam, Lorraine, Jody	n/a	n/a
Asia and Australia's Engagement with Asia	Matthew	n/a	Denise, Alice, Lorraine	Chris, Sam, Jody
Sustainability	Denise (with caveats and significant revision)	Alice, Chris, Sam, Lorraine, Jody	n/a	Matthew
Capabilities				
Literacy	Alice, Matthew, Chris, Sam	n/a	n/a	Denise, Lorraine, Jody
Numeracy	Alice, Matthew, Chris, Sam	n/a	n/a	Denise, Lorraine, Jody
ICT Capability	Alice, Matthew	n/a	n/a	Denise, Chris, Sam, Lorraine, Jody
Intercultural Understanding	Alice, Matthew, Lorraine, Jody	n/a	n/a	Denise, Chris, Sam
Ethical Understanding	Alice (passing reference)	n/a	n/a	Denise, Matthew, Chris, Sam, Lorraine, Jody
Critical and Creative Thinking	Alice	n/a	n/a	Denise, Matthew, Chris, Sam, Lorraine, Jody
Personal and Social Capability	Alice (passing reference)	n/a	n/a	Denise, Matthew, Chris, Sam, Lorraine, Jody

Table 22: Teacher responses to each Priority and Capability.

Generally, the Capabilities were seen to be easy to implement, although Alice was the only one to mention all of them and Denise did not refer to any. They were not an initial focus of this research and emerged as a point of analysis after the interview with Denise at School One. However, whenever the remaining teachers were asked about Priorities and Capabilities they automatically responded to the Priorities first and made a passing reference to the Capabilities, if at all. Therefore, within the present sample, the Capabilities evidently receive little attention. By contrast, all of the Priorities were generally considered to be difficult to implement, which is problematic when considering that they have been ascribed such a high degree of national importance. The teachers often suggested that they would like more guidance in the implementation of the Priorities.

Given that the Arts are an ideal site for exploring other cultures and much is made of this point in Australian Curriculum discourse—"exploring and understanding culture, in every sense of the term, is core business for the Arts" (ACARA 2010a, p. 23)—it is ironic that the

Priorities have been received with so much difficulty. It suggests that the teachers struggle to deliver cultural diversity in their classrooms, perpetuating the dominant cultural paradigm of Western art music. Arguably, this can be partly attributed to teacher training, a point that will be examined later in the chapter. However, I also suggest that the teachers' issues with the Priorities may stem from poor writing and limited guidance within the curriculum, and this may extend beyond music and the Arts. For example, the fact that the Closing the Gap initiative failed to meet its education benchmarks could indicate a curriculum-wide failure to adequately implement the Indigenous Priority (Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet 2018). In addition, the Capabilities were often dismissed by the teachers, and three Capabilities were only addressed briefly by Alice. This would suggest that the Capabilities may not be actively present in the minds of music teachers, supporting Matthew's earlier claims. Therefore, there appears to be a disconnect between the intentions for the Priorities and the Capabilities, and their realisation within the classroom.

9.3 Capabilities

Four of the Capabilities were defined as being easy to implement by more than one teacher: literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology (hereafter ICT) capability, and intercultural understanding (Alice 2017, Matthew 2017, Chris et al. 2018). These are aspects of music teaching that are inherent in all teaching situations, although intercultural understanding does require some consideration. Other than Matthew, no other teacher made specific reference to these aspects just being a part of their job, but this opinion could be inferred by the way that they approached their responses.

9.3.1 Literacy and numeracy

Literacy and numeracy are presented together because they were often discussed together. They are the central educational outcomes of the Australian Curriculum, which has been designed to strengthen them. Literacy and numeracy are also tested nationally through NAPLAN (Ministerial Council on Education 2008).[1] All of the music teachers who discussed

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[1] Recent reports indicate that Australian students are getting worse at literacy and numeracy, despite the focus of the national curriculum and the priority placed on NAPLAN testing. See Department of Education and Training (2018).

literacy and numeracy described them as being easy to implement, and they approached literacy as the limited concept of students' ability to read and write. Subject-specific literacy is also encouraged by the Australian Curriculum (ACARA n.d.-h, version 8.3), but it is not emphasised, and teachers did not consider music-specific examples of literacy in their responses.[2] Therefore, the definition and application of literacy to the ACM is unclear, and all teachers in the present sample interpreted it to mean reading and writing.

There was a common thread among the responses of the teachers. Alice pointed out that literacy and numeracy are two of the focuses of the Australian Curriculum as a whole, and although she did not provide an example for how she implements literacy, she indicated that numeracy is an inherent aspect of music through timing and conventional approaches to theory. Matthew agreed and highlighted counting in music as an example of numeracy and lyrical content as an example of literacy.

> Matthew: …when you get to literacy and numeracy…it's obvious, like music is…from counting to anything else, it's mathematics in a way, isn't it? So it's always there…if you've just been as blunt as "music has lyrics"…there's your literacy aspect… (Matthew 2017).

This example also illustrates the dismissive way that Matthew referred to literacy and numeracy—he considers their inclusion to be obvious. Other teachers were less dismissive, but it was apparent that reconciling literacy and numeracy within their music programs did not require significant consideration.

As the exception, the teachers at School Four attempted to make the relationship between music and numeracy explicit through a combined mathematics and music course. Chris believed that this course had potential, but Sam disagreed, stating that the mathematics component distracted students from learning about music.

> Sam: And…cross-curricular wise…we were running a sort of music/maths unit, and…
>
> Chris: Which I still think was good.
>
> Sam: …I think the…final analysis was that we didn't have the time…we're trying to achieve all the music goals, and here we were spending a lesson on how to make a pie chart. And…our final analysis was that no, we don't have the time for this, we're going to focus on music, and really do that (Chris et al. 2018).

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[2] In the Arts, students "learn and use specific terminology of increasing complexity as they move through the curriculum" (ACARA n.d.-q, version 8.3).

Literacy was not referred to at all at School Four. When literacy and numeracy were discussed at the other schools, numeracy always received more consideration than literacy. This may be indicative of general trends in how music teachers approach literacy and numeracy, and it may also correlate with the fact that much of the literature surrounding extra-musical benefits of music education—for example, the so-called "Mozart effect"— focus on the ways that music can enhance students' numerical skills (Reimer 1999).[3]

Literacy and numeracy are considered easy to implement because they are aspects of virtually any course of musical study and require little effort to deliver. When students write assignments, learn about music-specific terms and concepts, and generally learn about music, they are developing different concepts of literacy in different ways. Likewise, numeracy is integrated into formal theoretical understanding of Western musical traditions. I suggest that this is the inherent integration of literacy and numeracy within music learning to which Matthew was referring.

9.3.2 ICT capability

The importance placed on ICT capability is a product of its time, and I suggest that it is less relevant now than it was at the time of the publication of the *Melbourne Declaration* (2008), particularly within urban centres. This is not because it is not important for students to have a strong understanding of ICT, but because ICT has become intrinsically integrated in the school life of Australian students in the last ten years.[4] Evidence to support this in music can be seen across the entire ACT: many Canberra schools offer some variation on a music technology course that covers digital music production, distribution, and composition. It would also be fair to assume that the submission of written assignments involves word processing and digital submission, which implies students must display a basic understanding of ICT.

At School Two, much of the ICT component is covered through composition, recording, and accessing music online for general listening. In some cases, the software used is from

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[3] The so-called "Mozart effect" is where students' cognitive function is increased following exposure to classical music—often Mozart's music. Further research revealed that the boosts in cognitive function were the result of specific sequences of notes. Reimer questioned the implications of the effect, suggesting that it would make more sense for students to listen to the specific sequences in isolation if improved cognitive function was the goal. Therefore, he saw such non-musical benefits of music education as problematic (Reimer 1999).

[4] As an example, there are a plethora of references to "Bring Your Own Device" across ACT school websites.

free or subscription-based online services that are similar to professional software packages that are prohibitively expensive. For example, Alice referenced a website called Noteflight, an online notation service that is very similar to the industry standard Sibelius or Finale software packages (Alice 2017). Alice teaches composition in Years 7–8 through GarageBand, which is a free software solution. GarageBand involves students recording their own sounds and instruments or utilising pre-loaded loops to create their own pieces of music, and this is how Alice takes advantage of the separation of composition and notation.[5] School Two also uses websites like YouTube to access music for listening, and at a school-wide level they use an online platform called Schoology. It appears that integration with ICT has become the standard approach.

> Alice: …but the ICT stuff is there as well, and that's, you use a lot of GarageBand, recording, and we have a program called Schoology, which is a bit like Moodle, and you can upload all your stuff, so that they do easily, and we use YouTube a lot, Noteflight… (Alice 2017).

Matthew takes a similar approach in integrating ICT into his music courses at School Three, although this school also has a recording studio that uses professional-grade recording software.[6] This equipment and software is utilised in the music recording elective at this school, which is explored in greater detail in Chapter Ten. Aside from this, Matthew did not refer to the ICT capability again.

Denise did not reference ICT capability, but its integration can be inferred when looking at the tasks for assessment in the School One course documents (see Chapter Ten). In addition, School One delivers a music technology elective that is run to provide students with an industry qualification, and this is fundamentally reliant on ICT capability.[7] As with literacy and numeracy, the ICT capability is easy to implement because it is integral to modern approaches to music education and the contemporary school environment more generally. It reflects how professionals engage with the music industry, and how audiences engage with music. ICT is also the catalyst for Alice's comparatively innovative approach to composition that aligns with the ACM's definition of the term. Without technology, she would be unable to deliver composition tasks that separate notation from the act of composing. While its curriculum-wide emphasis appears to be arguably somewhat

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[5] Alice defined this as a key benefit of the ACM. See Chapter Seven.
[6] The presence of this industry-grade equipment indicates that music at School Three is well-funded.
[7] This course is not based on the ACM and is therefore beyond the scope of the present thesis.

redundant in the ACT, the prospect of integrating ICT more fully within music creates opportunities for innovation and change (Brown 1995, p. 18).

9.3.3 Intercultural understanding

Although they occupy different dimensions of the Australian Curriculum, intercultural understanding and the Indigenous and Asian Priorities are related. Indeed, addressing the Priorities in a way that encourages intercultural reflection and dialogue would be encompassed by the intercultural understanding capability. However, it possible to explore other cultural styles of music in the same way without addressing the Priorities. For example, Denise's conventional classroom program initially focuses on the blues in Year 8, which stems from African and African-American musical traditions. This is supported by a Years 9–10 elective that involves the study of "African music" (School One 2015b). These musical focuses potentially involve intercultural understanding but do not address either of the two Priorities. Generally, the teachers indicated a preference to teach what they considered to be relevant and "not tick boxes" (Denise 2017), which manifests itself as teachers prioritising the music of cultures that they have knowledge of. This partly explains why intercultural understanding is considered straightforward, while the Priorities remain challenging. However, stipulating intercultural understanding instead of multicultural understanding means that merely including the music of other cultures is not enough: there needs to be "loose contacts and exchange," or "meeting between cultures" (Schippers 2010, p. 31). Therefore, implementing intercultural understanding may not be as straightforward as the teachers assume. To illustrate, I call attention to Schippers' analytical tool of "key factors in identifying cultural differences between teaching/learning experiences" (2007, p. 8).

Schippers conceives of cultural diversity in music education as a range of categories, each of which is measured on a continuum. Table 23 reproduces Schippers' original from 2007 to illustrate the relationships within and between categories. As can be seen, the left side of the continuum represents formal music learning processes, while the right side represents informal processes. There are two points to note: Firstly, as the more general point, there will be inherent tension when informal music practices, many of which are non-Western, are reconceptualised for a formal framework such as Western school systems

Dimensions of interaction			
Large power distance	<———————————————————>		Small power distance
Individual central	<———————————————————>		Collective central
Avoiding uncertainty	<———————————————————>		Tolerating uncertainty
Issues of context			
Static tradition	<———————————————————>		Constant flux
Reconstructing old models	<———————————————————>		Creating new identities
"Original" context	<———————————————————>		Recontextualisation
Modes of transmission			
Analytic	<———————————————————>		Holistic
Notation-based	<———————————————————>		Oral
Tangible	<———————————————————>		Intangible
Approaches to cultural diversity			
Monocultural	Multicultural	Intercultural	Transcultural
	<—————|——————————|—————>		

Table 23: Key factors in identifying cultural differences between teaching/learning experiences (Schippers 2007, p. 8).

(2007, p. 9). Secondly, as illustrated under "approaches to cultural diversity" in Table 23, multicultural music learning experiences and intercultural music learning experiences are not the same. *Multicultural*, in Schippers' sense, actually refers to "different peoples and musics [leading] largely separate lives" (2010, p. 30) where each student learns the music of their own culture. As noted above, *intercultural* refers to the intersections and meetings of different musical cultures. Furthermore, Schippers suggests that monocultural practices are the dominant approaches throughout educational institutions in the Western world (p. 30). As the Canberra secondary school system is undoubtedly part of the Western educational tradition, the teachers may face systemic challenges in the realisation of cultural diversity. The following examples illustrate how the teachers have approached the intercultural understanding Capability.

Alice used the example of the different European cultures, as well as American cultures, that are easily encompassed by the Western art music framework. This was in addition to an explicit reference to the Asian Priority.

> Alice: The intercultural understanding I think we do quite well…because we look at music from Europe, we look at music from America, we look at music from just about anywhere…*but it's more if it naturally falls into the course, rather than I go I have to put it in* (Alice 2017, emphasis added).

This response implies a monocultural-leaning approach through "looking at" (Alice 2017) different styles of music as opposed to deeply engaging with them, and carries connotations towards the world music paradigm that conceptualises music as the music of the West, and

the music of the other. Matthew drew reference to this concept and explained that he has significant issues with it but did not indicate how he reconciles it.

> Matthew: …there's…a specific unit on…world music, which [is a term] I don't often actually use because…it just doesn't sit well with me these days…it's a big unit on it too, so we cover it, but it [also comes] in bits and drips everywhere…*The thing is, when the opportunity comes, you cover [world music]* (Matthew 2017, emphasis added).

Despite the issues surrounding world music, both of these examples exemplify the common themes of implementing the Capability where easiest. From this, I suggest part of the reason why the teachers claim that they find intercultural understanding easy to deliver is because they have a choice about cultures they engage with and their relevance to the overarching music focus. The teachers make use of the freedom in the curriculum to manipulate the discursive gap, emphasising the music of cultures that they have experienced. In some cases these cultures were studied in their formative years. This phenomenon aligns with elements of Bourdieu's concept of habitus, namely how an individual's past experiences inform how they may approach new situations or challenges (Bourdieu 1996, Costa and Murphy 2015). In Chapter Six I examined the background of each teacher. Although each teacher accounted for their experiences in different ways, they all shared a common background in formal Western musical training and some individuals had experienced music from other cultures as well. Unsurprisingly, the teachers with some form of experience with music from a non-Western culture accounted for intercultural understanding (and the Priorities) with more authority than those who did not.

Lorraine is a prime example, as she has experience with Gamelan music and feels confident when working with that particular style.

> Lorraine: I'm better with Gamelan, so in that way, even though that's not our Indigenous experience…we took them out to a Gamelan set and had a lesson, and we did a whole unit based on that (Chris et al. 2018).

Lorraine's preference for Gamelan is understandable given the limited time that she has to deliver music programs (see Chapter Ten). However, the reluctance of some of the other teachers to engage in culturally diverse musical experiences illustrates a disconnect between teacher training and the curriculum: if music teachers are expected to deliver intercultural experiences in their classrooms, then their training should cater for it. This issue is similar to the challenges associated with teacher training and composition, which were examined in Chapter Eight. While Lorraine's example appears to make the best of a challenging situation,

it also carries problematic further implications in relation to the Indigenous Priority, which will be examined shortly.

Chris made some comments and suggestions that align very strongly with the praxial framework and its concept of intercultural understanding (Elliott and Silverman 2014, pp. 447–451).[8] Ironically, these suggestions were not inspired by praxial understandings, but by the NSW HSC Music One course, which uses the comprehensive musicianship framework (see Chapter Two). Students can choose to study the music of another culture as a significant portion of their overall assessed work (Board of Studies NSW 2009), and the key point is that the students *choose* the culture for study themselves, rather than the curriculum or the teacher stipulating a culture.

> Chris: …I mean you could run an ethnomusicology unit, almost like…"music of another culture" in…Music One, [so] everyone in the class picks a culture that's interesting to them. So rather than make everybody study Aboriginal music, or Gamelan music, if you've got an Indian background or a Tongan background, then you can [study those musical styles]… (Chris et al. 2018).

The praxial framework does suggest that teachers choose the styles of music for study based on the backgrounds of their students.[9] As the students are responsible for the choice of music in this hypothetical example, this would appear to be a useful solution. However, there is a practical drawback.

> Lorraine: I can see us running into a problem. Some of our Year 10 students that are whizz-bang are going to give me papers that, if they're writing on a culture I know nothing about, I've just created that extra workload of going and finding out about what this [tune is] written about… (Chris et al. 2018).

This relates back to Sam's point earlier point of realistic and idealistic standards, although the context is different.[10] Much of what curricula, academic writing, and advocacy suggests is idealistic, but impractical in the classroom. Chris's suggestion, although well intentioned, could possibly create challenges by increasing the already heavy workload of the teachers.

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[8] The authors describe a "dynamic multicultural (intercultural) curriculum" in which students are "welcomed" into different musical cultures as the ideal, with students "learning to work together expressively, in action, in the context of familiar and unfamiliar musical cultures" (p. 449).

[9] The authors refer to curricula that "select musical praxes exclusively on the basis of students' cultural affiliations" as a form of "insular multiculturalism" (Elliott and Silverman 2014, p. 448). Therefore, there is a subtle difference between the idealised intercultural curriculum and an insular one. It would appear that the starting point of students' cultural affiliations is important, but from that point students encounter "familiar and unfamiliar beliefs, preferences, and outcomes, in teachers' and students' full awareness of the pedagogies and power structures in and for different musical praxes" (p. 449).

[10] See Chapter Seven.

The interplay between idealistic expectations and realistic realisations of music curricula continues to be explored through the remainder of this chapter and through the detailed analysis of individual school programs in Chapter Ten.

In conclusion, three of the straightforward Capabilities—literacy, numeracy, and ICT capability—were essentially dismissed by the teachers. This is not because they do not care about delivering this content, but rather because it is simply an integral part of what they do. They appear to be open to guidance, but they do not appear to appreciate being micromanaged in the content that they deliver. By contrast, intercultural understanding received a greater degree of consideration, although it too was defined as straightforward to deliver despite an apparent misunderstanding about what the term *intercultural* actually means. Because of the potential for crossover between intercultural understanding and the Indigenous and Asian Priorities, the implication here is that the teachers find it easy to engage with the music of other cultures, but they struggle when they are required to work with externally specified cultures. Underlying this implication is the sense that the teachers are resistant to exploring music outside of their training and experience, which is supported by Lorraine's Gamelan example.[11]

9.3.4 Capabilities with limited discussion

Critical and creative thinking, ethical understanding, and personal and social capability were ignored by most of the teachers. This is surprising, particularly in the case of critical and creative thinking. The Australian Curriculum development and discourse places significant emphasis on the role of the Arts in teaching this capability (ACARA 2010a, p. 22, n.d.-d, version 8.3), and the Arts are arguably the natural home for critical and creative thinking. Alice was the only one who mentioned all Capabilities and did so because there was a considerable amount of time to discuss many different aspects of the ACM. She also went through them as a list, essentially stating whether she thought each Capability was easy to implement or not. In the case of these three, she briefly explained her approach but did not go into significant detail. However, links can be drawn to other comments made by the

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[11] As introduced in Chapter Eight, Smith and Lovat (2003) explore the self-efficacy of teachers and how it influences their confidence (pp. 148–150). If teachers do not believe that they can do justice to the music of other cultures, then they experience low confidence and self-efficacy. This may explain why the sampled teachers were resistant to exploring music from outside of their training and experience.

interview participants, and so wherever possible I have attempted to indicate these connections.

The lack of reference to critical and creative thinking appears somewhat counterintuitive, as the Arts are where students can gain experience in this type of thinking. Alice referred to it in relation to most musical activities, and she believes that School Two does a good job at offering this Capability.

> Alice: The critical and creative thinking, I also think we cover quite well. You know, analysing stuff and then creating a new piece from it, thinking outside the box, originality. I think that's fairly well tied in (Alice 2017).

The other teachers also described creative activities without referring to the Capability directly. Denise discussed a course in which students create their own musical theatre production (see Chapter Seven). In this course, students are faced with creative challenges through composing and scripting, and logistical challenges in organising their cast, staging, and lighting. At School Four, Chris referred to the ways their students engage with music, through performing, *creating*, and listening, which almost makes the presence of the Capability explicit.[12] Furthermore, Sam believes that being creative in music learning validates the activities that students engage with (see Chapter Seven). Therefore, even though the Capability was not explicitly discussed, creativity appears to be an integral and assumed component of these music programs, and its inclusion as a Capability within Arts subjects goes without saying.

By contrast, Alice seemed unsure about how to address ethical understanding.

> Alice: The ethical behaviour, I don't really focus on it…perhaps I model some of it…[but] I don't really know about that one (Alice 2017).

Again, the other teachers did not directly refer to the Capability, but there is a sense of ethical understanding in their programs. Denise spoke to equal opportunity within the Band Program, Matthew outlined his student-centred program where work is based on the standard of the individual student, and the teachers at School Four are realistic about the abilities of students entering Year 7 and cater for this variability.[13] There is a sense that

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[12] The ACM refers to performing, composing, and listening. The teachers at School Four consistently referred to creating instead of composition. In Australian Curriculum development documentation, creating was also considered in place of composing, but was rejected because it implies performing is not creative. See Chapter Three.

[13] See Chapter Seven.

teachers prefer to model ethical behaviour rather than explicitly teach it. Additionally, elements of the Sustainability Priority—particularly cultural sustainability, examined later in this chapter—are arguably examples of ethical understanding. However, the teachers did not make this connection.

The development of personal and social capability is arguably an inherent part of the music classroom. Indeed, the praxial philosophy is designed around the premise of music education contributing to personhood, and the authors have drawn from a range of texts about such development in broader education (Elliott and Silverman 2014, pp. 153–191).[14] Alice conceptualised personal and social capability as students working through performance-based activities to develop their "teamwork, confidence…and motor skills" (Alice 2017). Parallels can be drawn to the programs on offer at other schools: Denise's concert bands at School One involve students working together in large groups, as well as smaller sectional rehearsals that require more student autonomy; a similar situation occurs through the orchestra at School Three, with Matthew encouraging students from any instrumental background to join; and the entire of the co-curricular music program at School Four can be considered as a tool developing students' personal and social skills in addition to their musical ability.[15] Although this may not be the Australian Curriculum-sanctioned definition of the Capability, it is consistent across all sampled schools.[16]

I suggest that these three Capabilities were not discussed by the teachers because they are inherent aspects of teaching music. In all schools, they appear to have been integrated with little apparent thought or effort. This may indicate that the teachers have not consulted with the curriculum definitions and explanations in enough detail, as is the case with

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[14] The authors suggest that "the processes of making or listening to musics…[do] something close to what we do when we constitute others as persons, or when we invest others with personhood," and that "it may be that people interpret musical pieces and processes with a *principle of charity* that makes musical experiences *feel like* an interaction with another person" (p. 190, emphasis in original). Outside of this book, personhood is defined as "the state of being a social, embodied, and sentient being…" (Shir-Vertesh n.d.) This goes beyond the scope of the present thesis.

[15] The details of these programs will be explored in Chapter Ten. As the co-curricular programs from School Four are beyond the ACM, they are not explored in any significant detail. In their interview, the School Four teachers explained co-curricular music in greater detail: as an extension of the activities that students engage with in class.

[16] Personal and social capability is defined as "a range of practices including recognising and regulating emotions, developing empathy for others and understanding relationships, establishing and building positive relationships, making responsible decisions, working effectively in teams, handling challenging situations constructively and developing leadership skills," and it encompasses "students' personal/emotional and social/relational dispositions, intelligences, sensibilities and learning" (ACARA n.d.-t, version 8.3).

Sustainability (see below), but the point is that they are included easily in the sampled music programs. As such, it appears that most Capabilities are straightforward to implement.

9.4 Priorities

It is troubling that two of the Priorities identified as being of national significance—the Indigenous Priority and Sustainability—were almost unanimously declared problematic. Like the Capabilities, the Priorities are to be implemented in every Learning Area/subject (ACARA n.d.-e, h, version 8.3). There is a sense that the teachers feel the need to shoehorn the Priorities into their programs, even though they might not immediately appear to be relevant. In addition, they suggested that students would learn about these Priorities in relation to other Learning Areas that could contain them more comfortably. This is despite the fact that there are concepts of sustainability that easily fit within a music/Arts framework, such as cultural sustainability. Further, the Indigenous and Asian Priorities are easily reconcilable within the subject. Therefore, there is an obvious disconnect between the Priorities and the teachers' approaches.

9.4.1 Sustainability

For clarity, I refer to the Sustainability Priority as a whole with a capital "S." The issue facing Sustainability is that the teachers do not emphasise its relevance within a music classroom. This is despite a clear reference to cultural sustainability in the curriculum.[17]

> The Australian Curriculum: The Arts…enables the exploration of the role of The Arts in *maintaining and transforming cultural practices, social systems* and the relationships of people to their environment…students consider issues of sustainability in relation to resource use and *traditions* in each of the Arts subjects. The Arts provides opportunities for students to express and develop world views, and to appreciate the need for *collaboration within and between communities* to implement more sustainable patterns of living. (ACARA n.d.-z, version 8.3, emphasis added to indicate cultural sustainability).

Despite this, the majority of teachers have restricted their interpretation of Sustainability to refer to the physical environment. Alice struggled with the implementation of Sustainability,

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[17] According to Soini and Birkeland (2014) cultural sustainability is still in its first stage of concept evolution (p. 219). The authors differentiate between cultural and social interpretations of sustainability, and propose seven storylines in which cultural sustainability is articulated in the literature: heritage, cultural vitality, economic viability, diversity, place, eco-cultural resilience, and eco-cultural civilisation (pp. 216–219). In the ACM, concepts of heritage are most relevant: "cultural heritage comprises a stock of cultural capital that has been inherited from previous generations and can be handed onto future generations" (p. 216).

even though she made several previous attempts to include relevant tasks. Previously, she had two approaches to Sustainability, which included an instrument construction task and a composition assignment which involved students identifying a sustainability issue, and then composing a piece of music that reflected it. She found that this task usually resulted in students being distracted from the musical aspects of the task—the actual composition itself—and focusing on the sustainability issue. This became an untenable situation given the time constraints placed on elective music at this school, as will be explored in Chapter Ten.

> Alice: And the sustainability I suck at…The only example I've got…is [that] they used to do a "make their own instrument" [assignment], and it was from other equipment, and they'd just put it all together. I don't really focus on sustainability…In the past I've [done] a composition assignment where they have to pick an element of sustainability and reflect on that, but…the kids weren't focusing on the composition, they were focusing on the issue… (Alice 2017).

Lorraine was also critical of the application of environmental sustainability in the classroom and struggled to think of a way to make the concept interesting for her students.

> Lorraine: I mean with sustainability, let's look at how we treat wood in a violin! Like, I just can't figure out how to make it a worthwhile statement (Chris et al. 2018).

The positions of Alice and Lorraine indicate that there is evidently a disconnect between the curriculum's concept of Sustainability and the ways that teachers interpret it. This suggests that the teachers may not be fully engaging with the curriculum descriptions of the Priorities: as noted, cultural sustainability is not referred to by name but is very clearly described in the curriculum (ACARA n.d.-z, version 8.3). It is also possible that music teachers are not aware of cultural sustainability, which in turn may indicate yet another shortcoming of teacher training. Schippers and Grant (2016) suggest that formal methods of music education, such as teaching music in schools, may not be ideal approaches for developing musical sustainability as they potentially stagnate dynamic and fluid cultures (p. 3).[18] The complexities associated with cultural sustainability are examined further in relation to the Indigenous and Asian Priorities, both of which are sites for potential cultural sustainability in the Australian Curriculum.

Although Denise has not integrated cultural sustainability within her courses, she stated that she always wanted the implementation of Sustainability to be authentic and relevant to

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[18] This is an author-generated PDF of a book chapter sourced from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/295906541 on August 28, 2019, and accurate pagination of the published source is not possible.

music. To this end, she re-contextualised the term to refer to students engaging with music in safe and sustainable ways.

> Denise: …the way we look at sustainable practices is through maintaining all the beautiful equipment we have…so it lasts, so we're not just wasting it…we have maintenance week, where they…do all the things that are necessary to maintain their instrument…As teachers we try and model that we're looking after everything as well…But it's also about teaching the children posture, so they're looking after their bodies, because playing a musical instrument can be really taxing on your body as you know. If you think about all the [repetitive strain injuries], the back problems, the neck problems, the shoulder problems, all that sort of stuff (Denise 2017).

Denise's concept of sustainability in music is seemingly unrelated to the curriculum and is more in line with health and safety considerations that are already established as an aim of the ACM (see Chapter Four). However, instrument maintenance is very clearly a form of environmental sustainability, as material resources are required to construct musical instruments. Although largely redundant considering the aims of the ACM, Denise's approach is the only considered example of Sustainability within the present selection of schools. It is only relevant to performers, neglecting other types of musical engagement, and does not engage with cultural sustainability. Evidently, there are significant issues and shortcomings in the implementation of Sustainability in the music classroom.

9.4.2 Indigenous Priority

As established in the Introduction, the Indigenous Priority was formulated because of the alarming gaps between non-Indigenous and Indigenous student attainment. It is part of the broader Closing the Gap initiative, and has been a central component of curriculum development discourse since the *Melbourne Declaration* (Ministerial Council on Education 2008). In the Arts, the Indigenous Priority provides insight into the integration of "People, Culture, and Country/Place" (ACARA n.d.-a, version 8.3).

> Students' exploration of traditional and contemporary artworks by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples provides insight into the way the relationships between People, Culture and Country/Place for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples can be conveyed through the arts, their expression in living communities, and the way these build Identity (ACARA n.d.-a, version 8.3).

As noted in the discussion about intercultural understanding, the teachers prefer autonomy in the selection of music from other cultures which is partly why the Indigenous Priority is considered challenging to implement. Arguably, the Indigenous Priority is also an example of

cultural sustainability, and the two could be delivered together. However, there are deeper issues, as both the curriculum and teacher training have a role in addressing the challenges.

Denise noted significant difficulty in implementing the Indigenous Priority. As with theory and composition (see Chapter Eight), the large groups in the Concert Band Program are not conducive to non-performance activities. There is also the question of relevance to the concert band, as Indigenous musical traditions and concert band repertoire are not frequently integrated. It is easier for Denise to attach an Indigenous focus to one of the Performance Music units. Perhaps most importantly, Denise does not believe that the provision for the Indigenous Priority within the ACM adequately addresses the social and cultural function of music for Indigenous Australians, although she did not elaborate on what these "fundamental concepts" (Denise 2017) are.

> Denise: We have…a [presentation] that we do, we get them singing and doing rhythms and try to get them engaged as much as we can, but we don't do it as a term-long project or anything like that. Only a couple of lessons, but done well…[doing it well] digs down to some of the basic fundamental concepts and the importance of Indigenous music to Aboriginal Australians, and where it developed from, but where it is now as well (Denise 2017).

As such, the implementation of the Indigenous Priority at School One involves a short unit of work, where a presentation is delivered followed by several weeks of assignments. In line with Denise's performance-based focus, students gain experience with Indigenous styles through singing and rhythmic exercises using clapping sticks.[19]

Alice and Matthew had similar approaches to each other, although neither were particularly happy or confident with their efforts. Alice addressed Indigenous music wherever she considers it to be relevant and has found it easier to do through the study of musical instruments.

> Alice: The intercultural understanding I think we do quite well, but the Aboriginal and Asia engagement, not so much…[we do it] if it naturally falls into the course, rather than [me saying] I have to put it in…So if we're looking at different instrument families, it's quite easy for me to then relate that back to some Indigenous culture (Alice 2017).

Matthew also explored Indigenous music through the study of musical instruments. He also utilises the "cliché" (Matthew 2017) of getting Indigenous musicians to come in and teach

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[19] This, in turn, links back to the Sustainability Priority in an environmental sense, as the clapping sticks have been sourced from old dowel rods from their previous music facility (Denise 2017).

the students the basics of the didgeridoo. This was his only concession to any difficulty within the ACM.

> Matthew: The thing is when the opportunity comes, you cover that…and [when] we do Australian music, so you get groups who do didgeridoo…and I know it's a little bit clichéd, but…for the kids you have to start from the basics, so you're sort of "this is how you can incorporate Indigenous instruments," or styles of playing, so you can put it there. *It's a bit hard…* (Matthew 2017, emphasis added to indicate the only concession of difficulty within Matthew's interview).

Common across both of these responses is the sentiment of "when the opportunity comes" (Matthew 2017) or "if it naturally falls into the course" (Alice 2017) which is indicative of an underlying lack of confidence in implementing the Indigenous Priority. These responses indicate that there are no concentrated efforts to adequately implement the Indigenous Priority in these schools, and they are used as excuses to explain why the teachers have avoided it. The excuse of "when the opportunity comes" may be understandable in relation to historical, traditional Indigenous music practices (discussed below), but belies the fact that Indigenous Australian music also refers to vibrant popular styles such as Indigenous hip hop which represent contemporary Indigenous Australian culture (Hutchings and Crooke 2017). Moreover, such contemporary approaches are referred to by name (although not elaborated upon) within the ACM (ACARA n.d.-r, version 8.3). Insights from the teachers at School Four, supported by articles from the early 2000s, do not justify these excuses, but they may explain why teachers shy away from the Indigenous Priority and illustrate that it is a long-term issue in Australian education.

At School Four the primary concern is that none of the teachers have sufficient knowledge in Indigenous musical styles, and because of this they cannot make their program authentic and relevant. This does not mean that they cannot address the Priority: rather, because of their collective focus on making all learning meaningful, they believe their lack of expertise will make attempts to incorporate the Priority disingenuous.

> Lorraine: I find [the Indigenous Priority] hard…because the way it's slotted into the curriculum is [that] it's obviously part of a bigger curriculum plan. And so, to make sure that how I engage with [Indigenous music is] authentic, and not a tokenistic approach into ethnomusicology is [challenging]…I mean, for me personally, Indigenous music really isn't my background and specialisation (Chris et al. 2018).

Only Denise and Lorraine elaborated on why they struggle with this Priority, but I suggest that all teachers share similar concerns about their ability to do justice to it. When considering their training, it is evident that all teachers have come through university- or

conservatorium-based courses that are based in Western musical traditions.[20] This means that all sampled teachers have a comprehensive understanding of Western music, but they have not necessarily had significant exposure to Indigenous Australian musical practices. It would be reasonable to assume that any other teacher who had trained in the same way would face similar difficulties. The problems discussed in relation to the Indigenous Priority reveal systemic problems in the way that teachers are dealing with cultural differences. Therefore, if the study of Indigenous music is to be a continued emphasis in Australian schools, part of the solution to ensuring its accurate implementation is to amend teacher training so that teachers feel confident in delivering this Priority.

In saying this, the teachers also have a role to play. After all, the Priority was identified in 2008, and it is referred to specifically within the curriculum. The teachers had plenty of time to familiarise themselves with Indigenous music and, if necessary, to do their own research and professional development. For example, there are readily available professional development resources that teachers can find online.[21] Dunbar-Hall (2001) also challenged the assumption that Western-trained music teachers do not have the understanding or ability to approach Indigenous Australian music. While acknowledging that there are challenges when teachers have not received formal training in Indigenous Australian music, he also stated that:

> In many ways [constructing models through which Indigenous Australian music can be studied] is not very different from the way music from other sources is studied: local musical traditions, historical events as they are reflected in songs, music about events at specific places, and links between music and politics are often the topics through which music is taught and learnt (p. 9).

Dunbar-Hall's logic challenges the statements of the sampled teachers, as they all teach some other form of music in which they do not have formal training and have therefore taught themselves. Without trivialising the challenges of teaching Indigenous Australian music, it appears that focusing on it (or not) is primarily based on teacher choice.

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[20] See Chapter Six.
[21] For example, see Bangarra (2019), Music Australia (n.d.), and Music Teachers' Association of New South Wales (2019) as a small sample of music teacher professional development options. Bangarra is specifically focused on professional development in Indigenous Australian dance, music, and visual arts as well as a range of other Capabilities and Learning Areas, while the other two examples are focused on professional development in music.

In addition to professional development, Lorraine identified some inadequacies in the ACM that could be strengthened to better support the Indigenous Priority, while also referring to the shortcomings in conservatorium music education and teacher training.

> Lorraine: …if you come out of…a conservatorium or…school of music training now…we just don't touch on a whole lot of [ethnomusicology], so if [ACARA] want [Indigenous music] to be included, this is where those lesson examples might be really good. Or an ACARA-based upskill: to get some really great ethnomusicologists who are really passionate about this, [to] run a two-day seminar across the holidays, how to include it for [Years] 7 and 8, 9 and 10, something like that (Chris et al. 2018).

Very succinctly, Lorraine captured the challenges of the Indigenous Priority. Dunbar-Hall (2002a) again provides further insight. Teachers do not receive requisite training, and there are further political implications—the Indigenous Priority as a site of reconciliation, or as a site for the perpetuation of stereotypes—that all "contribute to a problematic situation with little chance of immediate resolution" (p. 19). The fact that this article was published in 2002 and the same issues are still challenging music teachers reveals just how complex the appropriate inclusion of Indigenous Australian music in the curriculum and the classroom really is. Teachers do need to take responsibility for learning about Indigenous music, but they have been hampered by inadequate training in conventional music teacher education, and limited guidance from ACARA and the ACM. If these issues with the curriculum were to be rectified, and if provision for subsequent professional development was increased, then the Indigenous Priority could be delivered with more confidence, and Australia could be closer to fulfilling its Closing the Gap goals. While the implementation of Indigenous music practices within classrooms is undoubtedly an element of best practice in music education, further exploration of it is beyond the scope of the present thesis.

9.4.3 Asian Priority

The Asian Priority is contentious because all of the teachers who responded to it classified it as being easy to implement, but with caveats. As the Priorities were often discussed together, it may also be possible that the Asian Priority was just easier to implement than the other two. With that said, many of the references to intercultural understanding were elaborated by using Asian music as examples: it would appear that music teachers often turn to the music of Asia to engage with music of other cultures, which may be explained by Western art music's longstanding practice of taking musical influence from Asian cultures.

Despite the frequent use of Asian music in classrooms, there is a significant pedagogical issue in the way the Priority is defined for use in the Arts, as it explicitly emphasises aesthetic education.

> In the Australian Curriculum: The Arts, students can examine art forms that have arisen from the rich and diverse belief systems and traditions of the Asia region. Students can consider the *aesthetic qualities* of these art forms as well as their local, regional and global influence. This learning area provides opportunities to investigate the role of the arts in developing, maintaining and *transforming* cultural beliefs and practices and communicating an understanding of the rich cultural diversity of the Asia region. Students can engage with a variety of art forms, media, instruments and technologies of the Asia region. They can reflect on the *intrinsic value of these artworks and artists' practices* as well as their place and value within broader social, cultural, historical and political contexts (ACARA n.d.-c, version 8.3, emphasis added to indicate explicit reference to aesthetic education).

There is an interesting comparison between the language used to describe the Indigenous and Asian Priorities, as well as the volume of words to describe each. The emphasis on the aesthetic benefits of Asian art forms, through the reference to aesthetic qualities, intrinsic value, and artworks is at odds with this otherwise balanced description. It does not necessarily reflect how practitioners engage with music from the diverse region emphasised: North-East Asia, South-East Asia, and South Asia.[22] Further problems arise as the Priority is externally focused, with limited focus on the diasporas of Asian communities within Australia and no reference to the cultural diversity present in many Australian classrooms.[23] The Arts is one of the few areas where cultural study is highlighted: as Australia is in the Asia Pacific region and has strong economic ties to China, Japan, and India, the description of the Priority in relation to other Learning Areas emphasises economic justification over cultural (ACARA n.d.-c, version 8.3).

In contrast with her response to the Indigenous Priority, Denise found the Asian Priority to be a relatively easy aspect of the ACM to deliver within the concert band. Each year, the teachers identify a different Asian culture that they will work with and explore that culture

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[22] In the Australian Curriculum, North-East Asia refers to China, Japan, Mongolia, North Korea, South Korea, and Taiwan. South-East Asia refers to Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar (Burma), the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste, and Vietnam. South Asia refers to Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka (ACARA n.d.-c, version 8.3). Although they are mentioned, West Asia and Central Asia are not elaborated upon or prioritised for study.

[23] Diasporas of Asian communities are referred to by a single reference to "[building] understanding of the diversity of cultures and peoples living in Australia…" (ACARA n.d.-c, version 8.3). Overall justification for the inclusion of the Priority includes reference to "Australia's extensive involvement with Asia in social, cultural, political and *economic* spheres," and how such involvement is "vital to the *prosperity* of Australia" (n.d.-c, emphasis added).

through music. She used an example from 2016, when Korea was the focus. A piece of concert band repertoire was selected that took considerable influence from traditional Korean music, and the students learned this piece in preparation for several performances. In addition, the school collaborated with the Korean embassy, and borrowed some traditional instruments for a single performance. For their other performances, the students modified Western instruments so that they approximated the Korean instruments. This is an example of what Denise considers "authentic teaching" (Denise 2017) of the Asian Priority, although her definition of *authentic* is significantly different to the conventional, albeit problematic, use of the term in music discourse (Schippers 2010, pp. 47–53).[24]

> Denise: I thought that was really authentic teaching…Sometimes we're not so lucky, we don't [incorporate] it quite so easily…in…the concert band, but that's how we do it… (Denise 2017).

In addition, there are dedicated units of work relating to the music of different Asian cultures within Performance Music, meaning that attempts to address the Asian Priority are easy to identify at this school.[25] However, this example of so-called "authentic teaching" (Denise 2017) serves as an example of the "naïve idea that the complexities of music across the world can be represented by simply including (Western) notation and transcriptions of songs from various cultures into music curricula" (Schippers and Campbell 2012, p. 87). It is also an example of what Elliott and Silverman term an "amalgamationist" curriculum, in which "a limited range of microculture practices [are included] based on their…potential for incorporation into [the Western tradition]" (2014, p. 448). Therefore, Denise's *authentic* appears to be referring to authenticity in the sense that it is something that she feels she can do convincingly, aiming for "sincerity of expression" (Schippers 2010, p. 49). It is not authentic to Asian cultural styles.

Instead of studying an individual culture in isolation, Alice incorporates aspects of a variety of cultures and uses them to support learning through the elements of music. One of

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[24] Authenticity in music is complex, and the appropriation of music for educational purposes increases complexity. Perhaps the one common factor across the broad range of uses for "authenticity" is that it aims to create "truthful" musical experiences (Schippers 2010, p. 53), through "following ancient scores or the canon; using period instruments and ensembles; re-creating the original setting or context; obedience to rules and the approach to playing defined by the tradition; or aiming at sincerity of expression, meaning, the essence of a musical style" (p. 49).

[25] See Chapter Ten.

her examples was teaching aspects of rhythm through Indian ragas. As with the Indigenous Priority, the study of instruments also allows her to integrate the Priority with relative ease.

> Alice: …in some of my Year 9–10 electives…we looked at Asian music…I still put in a little bit of some Japanese stuff, some Chinese stuff, Indian stuff, and especially the Indian stuff, it's quite nice to teach the rhythm element through that…if we're looking at different instrument families, it's quite easy for me to then relate that back to…some Asian instruments that kids might not have heard before (Alice 2017).

As well as illustrating how Alice engages with the Asian Priority, this example also shows how she utilises the elements of music to inform the implementation of an otherwise challenging area.

Matthew has a novel approach to dealing with this Priority. In a literal realisation of his comments about teaching in a cross-curricular way, he works with language teachers to situate his implementation of the Asian Priority. At School Three, the Asian languages that are taught are Indonesian and Japanese. Consequently, Matthew teaches his students about Indonesian and Japanese music, giving the students a sense of cross-curricular cohesion across multiple Learning Areas.

> Matthew: We do Indonesian music…and we teach Indonesian [language] here…[we teach] Japanese, and we cover Japanese music too. And [we teach] French as well, and when we do Polynesian music there's the French element too…we're pretty good at cross-curricular, and now we do collaborations across the faculties…you do something and go "wouldn't it be good if I just talked to this [language] teacher…" (Matthew 2017).

This appears to be a logical way to provide consistency for students across all of their subjects, although its effectiveness cannot be determined from the interview.

Of the three Priorities, the Asian Priority was given the least amount of attention by the teachers at School Four. Lorraine discussed it in combination with the Indigenous Priority: as established, she finds it easier to deal with the Asian Priority because her musical training and interests have led her to study the Balinese Gamelan. Despite her relative ease in implementing this Priority, Lorraine's comments about ethnomusicological training within tertiary music training implies that she sees herself as an exception to the rule: she argues that many music teachers do not have significant opportunity to engage in detailed ethnomusicological study. If this is consistent across Australian universities and conservatoires, then it is unsurprising that there is a disconnect between music teachers and the Priorities in the curriculum. Along with the Indigenous Priority and composition, this is

an area that requires significant amendments in teacher training and presentation within the curriculum.

9.5 Discussion

The scope of this thesis makes it difficult to make definitive conclusions about the Priorities and Capabilities: after all, this thesis is about how teachers in the ACT have begun to implement the ACM and is not a detailed study of the two overarching dimensions of the entire Australian Curriculum. The implementation of Priorities and Capabilities is a site for further research. However, there are three key points: music teachers approach music in a cross-curricular way, the Capabilities are easy to implement, and the Priorities are difficult to implement.

While all teachers engage with Capabilities and Priorities, it is also important to acknowledge their unanimous position of only doing so when it is "relevant" (Denise 2017, Alice 2017, Matthew 2017, Chris et al. 2018). They justify this cavalier attitude to the Priorities of the Australian Curriculum by saying that they do not like to "tick boxes" (Denise 2017) in the delivery of their music programs, which admittedly has some merit when considering the time constraints that teachers face, but is used so often that it has become an excuse.

Within this context, the Capabilities are straightforward to deliver, although teachers may not be looking at the curriculum-specific definitions of the terms. Regardless, all teachers said they could easily account for literacy, numeracy, ICT capability, and intercultural understanding within their programs, although it is evident that some of the teachers (ironically) tick a box and refer to the music of other cultures without actually engaging in intercultural understanding. Furthermore, the presence of critical and creative thinking, ethical understanding, and personal and social capability can all be inferred. Therefore, the delivery of the Capabilities is straightforward. The teachers appeared to dismiss the Capabilities because they are an inherent component of their job.

By contrast, Priorities received a greater degree of consideration, and Sustainability and the Indigenous Priority were unanimously defined as challenging to deliver. The Asian Priority was considered relatively easy to implement, but there were several instances where Asian styles were only implemented based on their potential for amalgamation into

Western practices. Lorraine indicated significant challenges with the Asian Priority, although these exhibit the same issues she raised about the Indigenous Priority. Overall, there are two key implications that can be drawn from the way these teachers deal with the Priorities.

Firstly, all teachers determined the concept of Sustainability within the curriculum to be entirely related to environmental sustainability, and it was therefore difficult to find relevance to music. This is despite the fact that cultural sustainability is clearly described in the curriculum, although it is not defined as such. This highlights the importance of reading the full description of the Priorities and Capabilities rather than implementing them on face value. I suggest such a cursory understanding may be present within other Priorities and Capabilities as well. With that said, the curriculum could be much more explicit in specifying how cultural sustainability can be delivered in the Arts by referring to it by name in relation to Arts subjects.

Secondly, the limited understanding of the Indigenous Priority is problematic. Despite the teachers' attributing cultural sensitivity as a reason for their reluctance to engage with the Priority, it has been an acknowledged national focus since at least 2008 and there has been plenty of time for them to learn how to deliver the Priority more effectively. With this said, it is important to acknowledge the limitations in music teacher training that prevent them from having a strong understanding of Indigenous Australian music. Therefore, amendments should be made to tertiary training and ongoing professional development so that music teachers can engage with the Priority. In addition, the ACM provides little guidance for the delivery of this Priority, despite the acknowledged weakness of teachers. It would be advisable for stronger and more consistent guidance in the delivery of the Indigenous Priority within the content descriptions and elaborations of the ACM to allow music to fulfil its role in Closing the Gap. In addition, similar guidance for the Asian Priority could also prove beneficial.

As this research is concerned with ACM, I will prioritise the role of the curriculum in strengthening these Priorities. Despite the fact that these are areas of national significance, they are also points of acknowledged weakness amongst music teachers and guidance for their delivery in music within the curriculum is limited. While all stakeholders have a responsibility to address this, the curriculum should provide clearer guidance in the delivery

of all Priorities to ensure the national focus of the entire curriculum is being met. Evidence from the present sample suggests that it is not.

Chapter Ten: Music in Canberra secondary schools

10.1 Introduction

The final chapter of this thesis is an analysis of the course documents from Schools One and Two that compares and contrasts their programs with the ACM and each other. Additionally, I contextualise the course documents by drawing upon publicly available course outlines from ten other secondary schools in Canberra along with information that Matthew and the teachers from School Four gave about their classroom programs during their interviews. This was as close to witnessing the teachers in action as I could get within the context of completing this research because participant observation was not a viable option.[1] I conduct this analysis because it provides insight into how the ACM has been initially interpreted for use within classrooms in Canberra. The analysis pertains to the structure of each program, how it handles the content of the ACM, and its pedagogical focuses.

There are two methods of course structure used by Denise and Alice. The first is the *curricular ensemble*, which is my own term to describe ensemble programs that are based on the ACM and run during class hours. The second is the conventional classroom format of music teaching. I argue that curricular ensembles can be effective programs for student engagement in music, but they exhibit structural traits that mean they are not always effective at aligning with the ACM. The elements of curricular ensembles that do not align with the ACM then suggest that, despite its capaciousness, the curriculum was designed for use in a conventional classroom format. However, classroom-based programs do not always fully align with the ACM either, particularly in relation to the Cross-Curriculum Priorities, which highlights shortcomings in the ACM itself, the training of secondary music teachers, and also the choices that the teachers make when designing their programs. Despite considerable differences in the program structure and curriculum organisation between Schools One and Two, Denise and Alice approach music education through the lens of equal opportunity and student-based achievement, thereby exhibiting key elements of best practice without fully aligning with the ACM. Even though I critique specific elements of the practice of both teachers, their courses are undoubtedly successful music education

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[1] See Chapter One for a description of the methods employed in the completion of this research. Attempting to observe participants would have likely resulted in further challenges in the recruitment of teachers. Chapter One also contains a summary of the challenges that affected the research processes and conclusions of the present thesis.

programs that nevertheless may not be as successful at realising the ACM as the teachers indicated.

To begin, I establish the emergent trends for music education in Canberra schools—including the presence of curricular ensembles—to provide context for the practice of Denise and Alice. With the context established, I then analyse the curricular ensembles in Schools One and Two, comparing them to the ACM in an attempt to determine how well they align with the national curriculum. I conclude the chapter by examining the classroom programs at each school, comparing and contrasting the ways in which Denise and Alice have realised the curriculum in relation to their personal background and experiences in music education.

10.1.1 Limitations of course documents

Any course documents that teachers use are the property of the school in which they were based. Therefore, their dissemination to researchers is at the discretion of school principals. I wrote a request for course documents when applying to research in schools, and all principals approved the request. However, some teachers were unable or unwilling to provide these documents. As explained in the Chapter One, the teachers at Schools Three and Four did not provide any course documentation for analysis: Matthew did not respond to requests, and Chris was reluctant to allow access to the documents. Consequently, the present chapter utilises documents from Schools One and Two, and I draw from interview data when analysing Schools Three and Four.

The age of the documents initially appears to be an issue. School One's documents are dated to 2015, while School Two's are dated to 2014, placing the documents in a grey area on the ACM development timeline (see Chapter Three): the final draft of the ACM is attributed to 2012, while the first published version of the ACM that was required to be implemented in any jurisdiction was released in 2016. Within this four-year window different versions of the Australian Curriculum were published. Schools One and Two's documents align with the Australian Curriculum versions 7.5 (2015) and 6.0 (2014) respectively, meaning that they are based on late drafts of the ACM instead of a final version designed for implementation. Despite their age, the school documents align with the present version of the ACM, meaning that they remain relevant to this day. There is scant

evidence of any activity in relation to Arts subjects in the Australian Curriculum's activity reports in this time frame (ACARA 2017, 2018). Given the similarity between the current version of the ACM (8.3) and versions 6.0 and 7.5, it is evident that there has been little to no development in the Arts since at least 2015. The age of the documents also justifies the focus of the present thesis: while their interviews took place in the same year as the compulsory introduction of the ACM in Canberra, Denise and Alice had in fact been working with the new curriculum framework for at least two or three years, respectively.

Additionally, Denise and Alice explained amendments that they had made to their courses without changing the course documents. Matthew and the teachers from School Four explained how time consuming and complicated the course design process can be, which may account for why the documents from Schools One and Two have not been updated (Matthew 2017, Chris et al. 2018). To account for any discrepancies, I have used the information that both teachers provided in their interviews to expand on or amend information from the course documents to ensure that the present analysis is as up to date as possible.

10.2 Emergent trends in music education in Canberra

The ACT Government Education Directorate website states that there are nineteen government secondary schools and nineteen non-government schools that cover secondary schooling within Canberra (ACT Government Education Directorate 2018a, b). From each school's website I attempted to determine whether or not it implemented curricular music. This was not a precise exercise, as schools gave different degrees of information online. Some gave a specific indication of their curricular offerings and the organisation of rotations and electives, while others gave next to no indication of the subjects on offer. In addition, some schools utilised different curriculum, ideological or organisational frameworks, removing them from the scope of the present analysis.[2]

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[2] The most significant alternative curriculum framework in Canberra is the International Baccalaureate, which appeared in two secondary government schools and four secondary non-government schools (IB Schools Australasia 2019). Non-government schools included under the *independent* umbrella include Catholic, Steiner, Islamic, Montessori, and community schools, all of which are organised in different ways. A cursory analysis of independent school websites indicated that these schools claimed to have met the requirements of the Australian Curriculum.

Despite the differences between curriculum models and school frameworks, there is a general approach to music that is utilised by the majority of schools in the ACT. Schools tend to implement music in a compulsory rotation in Year 7, or Years 7 and 8, along with other subjects that are usually from the Arts and Technologies Learning Areas. Music then remains an elective subject for the remaining years of secondary school. Of course, there are some exceptions. The presence of middle schools—separate campuses or specialised locations within regular high school campuses that address the crossover between primary and secondary schooling in Years 6, 7, and 8—complicates the identification of relevant information. There are also schools that do not implement curricular music, although some of these schools have co-curricular music programs. For example, Merici College, an all-girls Catholic school, has no curricular music programs but maintains co-curricular music ensembles (Merici College n.d.).

In some cases, schools published course outlines or student guides on their websites. In an attempt to understand the context of the implementation of the ACM in Canberra, I analysed these course documents from as many schools as possible. Five government schools and five non-government schools hosted readily available documents on their websites. As well as conforming to Philpott and Wright's broader assumptions made about secondary music education (2012, pp. 441–442, see the Introduction), the information in these documents forms the basis establishing what I define as the *emergent trends* for secondary school music education in Canberra: an initial understanding of themes and trends that may be present in other Canberra secondary schools and that contextualise the present study.

The themes and trends exhibited by the ten additional schools tend to correlate with the government school/non-government school divide, but there are exceptions within both categories. Non-government schools tend to implement conventional classroom programs that focus on music performance, composition, theory, and analysis. They also encourage students to have private music tuition in addition to their classroom learning, and in some cases, students are required to participate in co-curricular ensembles if they study curricular music electives (Chris et al. 2018, Marist College Canberra 2018a, b). By contrast, government schools tend to emphasise Western popular music in performance tasks, electives for later years often focus on the broader music industry, and music is often taught

through *curricular ensembles*, my own term to describe ensembles such as concert bands and orchestras that are nevertheless based on the ACM. The early indication of trends in Canberra schools suggests that despite the capaciousness of the ACM, teachers appear to implement it in similar ways and the similarities appear to be dictated by the type of school.

10.2.1 Music in non-government schools

All of the non-government schools with course information online were Catholic schools: Daramalan College, Marist College Canberra, St. Edmunds College, St. Francis Xavier College, and St. Mary MacKillop College. Schools of other denominations or affiliations tended to limit the amount of course information that was published in the public domain: for example, Radford College, which is an Anglican School, gave a broad overview of its secondary subjects online, but further information required a password (Radford College n.d.). The course outlines from the five Catholic schools emphasised that students should learn to read standard music notation, while some of the schools also placed arbitrary benchmarks on participation in music: they often encouraged students to have private music tuition outside of classes and enforced students' participation in co-curricular ensembles. The course outlines often used subjective language when describing music and often used style-specific terminology when referring to all music (MUSICS, see Chapter Two). Early indications suggest that Denise's earlier assumption—that non-government schools tend to deliver conservative programs—appears to be accurate, supporting her claim that the ACM can encompass both traditional and practical music programs (Denise 2017, see Chapter Seven).

References to standard notation were present in the documents of three schools, often in relation to styles of music that are not reliant on written notation at all. This is consistent with the language used in the ACM. For example, Daramalan College focuses on Western popular music in Year 7—styles of music that are primarily aurally based—yet all students learn to read standard notation (Daramalan College 2018). Marist College Canberra is slightly more targeted in its approach, referencing standard notation in relation to learning keyboard instruments for Years 7 and 8, but not for guitar and percussion (Marist College Canberra 2018a). Standard notation appears to be an important component of non-government school music programs.

These schools tend to limit access to music programs through the application of arbitrary benchmarks, the suggestion that students should be having private music lessons, or the requirement for students to participate in co-curricular ensembles. St. Edmund's College requires students to have passed an Australian Music Examinations Board (AMEB) Grade Three exam for both theory and performance before commencing music in Year 10 (St Edmund's College 2017c). Marist College Canberra does not impose such strict guidelines but indicates that prior experience is necessary to participate in music in the higher year levels (Marist College Canberra 2018b). Two schools encourage students to have private tuition without enforcing it (Marist College Canberra 2018b, St Mary MacKillop College 2018), but St. Edmund's College expects students to have private tuition from Year 9 onwards (St Edmund's College 2017b). None of the five Catholic schools require students to participate in co-curricular music, but School Four does while also requiring students to have private tuition (Chris et al. 2018). All of these examples are instances of the schools limiting access to music, particularly when students cannot perform at a prescribed standard, do not wish to play in co-curricular ensembles, and do not want (or cannot afford) private tuition, thus perpetuating an elitist approach to music education that contradicts the ACM: that music education is equitable and relevant to all students (Ministerial Council on Education 2008, ACARA n.d.-u, version 8.3). The 2013 *Music Education Inquiry* by the Australian Music Association—which is situated within the Victorian context but raises valid points for the ACT—suggests that the perpetuation of such elitist approaches by secondary music teachers stems from their training. It "does not provide [teachers] with a familiarity of the entire curriculum" and they have "an inability to [contextualise] music [within] the curriculum" which, given their usually narrow focus on a particular instrument and style of music, results in "the perpetuating of notions of elitism" (Australian Music Association 2013, p. 22).

Language and terminology raised further issues. Daramalan College perpetuated the uncritical use of the term *work* in relation to all music (Daramalan College 2017a, b, see Chapter Five), while Marist College Canberra organised its Year 9–10 electives in a way that categorises all non-Western styles of music within the problematic umbrella of *world music* (Marist College Canberra 2018b). St. Edmund's College used subjective terminology to compare and describe different styles of music, stating that the (unspecified) style of music studied in Year 8 has "a deeper focus and style to it" than the popular music focus of Year 7

(St Edmund's College 2017a). Without knowing precisely what styles are taught in Year 8, it is impossible to know the full implications of this statement. However, at the very least, it encourages an approach that compares different styles of music and places value judgements on their "focus and style" (St Edmund's College 2017a). These factors—notation, limited access, and uncritical language use—combine to suggest that non-government schools in Canberra tend to offer conservative interpretations of the ACM, some of which perpetuate the inequalities in music education that were identified in the *National Review* (Department of Education, Science and Training 2005).

10.2.2 Music in government schools

The five government schools with open access to course information were Amaroo High School, Canberra High School, the Gold Creek School, the Harrison School, and Melrose High School. All schools exhibited at least one of the traits identified earlier: a focus on Western popular music, electives that explore the broader music industry, or curricular ensembles. Varying levels of detail provided some challenges in analysing these course documents, but a statement from Denise's interview may explain the rationale behind their structure. She said that a common trait for government school programs is that funding is based on the number of students who participate in a subject (Denise 2017). The three traits are potentially related to making music an attractive elective choice for students.

The focus on popular music was sometimes explicitly indicated through elective programs in Years 8, 9, and 10, but its presence in the compulsory rotations through Year 7, or Years 7 and 8, forms the basis for this trait. In these rotations popular music was usually implied by the range of instruments students could learn. For example, Canberra High School offers the selection of guitar, keyboard or voice for Year 7 students without prior musical experience (Canberra High School 2015). At Melrose High School, Year 7 students participate in a curricular concert band, and then learn the guitar or keyboard if they continue to Year 8 music (Melrose High School 2017a). Other schools offer a similar range of instrument and voice options, often with the addition of drums. The suggestion that these instruments imply popular music is made more persuasive when considering the orchestral or concert band instruments that are offered in compulsory rotations at some non-government schools, such as School Four (Chris et al. 2018).

Electives based on the broader music industry were primarily designated for Year 9–10 students. Some examples made explicit reference to the music industry, while others indicated the integration of performance and elements of the music industry, such as "songwriting and recording" at Amaroo High School (Amaroo School 2017a). Although industry-based electives can have a wide variety of focuses, they frequently require the use of computers and technology. The ACM offers no examples of industry-based tasks in the content descriptions or elaborations, but courses like the aforementioned "songwriting and recording" course integrate composing and performing with broader industry focuses such as the production of records or digital music.[3] Industry courses may be attractive to students, provide variety in elective offerings, and an additional benefit is that they are inherently reliant on the ICT capability (see Chapter Nine). Incidentally, such courses also align with the focus on popular music, as popular styles are disseminated through audio recording rather than notation (Davis and Blair 2011, p. 125). As the ACM does not refer to such industry focuses in its content descriptions, the consistent presence of these courses in Canberra government schools illustrates a remarkable similarity of curriculum interpretation and response to environment amongst teachers.

Amaroo High School, Canberra High School, Melrose High School, and other government secondary schools in Canberra offer curricular concert band programs (Amaroo School 2017b, Canberra High School 2017).[4] This means that students participate in ensemble programs that occur during class time at the schools, and the students are assessed against the achievement standards of the ACM within the ensembles. Some schools offer curricular concert bands for Year 7 only, while others offer them in every year of secondary school. This contrasts the co-curricular ensembles delivered in non-government schools, which occur outside of class time and are not assessed against the ACM. Because of their relevance to the present thesis, curricular ensembles will be examined in more detail in the next section of the chapter.

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[3] The ACM does mention recording performances and using technology, but does not do so with reference to the relevance that these tasks have to the broader music industry (ACARA n.d.-r, version 8.3).

[4] For a full table of Canberra schools and the programs offered, see Appendix C.

10.2.3 Discussion

Beyond the system of rotating through music courses, the trends exhibited by Canberra's schools are by no means exclusive or conclusive. There are fourteen other schools of each type that did not have any detailed course information hosted online. I could determine whether music was implemented at most of the schools and the method of rotation through Year 7, or Years 7 and 8, but could not gain any further insight. Therefore, this exploration of course documents is limited to providing a general overview of Canberra's music education context. An expansion of the scope could provide a deeper understanding of the Canberra context. However, this does not discount the fact that there are some emergent trends.

The government schools tend to align with praxial approaches in music education. There is a strong emphasis on practical tasks and the terminology used in course documents is inclusive, meaning that students are not encouraged to place value judgements on other styles (Elliott and Silverman 2014, pp. 282–305, Philpott and Wright 2012, pp. 453–454). However, these documents show little in the way of response to some of the *National Review*'s concerns: for example, there are few references to composition, improvisation is neglected, and the status of music within schools generally does not appear to be high (Department of Education, Science and Training 2005). It appears that the present sample of government schools implement praxially-aligning music programs, but do little to strengthen the areas in need of improvement that were identified in 2005.

By contrast, the non-government schools exhibit a tendency to limit access to music and to centralise Western art music through inappropriate terminology. This is despite an integrated focus on practical, theoretical and contextual knowledge that is essential to praxial music education (see Chapter Two). Music is a high-status subject within non-government schools, but the scope of this thesis means that it is impossible to determine whether this is the result of the recommendations made by the *National Review*. It appears that the sampled non-government schools tend to promote teaching methods that align with best practice, but they also neglect non-Western styles of music and limit access to the subject. In so doing, they undermine inclusivity and appear to unconsciously and uncritically support some outdated, elitist approaches to music education.

School and teacher	Classroom-based program/s	Curricular ensembles
School One (Denise)	Performance Music: Term-long compulsory rotation course in Year 7 (unless students participate in the Concert Band Program). Semester-based non-sequential elective course in Years 8–10.	Concert Band Program: Year-long sequential elective course in Years 7–10.
School Two (Alice)	Classroom music: Term-long compulsory rotation course in Years 7–8 (unless students participate in the Year 7–8 Concert Band). Semester-based non-sequential elective course in Years 9–10.	Year 7–8 Concert Band: Term-long elective rotation course in Years 7–8.
School Three (Matthew)	Classroom music: Term-long compulsory rotation course in Year 7. Semester-long sequential elective course in Years 8–10.	Orchestras Year-long sequential elective course in Years 7–10.
School Four (Chris, Sam, Lorraine, and Jody)	Classroom music: Semester-long compulsory rotation course in Year 7. Year-long sequential elective course in Years 8–10.	N/A

Table 24: Overview of music programs at the sampled schools (School One 2015a, b, c, d, School Two 2014a, b, Denise 2017, Alice 2017, Matthew 2017, Chris et al. 2018).

10.3 Program analysis in sampled schools

Before analysing the course documents from the sampled schools, it is first necessary to establish the general identity and structure of music at each school. Table 24 lists and briefly describes the schools' programs to give a broad structural overview which will underpin the following discussion. The information in Table 24 is sourced from a combination of program documents (where available) with supporting interview data, or from the interviews alone when program documents were not available. The three government schools (Schools One, Two, and Three) all make use of both conventional classroom-based approaches and ensemble programs to realise the ACM, while School Four only utilises a classroom program. Each school also makes use of co-curricular ensembles which will be introduced briefly but are not relevant to the present thesis and are not listed in Table 24. Finally, because Schools Three and Four were reluctant to provide course documentation, this section of the thesis primarily focuses on Schools One and Two.

The curricular ensemble programs in government schools are the first courses to be analysed. They appear to be prevalent within government schools in Canberra and are present in each of the three government schools in the research sample. Their presence in Canberra may be partly explained by the work of the Instrumental Music Program (hereafter IMP), a longstanding ACT Government initiative that has been running for more than 30

years and introduces primary school students to concert band instruments (Instrumental Music Program n.d.). I examine the curricular ensembles to determine their effectiveness as alternatives to classroom programs in realising the ACM. This section also assesses whether the sampled curricular ensembles align with a praxial concept of best practice.

I conclude the program analysis with an exploration of the classroom programs. These programs are arguably what the ACM has been designed to deliver, so this section compares the classroom programs from Schools One and Two to the ACM and contrasts them against each other. As well as investigating how well each program aligns with the ACM and best practice, this analysis also compares the effectiveness of Denise and Alice's methods of representing their courses through documentation. Interview data from Schools Three and Four is also used to provide further context, and common elements of classroom music at all schools are identified and examined further. The end result is a snapshot of how the ACM is implemented in Canberra in both curricular ensembles and classroom formats.

10.3.1 Curricular ensembles: the influence of the IMP in Canberra

The prevalence of curricular ensembles in Canberra may be partly explained by the work of the IMP, which is currently offered in 59 ACT primary and secondary schools (Instrumental Music Program 2019). It was originally designed to introduce primary school students to concert band instruments and repertoire, although a ukulele program was introduced in 2012 and the IMP also facilitates choirs. There are currently 48 primary school-based concert bands, comprising of brass or woodwind programs, which involve participation from students in Years 5–6.[5] Therefore, a significant number of Year 7 students commence secondary school with some experience with concert band instruments, and I suggest that curricular ensembles in secondary schools—particularly concert bands—may be designed to capitalise on the experience of these students.

The IMP is unrelated to the ACM, but the aims of each raise some interesting points of comparison. The IMP has six aims, while the ACM has four (see Chapter Four). Table 25 compares the aims of the IMP to those of the ACM to determine whether it *could* be

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[5] There are also six secondary schools affiliated with the IMP, where students in Years 7–10 are able to participate in ensembles. All of the sampled government schools run an independent (non-IMP based) curricular ensemble program.

ACM aims	IMP aims
[Students develop] the confidence to be creative, innovative, thoughtful, skillful and informed musicians.	To develop cooperative learning [and] social interaction…*
	To encourage children to strive for excellence.
[Students develop] skills to compose, perform, improvise, respond and listen with intent and purpose.	To develop…performance skills.*
	To develop instrumental and ensemble skills.
[Students develop] aesthetic knowledge and respect for music and music practice across global communities, cultures and musical traditions.	To develop in children an awareness and appreciation of many musical styles and genres.
[Students develop] an understanding of music as an aural art form as they acquire skills to become independent music learners.	To enhance the education of children through their involvement in a quality music program.
	To provide a strong motivation for children to continue to engage in music activities.

Table 25: Comparison of the aims of the ACM and the IMP (Instrumental Music Program n.d., ACARA n.d.-b, version 8.3). I separated the IMP aim indicated with the star (*) to align with the focus of the ACM's aims.

encompassed within the national curriculum framework. It appears that it can, thus lending further support to the claims of Denise and the teachers at School Four (see Chapter Seven) and reinforcing the capaciousness of the ACM. The ACM's aims are certainly more general than those of the IMP, but the ACM is dealing with all music (MUSICS) while the IMP is specifically focused on concert band repertoire. Arguably, the IMP exhibits more ambition in its aims for student, but this is not without its own problems. For example, any statements about the quality of a music program risk implying that particular styles of music—in the case of the IMP, concert band repertoire—are of a higher quality than others. However, it is evident that the IMP can be subsumed within the broader aims of the ACM.

10.3.1.1 The Concert Band Program (School One)

The Concert Band Program (hereafter CBP) is the result of Denise's experiences of teaching music in rural New South Wales (see Chapter Six). She started to develop a similar program in another school when she first moved to Canberra in the mid-1980s and refined the program upon moving to School One several years later. The CBP has grown significantly since its inception and it now occupies a high-status position within the school, as it is the central music program at School One. The priority placed on the CBP was evident during Denise's interview: when we began discussing music at School One, she immediately

assumed I was focusing on the CBP and addressed it first. From Denise's perspective, music is a subject that is embedded in the culture of School One as a result of the CBP (Denise 2017).

Grade	Description
1	Very easy—1 year playing experience
2	Easy—2 years playing experience
3	Medium—3–4 years playing experience
4	Medium Advanced
5	Advanced
P	Professional

Table 26: Grading scale for concert band repertoire from Hal Leonard (Hal Leonard 2018).

The CBP is unique amongst the sample in its implementation structure (see Table 24). It is progressive and sequential, meaning that students are required to have participated in the previous band to be eligible to enrol. It is the only program in the present sample that conforms with the ACM's stipulation that music education should be "continuous and sequential" (ACARA n.d.-u, version 8.3). Instead of term- or semester-based courses, the concert bands are offered in year-based courses, meaning that students elect to participate in the CBP for an entire academic year. In Years 9–10, at which point students have had considerable experience in the concert bands, it becomes a two-year commitment. A conservative estimate of the time allocated to the CBP suggests that students participate in the ensemble for between 77.2–96.8 hours per year, which is around the 80 hour per year suggestion of the Australian Curriculum (School One 2018a, ACARA 2013, p. 9).[6] I suggest that this is a conservative estimate for three reasons: the nature of ensembles preparing for performances would likely involve extra rehearsals outside of class time; students would be encouraged to practice their instruments at home; and each year level embarks on a tour of varying duration once per year.[7] All of these factors would increase the time that students

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[6] School One's Prospectus (2018a) and elective booklets (School One 2018b, c) provides the clearest indication of time allocated to different subjects. The school runs on a two-week cycle with five 58-minute periods per day (2018a, p. 41). Students study seven subjects per semester: the core subjects/Learning Areas of English, Mathematics, Science, and Humanities and Social Sciences, and a selection of electives (School One 2018b, c). If music is taught for two lessons per week, or four lessons per two-week cycle, it equates to 38.6 hours per (twenty week) semester, or 77.2 hours per (forty week) academic year. Conversely, if music is taught for three lessons in one week and two in the other, or five lessons across the two-week cycle, it equates to 48.4 hours per semester or 96.8 hours per year.

[7] Denise explained the tours that the different year levels embark on. The Year 7 ensembles travel to locations in rural NSW for an overnight trip. The Year 8 ensemble goes to Sydney for three days. The Year 9 ensemble goes to Melbourne for six days, and the Year 10 ensemble goes to Queensland for seven days (Denise 2017).

participate in music. It appears that the CBP matches or exceeds the recommended time allocation for music in the Australian Curriculum.

Band	Grade level
Year 7 Beginning Concert Band	0.5, 1.0, 1.5
Year 7 Concert Band	1.5, 2.0, 2.5
Year 8 Concert Band	2.0, 2.5, 3.0
Year 9 Concert Band	3.0, 3.5, 4.0
Year 10 Concert Band	3.0, 3.5, 4.0. 4.5 and 5.0 for advanced students

Table 27: Grading of the CBP (School One 2015c, d).

Also unique within the present sample is the external measure of achievement, as each ensemble is allocated a range of grade levels in the course documentation. The School One documents do not explain what each grade means, simply listing them as a somewhat arbitrary benchmark. However, a guide for grading concert band repertoire by the publisher Hal Leonard (see Table 26) appears to correlate that format with the CBP documentation. There are five bands at School One. The Year 7 ensembles are divided into "raw beginners" (Denise 2017) and those with some experience, while the remaining three ensembles are year-based. They are listed, along with their grade allocations, in Table 27.

As the CBP requires students to participate in ensembles for consecutive years, suggesting an external standard is more appropriate than it would be in a non-sequential course where students can elect to participate without prior cumulative experience. However, the course documents give no indication of how the standards are applied or assessed. Furthermore, placing an external standard on music education applies a degree of selectiveness upon the course which goes against Denise's stated intention of equal access and opportunity for all students in the CBP (Denise 2017, see Chapter Seven). Indeed, the concert band idiom limits access by its very nature, as students need to be interested in concert band instruments and have the ability to develop the skills to read standard music notation to participate effectively. These characteristics limit the potential of the CBP to be a site for inclusion, both in terms of allowing equal opportunity for all students and incorporating music from different cultures. As well as challenging Denise's stated goals, the CBP is also at odds with the ACM's provision of relevance to all students (ACARA n.d.-u, version 8.3).

ACM content description	School One elaborations (Year 9 Concert Band)
ACAMUM099: Improvise and arrange music, using aural recognition of texture, dynamics and expression to manipulate the elements of music to explore personal style in composition and performance (improvising).	Revision of McBeth's Pyramid of Sound.[8]
	Revise then apply knowledge of elements of music to rehearsals and performances: rhythm, pitch, dynamics and expression, form and structure, timbre, texture.
	Choose a repertoire piece that is based upon 12-bar blues, explore basic improvisation then rearrange the composition for performance to include some student improvisation.
ACAMUM100: Manipulate combinations of the elements of music in a range of styles, using technology and notation (theory and aural training).	Apply elements of music to rehearsals and performances.
	Theory concepts.[9]
ACAMUM101: Practise and rehearse to refine a variety of performance repertoire with increasing technical and interpretative skill (practising).	Balance, blend and intonation.
	Contemporary and traditional band performance repertoire with increasing levels of difficulty and complexity.
	Understand the context of the repertoire in order to inform stylistic nuance and interpretation.
ACAMUM102: Plan and organise compositions with an understanding of style and convention, including drawing upon Australian music by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists (composition).	Chord progressions.
	Simple composition: rhythmic [composition] and using twelve bar blues.
	Theory concepts.
	Use of Noteflight or other music notation software where applicable.
ACAMUM103: Perform music applying techniques and expression to interpret the composer's use of elements of music (performance).	Sight reading of repertoire.
	Understanding of context of performance repertoire [and] its application.
	Revise elements of music—listening tasks—compare and contrast…performances of different versions/ensembles of the repertoire.
ACAMUR104: Evaluate a range of music and compositions to inform and refine their own compositions and performances (musical analysis).	Listening tasks—compare and contrast … performances of different versions/ensembles of the repertoire.
	Use evaluation of other performances to refine their own.
	Theory concepts.
ACAMUR105: Analyse a range of music from contemporary and past times to explore differing viewpoints and enrich their music making, starting with Australian music, including music of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, and consider music in international contexts (contextual analysis).	Reflection and evaluation of their own and their band's performances.
	Compare and evaluate audience responses and performer roles in different settings.
	Both bands will analyse each eisteddfod and competition piece.
	Both bands will analyse a minimum of three pieces in total per semester.

Table 28: ACM content descriptions and their elaborations in the CBP (ACARA n.d.-r, version 8.3, School One 2015d).

The CBP is a course that has been retrofitted to align with the ACM. It pre-dates the ACM considerably, and Denise stated that all she did to ensure alignment between curriculum and course was to rewrite tasks and assignments to reflect the ACM achievement standards (Denise 2017). She appears to take some creative licence in her attempt to account for the

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[8] McBeth's Pyramid of Sound refers to American wind band composer William Francis McBeth (1933–2012) and his concept of balance in the concert band.

[9] Theory concepts are named in School One's course documentation, but there is no explanation of what these concepts are.

ACM within the confines of the CBP. The student tasks are presented as elaborations of the ACM content descriptions within the course documentation, which means that each content description is accounted for but there is no clear indication of how the courses are actually structured and implemented. In some cases there is also little apparent alignment between the Arts-wide categorisation of content descriptions and the ACM's descriptions (see Chapter Five), or School One's elaborations of the descriptions. In Table 28 I have used School One's elaborations for the Year 9 Concert Band to illustrate the inconsistencies.

The inconsistencies between the ACM's content descriptions and the intention for each category of descriptions mainly effect the improvising, composing, musical analysis and contextual analysis content descriptions (see Chapter Five). The CBP's inconsistencies are most prevalent in relation to *responding* descriptions (indicated by ACAMUR) and composition. For example, the CBP makes no reference to "Australian music by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists" (ACARA n.d.-r, version 8.3) in its composition tasks, and the separation of different types of *responding* activities is unclear in the documentation (School One 2015d). Indeed, the first task listed under ACAMUR105—"reflection and evaluation of their own and their band's performances" (School One 2015d)—appears to be contained more comfortably within ACAMUR104. In her interview Denise attributed most of the challenges in curriculum implementation to program structure, and there is little guidance about program structure in any of the School One course documents. It is therefore necessary to turn to interview data for further clarity.

As established in Chapter Seven, Denise simplistically interprets *practical* to refer to performance alone (Denise 2017). She stated that students have instruments in their hands for "90%" (Denise 2017) of their class time and that they engage with as much material as possible in this way, as even music theory is taught on musical instruments. Her performance-based definition of *practical* does not acknowledge that it is possible to have practical engagement with other activities such as composition (Elliott and Silverman 2014, pp. 250–258, Reimer 2003, pp. 111–112).[10] Denise identified composition as the most significant challenge in the CBP (Denise 2017), although *responding* activities are arguably

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[10] Elliott and Silverman (2014) emphasised the practicality of composing, improvising and arranging (pp. 250–258), and Reimer (2003) stated that composition is "…fundamentally, *making music* from [an] idea" (p. 111) and that "the creativity of composing…can and should be as readily accessible for the development of all our students as any other way to be musically creative" (p. 112).

just as challenging to deliver within this context. Despite this, the CBP does align with the seventh praxial characteristic of being an "approximation" of real-world practice (Elliott and Silverman 2014, pp. 424–440, see Chapter Two). This characteristic suggests that CBP students should approximate what the members of professional and community concert bands do: practice individually, rehearse in sections and ensembles, and perform, and there is obvious provision for these three activities in the School One course documents. Furthermore, the student retention rate of "75%" (Denise 2017) and the status of the program within School One indicates that it is a highly successful program that "meets [student] need" (Denise 2017) at the expense of curriculum adherence. It is an exemplary example of a concert band program that aligns with best practice within that particular stylistic context. However, as a realisation of the ACM, it is challenged by inconsistencies and seemingly irreconcilable tension between the implementation of composition and *responding* tasks and the nature of a performance-based ensemble.

10.3.1.2 The Year 7–8 concert band (School Two)

The curricular concert band at School Two is modest in scale when compared to the CBP. It is an advanced option for students in Years 7–8, who participate in the band instead of progressing through the mainstream music rotation (examined later in this chapter), and only lasts for a term. Students elect to participate in the Year 7–8 band (hereafter 7–8B) at the end of Year 6, and if they do not enrol in the band they participate in the mainstream rotation program. Students are required to have some experience on concert band instruments to be eligible to participate in the 7–8B. Structurally, there are no differences between the mainstream rotation and the band, so most of the structural information will be examined in relation to the classroom programs. However, the structural point that is now relevant is that all of the course material outlined in Table 29 is supposed to be delivered in a single term—ten weeks—in either Year 7 or Year 8, and not both.

The key difference between the 7–8B and the mainstream rotation course is that students' performance activities and assessments are undertaken in a band context rather than as soloists. Aside from performance, students complete virtually the same tasks and do so on a "50/50" split (Alice 2017), spending half their time on performance activities and the other half on theory, composition, and analytical tasks. The attempt to spend an equal

School Two 7–8 concert band assessment tasks	ACM content descriptions
Research task: Students are to select a genre and write a report responding to the genre characteristics and analyse and respond to a piece from that genre.	ACAMUM094: Practise and rehearse a variety of music, including Australian music to develop technical and expressive skills (practising).
	ACAMUM096: Perform and present a range of music, using techniques and expression appropriate to style (performance).
	ACAMUR097: Analyse composers' use of the elements of music and stylistic features when listening to and interpreting music (musical analysis).
	ACAMUR098: Identify and connect specific features and purposes of music from different eras to explore viewpoints and enrich their music making, starting with Australian music including music of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples (contextual analysis).
Composition (written): Students are to use their knowledge of graphic and standard notation to compose and notate a piece reflecting a sustainability issue.[11]	ACAMUM092: Experiment with texture and timbre in sound sources using aural skills (improvising).
	ACAMUM093: Develop musical ideas, such as mood, by improvising, combing and manipulating the elements of music (theory and aural training).
	ACAMUM095: Structure compositions by combining and manipulating the elements of music using notation (composition).
Composition (performance): Students will perform their composition as a solo piece for the class to demonstrate their technical skill and expression.	ACAMUM094: (practising).
	ACAMUM096: (performance).
Performance (band): Students will perform as a band demonstrating their technical ability, ensemble skills and use of expression.	ACAMUM094: (practising).
	ACAMUM096: (performance).
"Adjustable" tasks (theory folio, analysis folio).	ACAMUM092: (improvising).
	ACAMUM093: (theory and aural training).
	ACAMUR097: (musical analysis).
	ACAMUR098: (contextual analysis).

Table 29: Assessment tasks and ACM content descriptions for the 7–8 concert band at School Two (ACARA n.d.-r, version 8.3, School Two 2014a).

amount of time between activities means that the 7–8B is a compromise between a conventional class-based program and a performance-based ensemble program, and it is designed from the ACM rather than being retrofitted to it. For these reasons, the ACM is more readily realised at School Two than it is at School One.

Alice's method of curriculum implementation is task-based, which is arguably a clearer way of outlining the tasks that students complete. To illustrate, Table 29 lists the five tasks students complete in the 7–8B and compares these tasks to the ACM content descriptions

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[11] In her interview, Alice noted that the composition task based on a sustainability issue was no longer taught but did not indicate a replacement (Alice 2017).

they supposedly represent. There are some apparent benefits to organising the course documentation in this way: notably, course organisation is exceptionally clear, and the integration of different styles of knowledge—including the interconnections between *making* and *responding* in all musical activities (see Chapter Five)—are made obvious. These benefits will be examined in greater depth in relation to the classroom programs.

Despite the increased clarity of curriculum realisation in comparison to School One, this program is not without its issues, and the ACM's inconsistencies are perpetuated again. For example, there are no references to improvisation in any of the students' tasks even though ACAMUM092 is supposed to reflect improvisation (see Chapter Five) and the theory and aural description—ACAMUM093—explicitly refers to it. There is also clear provision for the inclusion of Indigenous Australian music within the *responding* content description ACAMUR098, but there is no mention of Indigenous music in any of the tasks associated with the description. The time constraints placed upon this course may partly explain why improvisation and the Indigenous Priority have been neglected, but it is troubling nonetheless.

The 7–8B is an isolated course that does not continue onto any other curricular ensembles. However, there are co-curricular ensembles for students in Years 8–10 at School Two that are linked to the 7–8B, and Alice described the curricular ensembles as a "feeder" course (Alice 2017). Alice encourages every student who participates in the 7–8B to audition for the other ensembles, which suggests that one of the functions of co-curricular music in this school is to counter the limited amount of time that students have to study and play music in Years 7–8, and to keep them engaged with and playing music until they reach the elective courses in Year 9. The combination of time constraints and flow-on to other ensembles may indicate that, like the CBP, the 7–8B prioritises student need over curriculum adherence, which means that there are significant challenges facing the realisation of the ACM within this program.

10.3.1.3 Orchestras (School Three)

At School Three, Matthew implements a curricular orchestra program. It is so named in a deliberate attempt to differentiate it from other concert band programs in other schools.

> Matthew: I started [a] new [curricular ensemble] in the ACT, which [is] not taught anywhere [else]…the [Year] 7 and 8 and [Year] 9 and 10 orchestra. It's not too dissimilar from programs…where they've got a [concert] band, but this is an *orchestra*. I can have guitar…saxophones…didgeridoos, whatever they come [with], it's orchestra. Not in the sense of…a symphony orchestra, it's an orchestra in the sense of a bunch of musicians who come together and create good music (Matthew 2017, emphasis added).

As Matthew did not provide course documentation, the present analysis of his curricular orchestras is brief compared to School One and School Two. Although he described the program as an orchestra, I suggest that it is better served by a term such as *instrumental collective* because *orchestra* carries connotations towards "string, woodwind, brass, and percussion sections…playing classical music" (in the *Oxford Dictionary of English* 2010). Matthew is evidently targeting a broader range of instruments than a conventional orchestra covers. Despite the range of instruments that can apparently be included within the orchestras, the value judgement associated with the term "good music" (Matthew 2017) raises potential concerns.

Matthew gave a brief overview of the structure of the course. There are two orchestras: the Year 7–8 orchestra, and the Year 9–10 orchestra. They are year-based elective courses and it is unclear whether or not they are sequential. The Year 7–8 orchestra runs every year, but the Year 9–10 is not run as frequently and is dependent on student demand. Matthew described the orchestras running like classes, where students also study aural, theory and academic components of music and are not always playing and rehearsing. Because they are full-year courses, Matthew has found that he can cover academic and theoretical content in more detail than he can within the classroom courses. However, it does appear that composition is neglected in the orchestras. Structurally, the orchestras at School Three share the full-year scope of the CBP with the integrated academic focus exhibited in the 7–8 concert band at School Two. Further comparison is impossible given the limited information that Matthew provided.

10.3.1.4 Discussion

The three curricular ensemble programs examined in this section provide insight into how ensemble programs can be implemented within the auspices of the ACM. Within this sample there are two approaches: a fully practical program that approximates the real-world function of musical ensembles, and two programs that integrate ensemble performance into

an otherwise conventional classroom format. The following discussion is not an attempt to assess the quality or effectiveness of these programs in relation to student engagement or musical outcomes—in terms of participation, the CBP is undoubtedly the most effective school music program of any type in the entire sample. Rather, I am assessing each program in relation to the ACM to determine if curricular ensembles are an effective alternative to classroom programs in realising the curriculum. As illustrated by the examples, there are a range of considerations that need to be made in determining program effectiveness, including program adherence to the content descriptions, the limitations of style selection in ensemble programs, and historical uses of ensemble programs that are at odds with the ACM's inclusive intentions.

The description of each curricular ensemble and how it implements the ACM illustrates how the curriculum framework, while capacious, is not fully realised (or realisable) in ensemble programs. The CBP is the most extreme example: in emphasising the performance-based skills of practising, rehearsing, and performing itself, there is little time for students to receive adequate exposure to composition, improvisation, theory, and academic study. The less extreme 7–8 concert band at School Two also faces challenges in implementing improvisation, while Matthew suggested that composition was not a focus in his orchestral program. The CBP also faces significant challenges in realising the interrelationship between *making* and *responding*, although this could be a symptom of Denise's method of presenting her courses as an elaboration of the ACM's content descriptions. By contrast, the 7–8 concert band indicates the interrelationship quite clearly, coupled with a much clearer outline of assessment activities. As established in the previous chapter, all teachers in the sample struggled to deliver the Priorities—particularly the Indigenous and Asian Priorities—in all of their courses (see Chapter Nine). However, the challenges are amplified in curricular ensembles because of the discrete range of styles each ensemble is limited to.

Curricular ensembles automatically limit the scope of musical study to a single cultural and stylistic idiom. This is not without benefits: as argued by Bowman (2005a), a concept of MUSICS—all possible styles of music—can only be apprehended through particular styles of music (p. 65), and the style of music dictated by an ensemble simplifies the choices that teachers need to make. As a counter-argument, Elliott and Silverman suggested that musical

study should be limited to a small array of styles that serve as an orientation point, with brief forays into different music styles so that students experience breadth of study (2014, pp. 428–432). The issue with the present ensembles is that there is little apparent scope to explore other styles of music—particularly Indigenous Australian and Asian styles—which means that the students are potentially receiving a narrow musical education. This narrow scope is particularly problematic when ensemble courses last for a full year. For example, if a student participates in the CBP from Year 7 until the end of Year 10, their entire secondary school music education will have been focused on the concert band. Such a monocultural approach to music education may then perpetuate problematic understandings of the centrality of Western styles of music among students, further challenging inclusivity and multiculturalism in music education.

Historically, concert bands have not been sites for inclusion in music. Jere Humphreys (2012) explained that in the early twentieth century, North American school bands were used to "civilise" Native American students (p. 787, Handel and Humphreys 2005). I do not suggest that any of the teachers in the present sample wish to "civilise" their students from diverse cultural backgrounds, but it is a legacy of the concert band and similar programs that needs to be acknowledged and has the potential to be quite problematic if ensemble programs are delivered uncritically. As noted in Chapters Four and Five, the way that the Indigenous Priority is included throughout the ACM implies cultural appropriation rather than intercultural understanding. Similarly, Denise's "authentic" (Denise 2017) way of handling the Asian Priority is only authentic insofar as it pertains to the appropriation of Asian styles in the concert band repertoire, and not traditional (or even popular) styles of music from Asian cultures themselves. It is a form of *additive multiculturalism*, where the music of Asian cultures is added onto the centralised concert band repertoire (Mansikka, Westvall, and Heimonen 2018, p. 71). Without delving deeper into these issues—they were examined in greater detail in their relevant chapters—what is apparent is that the curricular ensemble format automatically creates structural challenges that make it difficult for such programs to realise inclusivity in music, which is a key tenet of the ACM. With that said, the CBP is the only example of a truly "continuous and sequential" (ACARA n.d.-u, version 8.3) program in the present sample: the 7–8B is too short to be considered continuous or sequential, and the remaining classroom programs are all non-sequential courses. The CBPs

limitations, particularly in relation to inclusivity, may be what allows Denise to develop students' skills considerably throughout the years.

To conclude the analysis of curricular ensembles, I reiterate that this section is not a critique of the curricular ensembles per se. The programs exhibit some elements of best practice in music education—approximating real-world engagement with concert bands, or delivering contextually-relevant theory, history and analysis—and simplify the challenge of style selection for teachers while engaging a large number of students in music. They are strong examples of school music programs in the concert band idiom. However, they exhibit structural characteristics that prevent the realisation of some of the ACM's requirements— particularly the inclusion of all music—thus challenging their capacity as tools to effectively realise the ACM. The nature of curricular ensembles and the demands of the ACM suggest that, despite its capaciousness, the curriculum is optimised for implementation in a conventional class-based format. The Australian Curriculum was designed to provide students with a general understanding of each of its subjects and Learning Areas (ACARA 2012b, p. 10), and by their very nature, curricular ensembles specialise in performance-based activities and discrete ranges of styles. As we will see, they are not as effective as classroom programs at realising the intentions of the ACM.

10.3.2 Classroom programs

This section of the chapter explores the conventional class-based programs that are based on the ACM and are present in all sampled schools. Again, there is an emphasis on Schools One and Two because they provided course documents for analysis, while Schools Three and Four did not. Any information about the latter schools is sourced from the interviews and serves a contextual purpose in the present analysis. The class-based music programs at Schools One and Two are situated differently: at School One, the program is called Performance Music (hereafter PM) and is secondary to the CBP, while at School Two there are a range of electives covering different aspects of music and the music industry that are the central music programs. Both Schools Three and Four implement classroom programs as the central component of their music offerings, making School One an anomaly within the present sample. There are significant structural differences between the programs at Schools One and Two, but as the programs are more similar in scope than the respective

curricular ensembles the pedagogical methods employed can be more readily compared. Therefore, this section serves two purposes: it assesses how well the school programs align with the ACM while also comparing the pedagogical practice of two teachers, exploring the impact of the discursive gap and habitus on their teaching.

10.3.2.1 Performance Music (School One)

The PM program is an alternative to the CBP for students who are not interested in concert band instruments. In contrast to the curricular ensemble, PM was designed using the ACM as a starting point rather than being a pre-existing, retrofitted course. As the (comparatively) minor music program within the school, it conforms to a much more conventional structure than the CBP. Year 7 students participate in a compulsory rotation through PM unless they elect to participate in the CBP, and this rotation lasts for a single term (ten weeks) and is an introductory course to piano, guitar, and drums.[12] From Year 8 onwards, PM becomes a semester-based (twenty-week) elective subject. Each semester focuses on a different selection of musical styles, and it is non-sequential, which means that there are no pre-requisites for entry into the subject. Students have the freedom to negotiate the styles of music that they study in each semester which, when coupled with the non-sequential nature of the course, more readily accommodates Denise's focus on equal access and opportunity in music than the CBP does.

Structurally, PM is implemented in a similar way to the CBP. The same considerations pertaining to school organisation and electives apply, meaning that students are likely to be participating in PM for between 38.6–48.4 hours per semester in Years 8–10 (School One 2018b, p. 2, 2018c, p. 2). Due to its term-based nature, Year 7 PM would likely receive half this time allocation. It is reasonable to conclude that in all years students come close to or exceed the hourly suggestion for participation in the Arts Learning Area (ACARA 2013, p. 9).

The wide variety of musical styles on offer enables students with a diverse range of interests to participate in PM. The course documents state that the first semester of Year 8 PM is based in the genres of blues and rock. Subsequent semesters of music are allocated different styles, ranging from rap and hip hop to "South American music and Afro-Cuban

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[12] In the remaining terms of Year 7, students rotate through other Arts and Technologies subjects.

music" (School One 2015b).[13] However, as PM draws on different students with a variety of musical and cultural backgrounds, these styles are negotiable.

> Denise: …we always start with the blues [in Year 8 semester one], but…second semester [is] designated as [punk and pop], but if you get a whole heap of kids in there whose real interest is disco…there's flexibility [to accommodate that]…when we get classical musicians in [PM], and they may not be interested in blues, they'll do a little bit of blues, but…then we'll tailor it to them (Denise 2017).

Basing the semesters of PM on a discrete selection of musical and cultural styles is a strategy utilised by other schools in Canberra and is also an approach advised in Elliott and Silverman's discussion of music curriculum (2014, pp. 429–431). In addition, the provision for students to individually negotiate the styles that they will study is in line with student-centred approaches to curriculum design, also advised by Elliott and Silverman (p. 429) and other music education experts and curriculum theorists (Department of Education, Science and Training 2005, p. 6, p. 179, Davis 2012, p. 419, Jeanneret and DeGraffenreid 2012, p. 402, Smith and Lovat 2003, pp. 230–236, see Chapter Two). PM clearly aligns with elements of best practice, although the course documents cannot determine whether non-Western cultural styles of music are taught in an appropriate way.

The ACM's content descriptions are elaborated using the same method that Denise uses for the CBP, and as discussed in relation to the curricular ensemble, this method can perpetuate inconsistencies that are present in the curriculum or create new ones. To illustrate, Table 30 compares the ACM's content descriptions and School One's elaborations for Year 8 PM. Even though PM is delivered in a conventional class format, Denise indicated that students still spend the majority of their time with instruments in hand. Consequently, it appears that the *responding* content descriptions are not always realised as effectively as they could be in a less performance-centric program: in particular, the stipulation to "create arrangements of repertoire" (School One 2015a) under ACAMUR097 seems out of place in a responding context, and would perhaps be better suited to ACAMUM093 or ACAMUM095. Of course, responding to performances and the elements of music is fundamental to being able to create an arrangement in the first place, so the inconsistency here merely highlights

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[13] The full list of styles for each year of PM is as follows: Year 8 semester one is based in blues and rock; Year 8 semester two is based in punk and pop; Year 9 semester one is based in rap, hip hop, electronic music, and country music; Year 9 semester two is based in folk, South American music, and Afro-Cuban music; Year 10 semester one is based in West African music and Indian raga; and Year 10 semester two is based in jazz, theatre music, and music for radio, film, television, and multimedia (School One 2015a, b).

ACM content descriptions	School One elaborations (Year 8 Performance Music)
ACAMUM092: Experiment with texture and timbre in sound sources including aural skills (improvising).	Experiment with different sounds on their selected instrument to convey different textures relevant to the style being performed.
	Use of computers and electronics to create loops/sequences and manipulate [analogue] sounds.
	Aural analysis of repertoire.
ACAMUM093: Develop musical ideas, such as mood, by improvising, combining and manipulating the elements of music (theory and aural training).	Extension and development of: elements of music; awareness of expressive instrumental techniques; theory concepts; simple composition elements based around basic rhythms and melodies/graphic notation.
	Composition including chords/melody.
	Improvisations based around the blues scale.
	Use of computers and electronics to create loops/sequences and manipulate [analogue] sounds.
	Varied techniques on instruments/voice to experiment with the production of different sounds/timbre.
	Create personalised arrangements of popular music.
ACAMUM094: Practise and rehearse a variety of music, including Australian music to develop technical and expressive skills (practising).	Extension and development of: play and perform repertoire from a variety of genres; introduction to correct instrumental technique; listen to stylistic and contextual interpretations of repertoire; introduction to basic sight-reading with simple melody and rhythm notations.
	Exploration of music of other cultures and eras.
ACAMUM095: Structure compositions by combining and manipulating the elements of music using notation (composition).	Development and extension of: introduction to theory concepts; reflection and evaluation of rehearsal and performance technique; identification of composition devices in repertoire; create video performances.
	Composition developed around the 12-bar blues.
	Extension activities could include re-harmonising a nursery rhyme or changing modes of pieces.
ACAMUM096: Perform and present a range of music, using techniques and expression appropriate to style (performance).	Development and extension of: perform simple riffs and chord progressions on the guitar; perform simple melodies and chord progressions on the keyboard; perform simple rock beats and basic rudiments on drum kit (singles, doubles and paradiddles); individual performance; group performances.
	Students are able to choose their instrument of study.
	Analyse techniques relevant to style being performed.
	Three individual performances or group performances per semester.
ACAMUR097: Analyse composers' use of the elements of music and stylistic features when listening to and interpreting music (musical analysis).	Development and extension of: discuss a piece of music (instruments used and how they are used); active listening worksheets with leading questions; listening/viewing other performers' interpretations of repertoire.
	Dissection and analysis of how the elements of music are used in a piece of music.
	Compare and contrast using alternative arrangements (like a version).
	Create arrangements of repertoire.
ACAMUR098: Identify and connect specific features and purposes of music from different eras to explore viewpoints and enrich their music making, starting with Australian music of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples (contextual analysis).	Development and extension of: student voice involvement in performances; introduce historical context pertaining to specific styles and pieces of music.
	Analysis of a diverse repertoire including music from other cultures.

Table 30: ACM content descriptions and School One elaborations in Year 8 Performance Music (ACARA n.d.-r, version 8.3, School One 2015a).

how arbitrary the distinction between *making* and *responding* in music really is. For the most part, this method of curriculum realisation allows PM to comfortably align with the ACM, but it fails to clearly indicate specific details pertaining to course organisation.

Aside from the perpetuation of curriculum inconsistencies, my main critique of the School One course documents is that they do not give any real indication of the program structure. Rather, they simply list a range of elaborations that appear unrelated but could, in fact, be components of the same assessment task. For example, the elaborations "create personalised arrangements of popular music," "compare and contrast using alternative arrangements," and "create arrangements of repertoire" (School One 2015a) could all refer to a single arrangement task or multiple arrangement tasks. Likewise, while there are references to students creating compositions and analysing repertoire, there is no information about the scope or scale of the compositions, the repertoire that is to be analysed, or the depth of the analysis. The only specific instruction is for students to complete "three individual performances or group performances per semester" (School One 2015a), which again emphasises the performance-centric nature of music at School One.

10.3.2.2 Selection of electives (School Two)

Unlike School One, classroom music at School Two is the central component of the music program. There are no alternative curricular music programs apart from the 7–8 concert band, so Alice maintains a diverse range of electives in Years 9 and 10 to retain interest in the subject. In Years 7 and 8, students rotate through eight subjects from the Arts and Technologies Learning Areas that become electives in Years 9 and 10.[14] Each rotation lasts for one term (ten weeks), and there is only one rotation-based subject per term. In the compulsory music rotation students are introduced to either the piano or the guitar, complete a range of theory and analysis tasks, and are introduced to composition. In Years 9 and 10, music electives become semester-long, non-sequential subjects. Rather than focusing on different styles of music, the five elective programs in the course documents for Years 9–10 focus on different aspects of the music industry. There are two performance-focused electives: Music Performance and Rock Music. The remaining three elective courses integrate performance with a music industry focus: Recording and Performing, Music Video Production, and Music Industry.

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[14] School Two delivers four Arts subjects: dance, drama, music, and visual art. Students rotate through these subjects, along with four technologies subjects, across Years 7 and 8, studying one Arts or Technologies subject per term (Alice 2017).

Music at School Two occupies a far less privileged position than it does at School One. While the subject appears to be well-supported by the students at School Two, Alice faces some of the challenges facing music teachers as elaborated in the *National Review*: the low status of music in relation to other subjects, the excessive workload that music teachers have, and the "steadily declining" funding for music education programs in schools (Department of Education, Science and Training 2005, pp. 59–61). In particular, time for music is the key challenge that Alice identified during her interview, particularly for the Year 7–8 rotation course, which may be indicative of the low status of the subject. However, supporting information from School Two's website suggests that all music courses—even the 7–8 rotation—exceed the time allocated to music at School One. According to the website, each subject receives seven lessons across a fortnightly cycle, and each lesson lasts for one hour (School Two n.d.). Therefore, students participate in a total of 70 hours of music in semester-based electives, or 35 hours of music in the 7–8 rotation. Alice has taken considerable influence from the ACM in the design of her courses. Her perception of limited time for music suggests that the demands of the ACM are unreasonable in their allocated timeframe.

Alice's range of industry-based electives is similar to the practice of other schools in Canberra. They are a deliberate attempt to broaden the scope of musical study so that students can do multiple semesters of music and feel like they are learning new material.

> Alice: I run four different electives at the moment. We swap every two years…So each of them has a slightly different focus, just because if you go music, music, music, music, music, you're really overlapping and the kids [get bored] (Alice 2017).

As well as providing students with variety across the entire of Years 9 and 10, this approach also aligns with real-life practice in popular music through its focus on creating, recording, and distributing music. There are opportunities for students with diverse musical focuses beyond performance to engage with the subject. However, while this approach does not explicitly emphasise Western styles of music—there are no stylistic limitations indicated in the documents—it does little to promote cultural diversity either. Coupled with Alice's acknowledged issues in dealing with the Priorities (see Chapter Nine), this program structure would suggest that students at School Two receive a culturally homogenous music education.

School Two 7–8 rotation music assessment task	ACM content descriptions
Music critique (week 4): analysis of elements of music in a piece of music.	ACAMUR097: Analyse composers' use of the elements of music and stylistic features when listening to and interpreting music (musical analysis).
Performance 1 (week 5): perform for the class.	ACAMUM094: Practise and rehearse a variety of music, including Australian music to develop technical and expressive skills (practising).
	ACAMUM096: Perform and present a range of music, using techniques and expression appropriate to style (performance).
Composition (week 8): GarageBand composition.	ACAMUM092: Experiment with texture and timbre in sound sources including aural skills (improvising).
	ACAMUM093: Develop musical ideas, such as mood, by improvising, combining and manipulating the elements of music (theory and aural training).
	ACAMUM095: Structure compositions by combining and manipulating the elements of music using notation (composition).
Performance 2 (week 9): perform for the class.	ACAMUM094: (practising).
	ACAMUM096: (performance).
"Adjustable" tasks (theory folio, analysis folio).	ACAMUM092: (improvising).
	ACAMUM093: (theory and aural training).
	ACAMUR097: (musical analysis).
	ACAMUR098: Identify and connect specific features and purposes of music from different eras to explore viewpoints and enrich their music making, starting with Australian music of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples (contextual analysis).

Table 31: School Two tasks and ACM content descriptions for the 7–8 rotation (ACARA n.d.-r, version 8.3, School Two 2014a).

To contrast the approach taken at School One, Alice's programs at School Two realise the ACM in a formulaic way. She uses the same format introduced in relation to the 7–8 concert band to organise all of her courses. Table 31 illustrates the allocation of ACM content descriptions to the 7–8 rotation, while Table 32 illustrates the general categorisation of assessment tasks and ACM content descriptions to the 9–10 electives. These tables show two important characteristics of music at School Two. Firstly, every single task that students complete across all music courses encompasses more than one content description, and secondly, the same content descriptions are used for multiple tasks within the same course. As the content descriptions are divided into different categories of musical engagement, their integration within tasks illustrates that musical tasks, such as composing a piece of music, rely on different types of knowledge. This is particularly effective when content descriptions attributed to *making* (ACAMUM) and *responding* (ACAMUR) are used in relation to the same task—for example, the majority of composition tasks across all electives, thus implying that students *make* and *respond* to musical ideas to create a composition. Using the same content description between tasks—for example, ACAMUM101 being used in relation

School Two 9–10 electives—general categorisation of assessment tasks	ACM content descriptions
Performances.	ACAMUM101: Practise and rehearse to refine a variety of performance repertoire with increasing technical and interpretative skill (practising).
	ACAMUM103: Perform music applying techniques and expression to interpret the composer's use of elements of music (performance).
	ACAMUR105: Analyse a range of music from contemporary and past times to explore differing viewpoints and enrich their music making, starting with Australian music, including music of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, and consider music in international contexts (contextual analysis).
Compositions.	ACAMUM099: Improvise and arrange music, using aural recognition of texture, dynamics and expression to manipulate the elements of music to explore personal style in composition and performance (improvising).
	ACAMUM100: Manipulate combinations of the elements of music in a range of styles, using technology and notation (theory and aural training).
	ACAMUM101: (practising).
	ACAMUM102: Plan and organise compositions with an understanding of style and convention, including drawing upon Australian music by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists (composition).
	ACAMUR104: Evaluate a range of music and compositions to inform and refine their own compositions and performance (musical analysis).
	ACAMUR105: (contextual analysis).
Research tasks.	ACAMUM101: (practising).
	ACAMUR104: (musical analysis).
	ACAMUR105: (contextual analysis).
Elective-specific tasks.	ACAMUM100: (theory and aural training).
	ACAMUM101: (practising).
	ACAMUM103: (performance).
"Adjustable" tasks (theory folio, analysis folio).	ACAMUM099: (improvising).
	ACAMUM100: (theory and aural training).
	ACAMUR104: (musical analysis).
	ACAMUR105: (contextual analysis).

Table 32: School Two tasks and ACM content descriptions for the 9–10 electives (ACARA n.d.-r, version 8.3, School Two 2014b).

to both performance and composition tasks (see Table 32)—illustrates that different types of musical engagement often use the same sorts of knowledge, which highlights the interrelations between *performing* and *composing* in the ACM.

In comparison to School One, the course outlines and task allocations are simplified at School Two. This does not mean that tasks and courses are simplistic, but it does make it easy to work out what content students actually cover. The downside to limiting content to five assessment tasks is that some courses do neglect particular aspects of the ACM, or the Priorities or Capabilities. For example, the Music Performance course documents do not refer to the ICT capability or composition tasks at all, and all courses have limited opportunities for intercultural study. However, the tasks for assessment are all contextually

appropriate to the focus of the relevant course. Despite some areas of neglect, the course documents at School Two mostly align with best practice in music education.

10.3.2.3 Contributions from Schools Three and Four

Matthew and the teachers from School Four discussed their music programs at some length in their interviews. The following section explores the structure of their classroom music programs and draws links between these programs, the Canberra context, and the ACM. In so doing I elaborate on two additional ways that music teachers can interpret the ACM for their own circumstances by manipulating the discursive gap. The application or elaboration of content descriptions in these schools cannot be assessed using the present data.

Classroom music at School Three exhibits similarities to the programs at Schools One and Two and to the broader Canberra context in government schools. Students begin by participating in a compulsory term-long rotation course in Year 7 where they learn the piano and guitar for five weeks each. The Year 8 course is a semester-long elective with students continuing on either piano or guitar and the introduction of detailed composition, musicology and recording. Classroom music in Years 9 and 10 retains the semester-based structure of the Year 8 course but introduces two elective streams: music performance and music industry. Performance retains a similar focus to the Year 8 course but introduces a significant focus on music history, ranging "literally from antiquity" (Matthew 2017) to the present day, while the industry course is focused on the amplification of live performances, the use of recording software, and the completion of a recording task. All Year 9 and 10 electives are sequential, meaning that students need to complete a music course in Year 9 to be eligible to participate in Year 10.

Matthew's approaches to music education can be established based on the language he uses to describe musicology, theory and aural training, composition and music history. For example, he frequently uses the term *music appreciation* to describe musicological study, which carries connotations towards a *music education as aesthetic education* (MEAE) perspective on music education: music is to be appreciated in a disinterested manner for its structural complexity and beauty (see Chapter Two). He exhibits a stringent approach to teaching the fundamentals of Western music, likening them to "eating your vegetables" (Matthew 2017). This approach may be a point where his background as a professional

composer, required to fulfil the specifications of a commission, influences a rigorous approach to theory and aural training. Furthermore, an underlying bias towards Western art music appears when he describes teaching composition. In Year 8, students start by *songwriting*—a term often used within the Western popular music idiom—but they can progress to composition if they are advanced enough (Matthew 2017). This distinction undermines the ACM's definition of *composition*. Finally, his assertion that he "literally" covers "all music" from "antiquity" to the present day (Matthew 2017) in his history courses is an impossibility. The history examples he provided in his interview stemmed from Western popular music, indicating that Western musical styles are likely the focus of historical analysis. In conjunction with his use of the term *world music* to describe the music of other cultures, it is evident that Matthew delivers a predominantly Western focus in his music courses, and within that it is likely that he prioritises Western art music. From the present general level, it appears that Matthew's approach to teaching music is at odds with the inclusive intentions of the ACM although his programs can still be comfortably structured within the curriculum's framework.

The classroom programs at School Four align with the broader Canberra context for non-government schools. They are structured conventionally, with an equal emphasis on performance, composition, and musicology. Year 7 music is the only compulsory music subject and it acts as a bridging course between a generalist primary education framework and a specialist secondary education framework. Students rotate through music for a semester in Year 7 through one of two streams: Performance Music for students with no previous musical experience, or Continuing Music for students who are continuing musical study. Following Year 7, students are required to have private instrumental tuition outside of school and are also required to participate in a co-curricular ensemble if they wish to participate in one of the music electives in Years 8–10.

The music electives are year-long subjects, with students receiving five lessons across a fortnightly cycle. The two-stream approach from Year 7 is continued through Year 8, with Performance Music this time serving as an intensive course to develop students' performance skills to an adequate standard for Year 9. The Year 9 and 10 courses were described as simplified versions of Music One from the NSW HSC, and the teachers at School Four defined the function of music education in these years as preparing students for pre-

tertiary (Years 11 and 12) music, which do have an externally measured achievement standard. Consequently, the ability to match the achievement standard in Years 9 and 10 becomes increasingly important, which is why students electing music are required to have private instrumental lessons. The teachers stated that it is the responsibility of the instrumental teacher to teach students advanced instrumental skills and the nuances of solo repertoire, leaving the classroom teachers free to enable class performances and teach theory and composition (Chris et al. 2018). Additionally, the requirement for students to participate in co-curricular ensembles ensures that students learn ensemble performance skills. These three components of music at School Four—private instrumental tuition, classroom lessons, and ensembles—appear to be modelled on a conservatorium-style approach to music education, which certainly emulates how professional Western classical and jazz musicians are trained. This approach can be linked to the statement in Music One that students "engage in activity that reflects the real-world practice of performers, composers and audiences" (Board of Studies NSW 2009, p. 6), which can in turn be linked to the original version of the praxial question that frames learning in the ACM: "What do humans do when we engage in the Arts?" (ACARA 2010c, p. 7). Despite the teachers' apparent rejection of the ACM, this general analysis of the music programs at School Four indicates that there are similarities in the underlying intention for music education between the ACM and School Four.

10.3.2.4 Discussion

Although Denise and Alice have designed programs that are structurally different, there is a similarity in intention behind their approaches. They both spoke about providing students with equal opportunity to succeed in music, irrespective of their prior experience, while also making the subject appealing to study. Denise accounted for the draw of the subject by highlighting that, from her perspective, most students are interested in performance-based activities.

> Denise: …you have to create a product that the kids want…[it] could be a concert band program…a jazz program, it could be strings, it could be vocal, it could be anything, as long as it's *practical*, and it's *doing*, and it's meeting client need (Denise 2017, emphasis added).

While this approach may be appealing to the majority of students, it has the unintended effect of limiting access to curricular music programs for students interested in composition

or musicology.[15] By contrast, Alice's approach to curriculum implementation is arguably more balanced. She acknowledged that programs using the same curricular outcomes could become repetitive, and so she adds variety to the content in an attempt to make music appealing to the students while retaining a relatively equal emphasis on different types of musical engagement.

> Alice: For…every elective we have, a lot of the [ACM] outcomes are the same. So I try to change the content up a little bit…All of the electives have an element of [performance, composition], research, analysis, [evaluation], that sort of thing (Alice 2017).

While there are some differences in course structure that are beyond the control of either teacher—for example, the limited time for music in Years 7–8 at School Two—the most significant differences in course content are the result of the ways that Denise and Alice attempt to engage more students in music through an exclusive performance focus or through diversity in electives. By contrast, their approaches to providing students with equal opportunity are similar.

The main method that Denise and Alice use to promote equal opportunity in music is to avoid adherence to the ACM achievement standards in their classroom programs, thereby alluding to the earlier discussion about the idealistic nature of the ACM (see Chapter Seven). When considering the non-sequential nature of both programs, this is logical. Students can participate in music whenever they choose at these schools (aside from the compulsory rotation courses), and unlike curricular ensembles, students do not need to meet any entry requirements. The PM course documents account for this by stating that "as students can undertake the [PM] courses at any point in Years 7–10, elements of each course can be adjusted to accommodate the variance of students' prior learning" (School One 2015a, b), building flexibility into the course. Alice's key unit of measurement is student development, so rather than measuring student outcomes against an external standard she compares their progress from the beginning of the course of study to the end. These approaches to ensuring equal opportunity in music align with student-centred models of curriculum and illustrate Elliott and Silverman's praxial approach to facilitating student achievement in music, where musical challenges are balanced with students' pre-existing musical understanding to

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[15] There are a number of non-ACM based subjects that still incorporate music and are arguably better suited to composition tasks. Of particular note is a course where students create and stage their own music theatre production, composing original music. As these courses are not based on the ACM, they fall outside the scope of the present thesis.

promote "self-growth and musical enjoyment" rather than anxiety, frustration or boredom (2014, p. 381). As neither teacher explained any theoretical underpinnings to this shared perspective, I suggest that they both exhibit an informal and experience-based understanding of this element of praxial music education.

Also common between School One and Two are the areas of neglect, where elements of the ACM and best practice in music education are underrepresented or ignored entirely in the course documentation. Both schools offer electives that are based in musical styles that often involve improvisation, such as blues, jazz, and rock music, and it would be appropriate for these electives to include a considerable improvisation focus (School One 2015a, b, School Two 2014b). However, this is not the case, with School One underrepresenting improvisation and School Two ignoring it. Neither teacher accounted for improvisation in relation to the ACM in their interviews which suggests that they do not consider it to be a central component of their curricular music programs. As established in Chapter Six, both teachers were trained through a Western classical music framework which does not centralise improvisation to the same extent as blues, jazz, and rock music. Evidence from other national and international studies (Bernhard II and Stringham 2016, p. 384, Augustyniak 2015, p. 176) suggests that this is a common limitation of Western music education programs. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that Denise and Alice's training does not support a full contextual understanding of the styles of music that they teach in their programs. However, the ACM itself also undermines the presence of improvisation in school programs because it is not visible: it is subsumed by *composition*, which was examined in Chapter Five. As music teachers appear to have a preference for recognisable terminology (see Chapter Three), the lack of references to improvisation by name within the ACM may invoke the effects of the null curriculum, where what is not included in the curriculum is not seen as valuable in the classroom (Eisner 2002, p. 26, p. 31, in Elliott and Silverman 2014, p. 405). The tension between *composition* and improvisation is evident in Alice's case, where most electives involve composition in the sense of realising pre-meditated musical ideas through written notation or technology (School Two 2014a, b). However, addressing this issue is not as simple as stating that every student should experience improvisation. Alice is not a trained improviser, and from a pragmatic perspective, many of her students—particularly in Years 7–8—would lack sufficient musical

understanding and ability on their instruments to improvise with intent. A significant increase in provision for improvisation-based tasks in secondary school music programs will likely require targeted amendments to the ACM as well as changes to current teacher training methods.

Neither set of course documents makes a significant attempt to address any of the Australian Curriculum's Priorities, which were acknowledged as points of weakness by both teachers in the previous chapter. I draw particular attention to the presence of the Indigenous Priority here as it is the only Priority that is referred to directly in the ACM content descriptions or elaborations. Arguably, its presence within the content of the ACM should emphasise its importance and value to teachers. School One's course documents do include some references to the Indigenous Priority, but they repeat much of the ACM's information verbatim. For example, 9–10 PM elaborates on the Indigenous Priority in relation to composition (ACAMUM102, see Appendix A), but is a word-for-word copy of a content description which in itself implies cultural appropriation rather than intercultural understanding: students "plan and organise compositions with an understanding of style and convention, including *drawing upon* Australian music by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists" (ACARA n.d.-r, version 8.3, emphasis added, see Chapter Five). There has evidently been little depth in the application of the Indigenous Priority at School One, with Denise stating that students' "[introduction to Indigenous Australian music] is not in any great depth" (Denise 2017). The Indigenous Priority was not included in any of School Two's documentation despite its presence in the ACM, and Alice did acknowledge the challenges she had with the Indigenous Priority. Concerningly, despite both teachers suggesting that the Asian Priority was easier to implement than the Indigenous Priority, neither teacher made an attempt to include it in their course documents. Sustainability is not present either. All sampled teachers stated that they implement Priorities when relevant, but they would likely argue that they do not have enough time to deliver the Priorities in their courses. While the time allocated to music in schools is an established challenge that many teachers face, the Priorities have been a known entity since the beginning of the ACM development process, and they are only impossible to deliver because they have not been built into the pedagogical framework of each school. The limitations of teacher training in ethnomusicology and the limited visibility of the Priorities within the curriculum itself need

to be acknowledged, but the responsibility to actually deliver the Priorities within the classroom lies with the teachers. This may demonstrate a resistance to change in teaching approach which is only exacerbated by the systemic failures of teacher training to support cultural diversity.

10.4 Discussion: course organisation and the discursive gap

In this chapter I have outlined the emergent trends for ACM implementation in Canberra and have subsequently analysed the course documentation for Schools One and Two with support from interview data from Schools Three and Four. All schools in the sample largely align with their respective emergent contexts, including their methods of rotating through subjects in Year 7 or Years 7–8, style selections and elective focuses, and pedagogical methods employed. Despite the broadness of scope within the ACM and the freedom that Denise and Matthew both acknowledged was inherent within it, the structure of secondary music courses in Canberra is remarkably similar, which may reflect the pre-existing practice of music teachers.

While Denise and Alice have designed curricular ensembles and classroom programs that align with what other schools do, their methods of implementation are quite different. Denise starts with ACM content descriptions and elaborates on each one within her course documents, using a similar method to what the ACM itself does that comprehensively accounts for each content description. Although it is easy to see how Denise has interpreted the ACM to fit within her school context, this approach does not resolve any of the issues present in the ACM and means that it is difficult to determine exactly what students do within a given course. By contrast, Alice starts with pre-determined tasks and has made no further attempt to interpret the ACM content descriptions, simply applying them to the appropriate tasks. All electives contain five assessed items and the ACM has seven content descriptions, meaning that each task has multiple content descriptions attached. Often, the same content description is used for multiple tasks within the same elective. The result is course documentation that clearly emphasises integration in music: that individual tasks are multifaceted and reflect different types of knowledge (content descriptions) and that different tasks often use the same type of knowledge, thus highlighting the interrelations between *making* and *responding*.

Comparing their course documents also reveals how the teachers have manipulated the discursive gap and how habitus informs their practice. Denise rejected methods used during her education because they proved to be ineffective when there were limited resources, resulting in the relatively unstructured nature of her course documents that prioritise performance. Alice has fully adopted the methods used in her formative years in spite of not liking some of the aspects she herself is not good at—namely theory and composition. Consequently, her courses are rigidly structured into four distinct sections, and while content descriptions can appear across different tasks, the tasks themselves are taught separately. In both instances, the teachers could fully justify and explain how their past experiences influenced what they currently do, thus indicating an informal understanding of how they have manipulated the discursive gap to interpret the ACM and demonstrating a reflexive understanding of their own practice by bringing their "unconscious practical knowledge to a conscious level" (Costa and Murphy 2015, p. 6).

The course documents also raise the question of whether retrofitting a well-established course—the CBP—or creating a new course from the ACM has an effect on teachers' adherence to the curriculum. A larger sample would yield more conclusive results, but the present examples suggest that the creation of new courses allows for a more accurate realisation of the ACM. Indeed, it is in the creation of new courses that I suggest that Priorities could be more fully developed. For example, teachers could centralise Indigenous Australian music, Asian music, and concepts of cultural sustainability in their music programs if they had an entirely blank slate from which to develop their courses, thereby delivering multicultural experiences in music that are *inclusive* or *critical*, and not merely *additive* (Mansikka, Westvall, and Heimonen 2018, p. 71). Of course, neither Denise or Alice chose to implement the ACM in such a way, and supporting statements from Matthew, Chris, Sam, Lorraine, and Jody suggest that most music teachers would also choose to centralise their teaching in Western musical styles (see Chapter Nine). While the ACM is capacious, attempts to simply retrofit existing courses may indicate a resistance to change on the part of more experienced teachers who possess a well-defined sense of identity about who they are as musicians and educators (Randles 2013, p. 479). It is reasonable to suggest that considerable changes to pre-service and in-service music teacher training will be required to ensure that teachers are adequately addressing the Priorities and teaching music multiculturally.

However, any changes to teacher training influenced by "advanced philosophical and policy frameworks" would likely take "several decades" (Schippers 2010, p. 39) to be implemented in classrooms.

The ways in which teachers interpret the ACM is based on choice. The ACM alludes to these choices, stating that teachers are best placed to develop and structure music programs (ACARA n.d.-x, version 8.3). In the cases of Denise and Alice, both teachers chose to manipulate the discursive gap to develop programs that align with their underlying ethos for music education. In so doing, their classroom programs mostly align with the ACM due to the curriculum's capaciousness but fail to adequately address the Priorities and marginalise improvisation. Student engagement is a key concern for both teachers, and while curricular ensembles may be more attractive to students than conventional classroom programs, they face structural challenges that prevent them from fully aligning with the ACM. In saying all of this, Denise and Alice have put considerable time and effort into ensuring that their students feel engaged with music education regardless of their pre-existing abilities, and the students' attendance and retention at School One speaks volumes to the effectiveness of the CBP and PM. Evidently, adherence to the ACM does not necessarily ensure a strong and effective music program—after all, this thesis has shown that the ACM is inherently flawed. However, the Priorities of the Australian Curriculum are doubtlessly important to all students' cultural understanding. Therefore, all teachers should be adequately and appropriately incorporating them into critically designed music programs. While such changes to Australian music education practice may appear idealistic and are certainly years away from being widespread, the detailed and granular examination of teacher practice in the present chapter highlights some of the problems and challenges that teachers face in realising the ACM. Now that they are identified, further research can focus on solving them.

Conclusion

Summary

This thesis is a tripartite analysis of the initial implementation of the Australian Curriculum in Music (ACM) in secondary schools in Canberra. It was designed to answer three research questions:

1. Can the ACM align with a praxial framework of best practice in music education?

2. How did secondary teachers react to the introduction of the ACM?

3. How have secondary teachers responded to the ACM for use in their own classrooms?

The first section established a framework for best practice in music education, questioned the ACM's alignment with best practice, and analysed the curriculum against music education philosophy and literature pertaining to music education, music and education individually, and multiculturalism in music and education. The second section was a case study analysis of the ways that a small selection of Canberra-based music teachers reacted to the ACM, with each school acting as a small-scale case study to build an understanding of Canberra's school music ecosystem in attempt to understand the challenges and tensions of implementing the curriculum. The final section analysed course documentation and interview responses to understand how the sampled teachers implemented the ACM in their classrooms, this time drawing on the responses from two schools to gain a detailed understanding of the issues, tensions, and challenges in play. To address these interrelated but distinct research questions I adopted a qualitative methodology (Bryman 2012, Alasuutari, Bickman, and Brannen 2008, Flick 2013). These processes included a comprehensive analysis and review of literature pertaining to music education philosophy, music education, government documents, and curriculum design. I conducted semi-structured interviews with secondary music teachers in Canberra. Finally, I analysed course documents provided by teachers from two schools.

Conclusions

The conclusions of this thesis have been deliberately structured to align with the research questions. When considering all of the conclusions about the ACM itself, and how teachers

have reacted to and implemented the curriculum, it became apparent that there were further links between the research questions and broader issues in music education, many of which were introduced in the *National Review* (2005). Therefore, the conclusions pertaining to the research questions can be considered symptomatic of these broader issues in music education: the value placed upon music in education, and the time allocated to it.

The ACM and best practice

To determine how effectively the ACM aligned with a praxial framework for best practice in music education, I distilled Elliott and Silverman's key ideas about a praxial music curriculum into seven characteristics that formed the key units of analysis of the ACM.[1] I define a praxial approach to music education as *best practice* within the present thesis because it is designed to be applicable for all music (MUSICS) while also encouraging comprehensive study, which aligns with the ACM's own stated goals (ACARA n.d.-r, version 8.3).[2] Furthermore, the ACM was undoubtedly influenced by praxis in its design, with a significant presence of praxial terms and ideas in the earliest phases of curriculum development (ACARA 2009a, 2010a). However, subsequent drafts of the ACM removed much of its initial philosophical and pedagogical clarity by simplifying statements and removing qualifying terms (ACARA 2010c, 2011b, c, 2012b, d). There were also significant tensions between individuals on the curriculum advisory boards (ACARA 2009b, 2010b, 2012a) and the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), that may have contributed to the lack of direction in curriculum design. The curriculum development process resulted in the current version of the ACM (ACARA n.d.-b, f, j, n, o, r, u, w, x, version 8.3) that is ambiguous in its philosophical and pedagogical positioning and inconsistent in its organisation of content. It attempts to compromise between broad and prescriptive curriculum frameworks, but these

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[1] See Chapter Two.

[2] As indicated in Chapter Two, *best practice* is a concept that I do not use uncritically: it is highly relativistic, it means different things to different people, and its use in an educational context has become something of a buzz word (Zemelman, Daniels and Hyde 2012). Further analyses of the ACM and its implementation could be undertaken using different frameworks of *best practice*: for example, social justice, equity of access, or intercultural inclusion. As any consideration of best practice in an educational context is highly philosophical, I highlight Bowman and Frega's (2012b) suggestion that it is sometimes necessary to accept the implications of philosophical frameworks to draw meaningful conclusions about their usefulness: they are "working hypotheses" (p. 3) that remain fallible in the long term. I welcome other frameworks of best practice in music education and encourage the analysis of the ACM in relation to such frameworks. However, further consideration of them is beyond the scope of the present thesis.

approaches are challenging to integrate convincingly and their combination, in this instance, has resulted in inconsistencies.

Within the ACM, the aims and achievement standards are the national objectives for music education (ACARA n.d.-b, r, version 8.3). They align with best practice by being inclusive of all types of music, using generic terminology so that they do not suggest that particular approaches to music are universal to all musical cultures and experiences. However, the ability of the objectives to indicate progression—important because the ACM describes itself as *continuous* and *sequential*—is challenged by their inclusive character, indicating a seemingly inherent and irreconcilable tension between inclusivity and progression in the ACM. Aside from statements such as *build upon* or *develop* prior knowledge, it is difficult for an inclusive curriculum framework to demonstrate progression. Therefore, the objectives of the ACM are relevant to all students in Australia's diverse multicultural society but struggle to indicate a meaningful sense of progression through music.

The content descriptions, examples of skills and knowledge, and structural components of the ACM can be considered its content (ACARA n.d.-f, u, w, version 8.3). As this thesis has shown, the content is inconsistent with the ACM's overarching objectives and does not align with a praxial framework of best practice. Inconsistencies in the content descriptions and newly defined terms, coupled with the presence of what I have termed *rogue terminology*, revealed an underlying bias towards Western musical styles. Despite a supposed multicultural focus, all examples of musical elements were exclusively from Western musical traditions, with no attempt to include elements from other cultural styles; existing musical terms were re-defined in an attempt to be more inclusive, but were then utilised in ways that align with their previous definitions; the content descriptions were inconsistent with the types of musical engagement they represented; and the uncritical application of the terms *work* and *score* to refer to all music emphasised the Western bias within the ACM. Despite its good intentions, the ACM has been unable to reconcile its suggested content with best practice in music education. Within a framework that gives no mandated time allocation and little guidance, it stipulates prescriptive skills and knowledge that are entirely unreasonable in context. I do not suggest that a curriculum must be dualistically positioned as either broad or prescriptive, but I do believe that any compromise between these two

positions should be pedagogically consistent. The ACM is not irrelevant as some within the interview sample suggested, however, it is inconsistent, vague, and at times, it appears confused.

Teacher's reactions and responses to the ACM

The reactions that the interviewed teachers exhibited towards the ACM were consistent across the sample. Every teacher characterised the ACM as a broad document that worked well as a general framework, but whether this broadness was positively or negatively received aligned with the type of school the teacher came from. Government school teachers appreciated broadness because it allowed them to manipulate program structure and create inclusive, student-centred programs. By contrast, the non-government school teachers believed that the broadness of the ACM implied a lack of direction, making it irrelevant. The majority of the interviewed teachers made some comment about the prescriptive examples of knowledge and skills in the ACM, emphasising that the suggested content was impossible to get through due to contextual factors, such as students' experiences in primary school music, and time limitations that teachers faced. The majority of teachers also commented on the degree of influence that the ACM had on their music programs. There was an inverse relationship between the experience of the teachers and the influence of the ACM. The most experienced teachers in the sample, both with more than twenty-five years in the industry, took very little influence from the ACM. Conversely, the two least experienced teachers, both of whom had been teaching for less than six years at the time of their interviews, took significant guidance from the ACM. In the present sample the ACM has been of variable influence, and it appears that recently trained music teachers receive the most benefit from it.

Teacher's reactions to the ACM were consistent, but their interpretations varied significantly. Despite this variance, they all aligned with emergent trends across Canberra. Across the four sampled schools, music had a variable presence and the programs were structured in different ways, with some based on the ACM and others retrospectively aligned with it. The implications of the different program structures were fully explored in relation to Schools One and Two, both of which provided course documentation for analysis. The Concert Band Program documents from School One were retrofitted to align with the

ACM but were unclear, giving no indication of course structure and perpetuating many of the ACM's inconsistencies. The Performance Music documents were created with the ACM as their basis but utilised the same method of content presentation and were similarly unclear. Additionally, integral components of the ACM, including composition, were largely neglected by the music teacher, Denise. However, music is remarkably successful at School One and aligns well with other elements of best practice. Furthermore, music is well-supported by school management. By contrast, the course documents from School Two were all based on the ACM and were exceptionally clear, outlining the structure of the courses and their assessment and negating many of the inconsistencies present in the ACM. The music teacher, Alice, made a concentrated attempt to address every requirement of the curriculum in every course. However, music was not as successful at School Two, as it was hampered by local structural issues beyond Alice's control. Therefore, alignment with the ACM is not a reliable indicator of the success or quality of a music program, as it is possible to align with elements of best practice without aligning with the ACM. Appropriate support from school management and leadership may have a greater influence on the success of a school music program than a national curriculum.

Secondary teacher training

Consistent reactions and responses from the entire interview sample highlighted shortcomings in teacher training. Every teacher acknowledged that the three Cross-Curriculum Priorities were problematic to implement, and the teachers at School Four highlighted limitations of secondary music teacher training that contribute to this. Secondary music teachers complete a tertiary music qualification followed by a teaching qualification. The teaching qualification is designed to instruct teachers-in-training about education, classroom management, and not their specialist content. This is the responsibility of their music qualification, which comes from a university or conservatorium, both of which are institutions that are built upon Western musical traditions. Therefore, opportunities for significant ethnomusicological study are still limited, which the teachers at School Four attributed to their limited success in implementing the Priorities. Additionally, according to these same teachers, musicians who enter the teaching profession are overwhelmingly represented by performers. This means that secondary music teachers with a

comprehensive background in composition, such as Matthew from School Three, are rare. Composition was another area that the majority of sampled teachers identified as challenging in the implementation of the ACM. These statements suggest that present approaches to music teacher training do not equip teachers to adequately implement the ACM.

There is also a disconnect between the teacher's experiences and backgrounds and the content that they teach. Within the sample, all teachers had taken a conventional pathway through a conservatorium or university and were trained in Western art music. However, all of the government schools within the sample focused on popular music in their classroom programs. To assume that experience in Western art music means that teachers are automatically qualified to teach popular music contradicts praxial approaches (Elliott and Silverman 2014), and there is evidence within the sample of teachers bringing the values and assumptions of Western art music to popular music study. For example, some teachers focused on notating all theory and composition work, generally neglected improvisation, or used Western art music terminology to discuss and describe popular music. While the choice of popular music is school-based, it again appears that conventional approaches to teacher training do not support contemporary teaching practice.

Broader issues: value and time attached to school music education

Among the many recommendations in the *Review* (2005), increasing the time allocated and value attached to music in curriculum and in schools were key steps to improving Australian school music education. As noted in the Introduction, there was scant evidence of any action being taken to act on the recommendations of the *Review* in its immediate aftermath (Lierse 2006), and as noted in much of the literature pertaining to music education, it remains undervalued internationally (for example, see Bowman 2012). Both of these challenges are illustrated by the present sample from Canberra, and more broadly within the ACM, indicating that they are still relevant issues. Significant improvements to music education and the implementation of the ACM are only likely to occur if time and value are addressed by the Australian Curriculum, and by individual schools.

The amount of time music is allocated in the curriculum and in schools reflects the value placed upon it. For example, music's position in the Australian Curriculum implies that it is

less valuable than other subjects. It is one of five Arts subjects that share a total time allocation that is less than that for the individual subjects English and Mathematics, and its content is presented as a progression of two-year bands rather than individual year levels. Its status as a second-phase subject suggests that priority was placed on the implementation of first-phase subjects—again English and Mathematics, as well as Science and History—and not on the Arts and Technologies. Music is also attributed significantly less space than other subjects within the curriculum.[3] While it is positive that music remains part of Australia's national curriculum, it is also concerning that the development of the curriculum did not address the key issues identified in the *Review* or in other literature. At present, the time and space allocations of the Australian Curriculum imply that music is valued less than other subjects in the curriculum: most notably, English, Mathematics, Science, and the History and Social Sciences Learning Areas.

The variability of time allocated to music within individual schools is partly due to the Australian Curriculum, which does not mandate the amount of time each subject should receive and instead suggests an indicative guideline (ACARA 2013). Therefore, the amount of time allocated to music in schools is directly related to the pre-existing status and value of the subject within each school. For example, School One and School Four already valued music highly which contributed to the generous time allocation that music presently receives, particularly in Years 9 and 10. Conversely, music was not valued to the same extent at School Two and its Years 7 and 8 compulsory rotation phase receives significantly less time than similar courses at Schools One and Four. What I have determined to be local structural issues that affect the implementation of music in each school—timetabling, and so forth—are determined by executive and administrative staff rather than teachers. As a result, if the broad school-wide culture supports and values music education, then it is more likely that music will be allocated a reasonable amount of time on the timetable. Even in the case of School Four—a school that acknowledged that it values music—the music teachers had to lobby the administrative and executive staff to amend the timetable to gain more

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[3] In an earlier PDF-based version of the Australian Curriculum, the Arts had 203 pages across five subjects—40.6 pages per subject. By contrast, English was attributed 151 pages, Mathematics was attributed 124, and the Humanities and Social Sciences Learning Area—comparable to the Arts because it also encompasses five subjects—was attributed 370 pages, or 74 pages per subject. Only the Technologies Learning Area, and Health and Physical Education, received less space in the curriculum. The different nature of the subjects and Learning Areas means that this is not an objective comparison, but it is interesting nonetheless.

face-to-face time with their students (Chris et al. 2018).[4] Although programs can grow and develop in status and value—for example, the School One programs—schools that value music inevitably allocate more time and deliver more robust programs. Improving the value attached to music in a broader array of schools is a key step in improving Australian music education.

The lack of value placed on music education can also be seen in teacher training and employment, particularly for primary school teachers. According to the *Review* and Jeanneret and DeGraffenreid (2012), the vast majority of primary school music experiences are taught by the generalist classroom teacher, who is also required to teach students most of their other subjects. Accordingly, they receive training in the different disciplines that they teach, but it is telling that they may only receive "as little as ten hours of music/Arts training across their entire teaching degree" (Butler 2015, p. 13). This suggests to generalist teachers that music is less important than other subjects. Butler's thesis also explained that generalist classroom teachers do not have the confidence to deliver music comprehensively, thereby contributing to Chris's explanation of the inconsistent musical ability of students entering secondary school (Chris et al. 2018). At present, it appears that training in music for generalist primary teachers is undervalued and is therefore inadequate to fulfil the requirements of the ACM.

Implications and further research
Implications of methodological issues

The methodological issues that I encountered in the completion of this thesis affected the scale of my results and conclusions. These issues carry implications towards present understandings of the secondary music teaching profession and highlight areas of need for further research. As outlined in Chapter One, it was difficult to recruit teachers to participate in this study, and I needed to amend the scope of my study several times to account for

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[4] Chris described the previous music allocation: "…we used to do two periods a cycle, so you saw them once a week—which is a waste of time—for a year…and so we—all of the arts [teachers]—got together and said: 'you know, seeing them once a week is crazy,' because, you know, if a kid is away for that particular period, it's a fortnight until you see them again. And so…we lobbied the school to pack it into four periods a cycle, two periods a week, as opposed to one period a week, over a year and so consolidated down a little bit into a semester, and I think that's worked in terms of just having more face-to-face access to the kids" (Chris et al. 2018).

participant non-response. This resulted in the change of scope from a national, multi-jurisdictional focus to a targeted case study of the ACT. As has already been acknowledged elsewhere, my conclusions cannot be generalised too far beyond the present sample, but they can provide detailed illustrations of teachers' practice while raising questions about music education in a national context.

The difficulties I experienced in the recruitment of participants to this research suggests that it is generally challenging to undertake studies with secondary teachers. It illustrates a potential reluctance to giving information about teaching, which may be indicative of the attitudes of teachers and may contribute to the lack of information about secondary music teachers in the literature. As can be seen throughout the ACM and within this thesis, teachers are central to music education and understanding their professional practice is of undoubted importance to strengthening the ACM and music education. Despite the challenges in recruitment, most of the teachers I engaged with—including those who did not end up participating in the study—appeared to be supportive of the research intentions. Another explanation for teacher non-response is that they are exceptionally busy. This made the scheduling of interviews challenging, even after I had received approval from schools and teachers. It is also worth drawing attention to the correspondence I had with a Tasmanian school principal who agreed to participate in the study but assumed I was focusing on the outcomes of students, suggesting that students are over-tested and assessed (see Chapter One). This statement was made despite the abundantly clear focus on secondary music teachers in my application to the school. If the majority of school-based research is directed at students, and principals are dismissing applications such as mine based on the assumption that students are the focus, then the difficulties of researching the practice of secondary teachers are compounded.

Implications for teacher training

The role of teachers in delivering educational experiences is emphasised in all the discourse surrounding the ACM and best practice in music education. However, my findings suggest that the music education system does not equip teachers to implement the curriculum. Addressing the issues identified in teacher training will require greater consideration. It will require a deeper, targeted study at a national level to fully ascertain the scope of any

inconsistencies between teacher training and curriculum and how they can be addressed, and different studies should be tested. If these inconsistencies were to be resolved and teacher training were aligned with the requirements of the curriculum, then it would result in teachers completing their training with a more complete understanding of how to implement every aspect of the ACM.

Improving pre-service teacher training would be unlikely to benefit music teachers who are already teaching in schools. These teachers would gain more benefit from professional development courses. Again, further targeted research is required to fully ascertain the areas and scope for improvement. The teachers at School Four suggested that upskills that focused on areas of weakness—for example, the Indigenous Priority—could be a solution. Research into existing upskill courses could also aid in the improvement of teacher training.

Implications for the ACM and music education nationally

Present approaches to music education philosophy are largely opposed to the standardised national curriculum framework for music (Elliott and Silverman 2014, Philpott and Wright 2012). Despite the objections to this approach, I suggest that recognising music within the national curriculum is better than no recognition at all, and that the best of the ACM's pedagogically inconsistent approach should be made. To this end, there are numerous recommendations for improvement to the ACM throughout this thesis, some of which would require little more than the consistent application of the ACM's own definitions coupled with a more self-aware and critical understanding of existing terminology. Accounting for musical engagement would be a more difficult task, as it is evident that *performing*, *composing*, and *listening* still carry assumptions pertaining to their conventional, non-ACM definitions and do not successfully convey the intentions of the ACM. A potential solution would be to capitalise on Small's concept of musicking and listening (Small 1998, Elliott and Silverman 2014), dispensing with the dualistic separation of performance and creative activities, and better aligning with the broader Arts-wide categorisations of *making* and *responding*.

The conclusions that relate to the reactions and responses to the ACM outlined here cannot be generalised beyond their context in Canberra. However, they do raise important questions that could guide further research on a broader scale. Methods of curriculum

implementation in other jurisdictions are of particular interest. For example, the delivery of the Indigenous Priority was a significant challenge for Canberra-based music teachers, but is it as much of a problem in schools that are located in areas with a higher percentage of Indigenous students? Or does the demographic of the school or jurisdiction affect the types of music that are commonly taught in classrooms? Additionally, a larger sample across a range of jurisdiction that includes more non-government schools could determine the differences in implementation between government and non-government schools with greater authority, thereby providing a more conclusive illustration of school music education nationally. All indications in the literature suggest that the situation for music education has not changed significantly since 2005, but there have been no subsequent national studies into music education since the publication of the *Review* either—the *Submission to the Victorian Parliament* by the Australian Music Association (2013) comes closest. Small-scale qualitative studies can provide insight into specific cases, explore complex issues in detail, and raise questions of national importance—see, for example, Augustyniak (2015), Cleaver and Ballantyne (2014), Crooke and McFerran (2015), and Joseph and Southcott (2012). However, they cannot provide a comprehensive and statistically-focused multi-jurisdictional understanding of Australian music education. Determining if there has been progress nationally could be done through further research that could draw on the present thesis as a point of departure, expanding methodological approaches to include quantitative elements across multiple jurisdictions so that statistical evidence can support qualitative examples that expand on the complexities, issues, and challenges facing music education and teachers in Australia.

In the *Review*, emphasis was placed on increasing the value of music in schools and curricula. The responsibility for this was attributed to curriculum advisory bodies and school leadership, such as principals. The implication is that those in school leadership positions did not value music education and therefore did not prioritise it. However, there is a distinction between educational leadership and educational management (Connolly, James, and Fertig 2017) that suggests that the management of schools could be responsible for issues, rather than the leadership. This is a subtle distinction, but important nonetheless: it suggests that those in leadership positions in schools may value music education, but management systems and employees may not enable this value to be realised. Therefore, further study

into the roles and responsibilities of school leadership and management in the implementation of music would be advisable.

Exploring the implementation of the ACM brings in concepts of change in education. Starr (2011) suggested that a vocal minority of teachers are often resistant to change, but the silent majority often support it and are willing to engage in processes of change. In the present thesis, the general dispositions of the participants aligned with Starr's suggestion, with most teachers positively engaging with the implementation of the ACM, attempting to implement it to the best of their abilities within the classroom. The teachers at School Four were slightly more resistant, but only because they had to conform to two further curriculum frameworks and felt that the ACM covered the same territory less effectively. Denise's approach to the implementation of the ACM, where her pre-existing programs were retrofitted to the new curriculum framework with little in the way of program adjustment, could also be interpreted as a kind of resistance to change. However, her approach can be partly explained by the overwhelming success of music at School One—why change something that already works so effectively? These approaches to change in schools raise questions about the implementation of the ACM in jurisdictions with pre-existing curricula that differ significantly from the ACM, where it may face much fiercer resistance. Therefore, further research into the implementation of the ACM in other jurisdictions may provide greater understanding about how music teachers react to curriculum change on a national level.

This study was designed to bring awareness to the design and early stages of the implementation of the ACM in secondary schools, but in so doing I have also encountered the systemic issues in Australian music education. For significant improvements to the ACM to occur, the underlying issues will also need to be addressed. While this research lacks the scope to resolve the larger issues in music education, it has clearly signposted areas of focus for researchers to pursue in the future. It has also provided deep insight into the practice of secondary classroom teachers, allowing other teachers and interested parties to understand how the ACM works in action and just how important teachers are to the delivery of music programs. Therefore, the fine-grained case study approach has provided significant understanding about music in Australian schools that belies its initial appearance. There are

potentially more questions than answers raised by this thesis, but it is a constructive contribution to the body of research into Australian music education.

Appendix A: Full tables of course outlines

School One Concert Band Program

ACM content description	School One elaborations (Year 7 Beginning Concert Band)
ACAMUM092: Experiment with texture and timbre in sound sources using aural skills (improvising).	In rehearsal students will manipulate balance and their sound to experiment with texture and timbre within the context of a concert band rehearsal.
	Students develop their aural skills through rehearsal, performance and personal practice to be able to evaluate and interpret the music they play.
	Students can experiment using resources such as McBeth's Pyramid of Sound, to develop their understanding of texture and balance relevant to the concert band setting.
ACAMUM093: Develop musical ideas, such as mood, by improvising, combining and manipulating the elements of music (theory and aural training).	Students use expressive instrumental techniques appropriate to different styles/genres of music in rehearsal, performance and individual practice.
ACAMUM094: Practise and rehearse a variety of music, including Australian music to develop technical and expressive skills (practising).	Students rehearse repertoire from a variety of composers, styles, [and] genres expressively and with attention to the particular instrumental technique required for the stylistic features of the piece in both the band setting, sectional rehearsals and individual practice.
	Students interpret different musical styles and genres.
ACAMUM095: Structure compositions by combining and manipulating the elements of music using notation (composition).	Students are introduced to simple composition elements based around basic rhythms and melodies, including graphic notation.
	Students develop their understanding of composition by [exploring] the elements of music through theory and rehearsing.
	Theory concepts.
	Discussion and analysis of how the musical elements are used differently by [a] variety [of] composers, styles, [and] genres.
	Students identify and discuss how composition devices are used in a variety of repertoire pieces.
ACAMUM096: Perform and present a range of music, using techniques and expression appropriate to style (performance).	Establish appropriate rehearsal and performance practices and techniques.
	Principles of ensemble playing: balance, blend, [and] intonation.
	McBeth's Pyramid of Sound.
	Elements of music.
	Analysis of the style and historical/societal context as appropriate.
ACAMUR097: Analyse composers' use of the elements of music and stylistic features when listening to and interpreting music (musical analysis).	Students develop their understanding of music conventions and the elements of music, including how they are manipulated by different composers, styles and genres through following a variety of musical scores while listening and also through their own performance of repertoire.
	Through discussion and analysis students develop an understanding of the influence of context on musical works.
	Listening and viewing other performers' interpretation of repertoire music, [for example] the original artists' performance of a band arrangement or the performance of the arrangement by another ensemble.
	Students reflect [on] and evaluate rehearsal and performance of concert band repertoire pieces.
ACAMUR098: Identify and connect specific features and purposes of music from different eras to explore viewpoints and enrich their music making, starting with Australian music including music of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples (contextual analysis).	Discussion of societies, cultures and histories associated with repertoire pieces.
	Students complete a unit of work on Australian music, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists and perform associated music if available and relevant.
	Students discuss the roles and responsibilities in rehearsing, performing and listening to music as both a performer and audience member.
	Students perform a variety [of] repertoire and evaluate its effectiveness either through discussion or as a written evaluation.
	Students evaluate the rehearsal and performance of repertoire [through] written and/or verbal reflection, either in the ensemble, a small group or individually.

Table 33: ACM content descriptions and School One elaborations for the Year 7 Beginning Concert Band (ACARA n.d.-r, version 8.3, School One 2015c).

ACM content description	School One elaborations (Year 7 Concert Band)
ACAMUM092: Experiment with texture and timbre in sound sources using aural skills (improvising).	In rehearsal students will manipulate balance and their sound to experiment with texture and timbre within the context of a concert band rehearsal.
	Listening and discussion of the various roles of the concert band instruments and how they interact to create texture.
	Discussion and analysis of how the elements of music are used within the context of a particular piece of music.
	Listening and discussion on how the concert band instruments are used differently in various musical styles and settings.
	Students can experiment using resources such as McBeth's Pyramid of Sound, to develop their understanding of texture and balance relevant to the concert band setting.
	Students develop their aural skills through rehearsal, performance and personal practice to be able to evaluate and interpret the music they play.
ACAMUM093: Develop musical ideas, such as mood, by improvising, combining and manipulating the elements of music (theory and aural training).	Students use expressive instrumental techniques appropriate to different styles/genres of music in rehearsal, performance and individual practice.
	Students analyse different types of score conventions such as graphic notation to develop their understanding of the elements of music.
ACAMUM094: Practise and rehearse a variety of music, including Australian music to develop technical and expressive skills (practising).	Students rehearse repertoire from a variety of composers, styles, [and] genres expressively and with attention to the particular instrumental technique required for the stylistic features of the piece in both the band setting, sectional rehearsals and individual practice.
	Students interpret different musical styles and genres.
ACAMUM095: Structure compositions by combining and manipulating the elements of music using notation (composition).	Students are introduced to simple composition elements based around basic rhythms and melodies, including graphic notation.
	Students develop their understanding of composition by [exploring] the elements of music through theory and rehearsing.
	Theory concepts.
	Discussion and analysis of how the musical elements are used differently by [a] variety [of] composers, styles, [and] genres.
	Students identify and discuss how composition devices are used in a variety of repertoire pieces.
ACAMUM096: Perform and present a range of music, using techniques and expression appropriate to style (performance).	Establish appropriate rehearsal and performance practices and techniques.
	Principles of ensemble playing: balance, blend, [and] intonation.
	McBeth's Pyramid of Sound.
	Elements of music.
	Analysis of the style and historical/societal context as appropriate.
ACAMUR097: Analyse composers' use of the elements of music and stylistic features when listening to and interpreting music (musical analysis).	Students develop their understanding of music conventions and the elements of music, including how they are manipulated by different composers, styles and genres through following a variety of musical scores while listening and also through their own performance of repertoire.
	Through discussion and analysis students develop an understanding of the influence of context on musical works.
	Listening and viewing other performers' interpretation of repertoire music, [for example] the original artists' performance of a band arrangement or the performance of the arrangement by another ensemble.
	Students reflect [on] and evaluate rehearsal and performance of concert band repertoire pieces.
ACAMUR098: Identify and connect specific features and purposes of music from different eras to explore viewpoints and enrich their music making, starting with Australian music including music of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples (contextual analysis).	Discussion of societies, cultures and histories associated with repertoire pieces.
	Students complete a unit of work on Australian music, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists and perform associated music if available and relevant.
	Students discuss the roles and responsibilities in rehearsing, performing and listening to music as both a performer and audience member.
	Students perform a variety [of] repertoire and evaluate its effectiveness either through discussion or as a written evaluation.
	Students evaluate the rehearsal and performance of repertoire [through] written and/or verbal reflection, either in the ensemble, a small group or individually.

Table 34: ACM content descriptions and School One elaborations for the Year 7 Concert Band (ACARA n.d.-r, version 8.3, School One 2015c).

ACM content description	School One elaborations (Year 8 Concert Band)
ACAMUM092: Experiment with texture and timbre in sound sources using aural skills (improvising).	Development and extension of the [Year 7 content] plus: Basic intervals in major tonality.
	Simple chord [progressions] in major tonality, including the 12-bar blues.
ACAMUM093: Develop musical ideas, such as mood, by improvising, combining and manipulating the elements of music (theory and aural training).	Development and extension of the [Year 7 content] plus:
	Students develop their understanding of pitch and timbre by creating simple compositions using 12-bar blues conventions.
ACAMUM094: Practise and rehearse a variety of music, including Australian music to develop technical and expressive skills (practising).	Extension and development of the [Year 7] concepts.
ACAMUM095: Structure compositions by combining and manipulating the elements of music using notation (composition).	Development and extension of the [Year 7 content] plus:
	Students write simple [compositions] based on the 12-bar blues chord progression and blues scale.
ACAMUM096: Perform and present a range of music, using techniques and expression appropriate to style (performance).	Development and extension of the [Year 7 content].
ACAMUR097: Analyse composers' use of the elements of music and stylistic features when listening to and interpreting music (musical analysis).	Development and extension of the [Year 7 content].
	Analysis and interpretation of the use of musical elements, devices and instruments in different musical styles and genres.
ACAMUR098: Identify and connect specific features and purposes of music from different eras to explore viewpoints and enrich their music making, starting with Australian music including music of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples (contextual analysis).	Development and extension of the [Year 7 content].

Table 35: ACM content descriptions and School One elaborations for the Year 8 Concert Band (ACARA n.d.-r, version 8.3, School One 2015c).

ACM content description	School One elaborations (Year 9 Concert Band)
ACAMUM099: Improvise and arrange music, using aural recognition of texture, dynamics and expression to manipulate the elements of music to explore personal style in composition and performance (improvising).	Revision of McBeth's Pyramid of Sound. Revise then apply knowledge of elements of music to rehearsals and performances: rhythm, pitch, dynamics and expression, form and structure, timbre, texture.
	Choose a repertoire piece that is based upon 12-bar blues, explore basic improvisation then rearrange the composition for performance to include some student improvisation.
ACAMUM100: Manipulate combinations of the elements of music in a range of styles, using technology and notation (theory and aural training).	Apply elements of music to rehearsals and performances.
	Theory concepts.
ACAMUM101: Practise and rehearse to refine a variety of performance repertoire with increasing technical and interpretative skill (practising).	Balance, blend and intonation. Contemporary and traditional band performance repertoire with increasing levels of difficulty and complexity.
	Understand the context of the repertoire in order to inform stylistic nuance and interpretation.
ACAMUM102: Plan and organise compositions with an understanding of style and convention, including drawing upon Australian music by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists (composition).	Chord progressions. Simple composition: rhythmic [composition] and using twelve bar blues. Theory concepts.
	Use of Noteflight or other music notation software where applicable.
ACAMUM103: Perform music applying techniques and expression to interpret the composer's use of elements of music (performance).	Sight reading of repertoire. Understanding of context of performance repertoire [and] its application.
	Revise elements of music—listening tasks—compare and contrast … performances of different versions/ensembles of the repertoire.
ACAMUR104: Evaluate a range of music and compositions to inform and refine their own compositions and performances (musical analysis).	Listening tasks—compare and contrast…performances of different versions/ensembles of the repertoire. Use evaluation of other performances to refine their own.
	Theory concepts.
ACAMUR105: Analyse a range of music from contemporary and past times to explore differing viewpoints and enrich their music making, starting with Australian music, including music or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, and consider music in international contexts (contextual analysis).	Reflection and evaluation of their own and their band's performances. Compare and evaluate audience responses and performer roles in different settings. Both bands will analyse each eisteddfod and competition piece.
	Both bands will analyse a minimum of three pieces in total per semester.

Table 36: ACM content descriptions and School One elaborations for the Year 9 Concert Band (ACARA n.d.-r, version 8.3, School One 2015d).

ACM content description	School One elaborations (Year 10 Concert Band)
ACAMUM099: Improvise and arrange music, using aural recognition of texture, dynamics and expression to manipulate the elements of music to explore personal style in composition and performance (improvising).	Application of McBeth's Pyramid of Sound. Apply elements of music to rehearsals and performances: rhythm, pitch, dynamics and expression, form and structure, timbre, texture.
	Melody writing techniques and devices.
	Form.
ACAMUM100: Manipulate combinations of the elements of music in a range of styles, using technology and notation (theory and aural training).	Apply elements of music to rehearsals and performances: rhythm, pitch, dynamics and expression, form and structure, timbre, texture.
	Theory concepts.
	Score reading.
ACAMUM101: Practise and rehearse to refine a variety of performance repertoire with increasing technical and interpretative skill (practising).	Balance, blend and intonation. Contemporary and traditional band performance repertoire with increasing levels of difficulty and complexity.
	Understand the context of the repertoire in order to inform stylistic nuance and interpretation.
ACAMUM102: Plan and organise compositions with an understanding of style and convention, including drawing upon Australian music by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists (composition).	Melody writing.
	Chord progressions.
	Simple compositions. Form. Theory concepts.
	Use of Noteflight or other music notation software where applicable.
ACAMUM103: Perform music applying techniques and expression to interpret the composer's use of elements of music (performance).	Sight reading of repertoire.
	Understanding of context of performance repertoire and its application.
	Revise elements of music—listening tasks—compare and contrast…performances of different versions/ensembles of the repertoire.
ACAMUR104: Evaluate a range of music and compositions to inform and refine their own compositions and performances (musical analysis).	Listening tasks—compare and contrast…performances of different versions/ensembles of the repertoire. Use evaluation of other performances to refine their own.
	Theory/composition exercises extending upon simple form and melody writing to concepts such as motivic development and more complex forms.
	Theory/composition exercises such as "Four Phrase Plans."
	Theory concepts.
ACAMUR105: Analyse a range of music from contemporary and past times to explore differing viewpoints and enrich their music making, starting with Australian music, including music or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, and consider music in international contexts (contextual analysis).	Reflection and evaluation of their own and their band's performances.
	Compare and evaluate audience responses and performer roles in different settings. Both bands will analyse each eisteddfod and competition piece.
	Both bands will analyse a minimum of three pieces in total per semester.

Table 37: ACM content descriptions and School One elaborations for the Year 10 Concert Band (ACARA n.d.-r, version 8.3, School One 2015d).

School One Performance Music

ACM content descriptions	School One elaborations (Year 7 Performance Music)
ACAMUM092: Experiment with texture and timbre in sound sources including aural skills (improvising).	Students will experiment with a range of instruments including: - Percussion - Guitar - Keyboard.
	Listen and discuss how the guitar, keyboard and drums are used differently and in different musical styles/settings.
	Perform in groups and as a class, students can experiment with layering different sounds. Perform in groups of instruments that are the same (e.g. two guitars) or different (e.g. any combination of guitar/drums/keyboard).
ACAMUM093: Develop musical ideas, such as mood, by improvising, combining and manipulating the elements of music (theory and aural training).	Introduction to the elements of music: rhythm, pitch, dynamics and expression, form and structure, timbre and texture.
	Develop an awareness of expressive instrumental techniques.
	Theory concepts.
	Introduction to simple composition elements based around basic rhythms and melodies/graphic notation.
ACAMUM094: Practise and rehearse a variety of music, including Australian music to develop technical and expressive skills (practising).	Play and perform repertoire from a variety of genres.
	Introduction to correct instrumental technique.
	Listen to stylistic and contextual interpretations of repertoire.
	Rehearsal time to be allocated in class.
	Introduction to basic sight-reading with simple melody and rhythm notations.
ACAMUM095: Structure compositions by combining and manipulating the elements of music using notation (composition).	Introduction to theory concepts.
	Reflection and evaluation of rehearsal and performance technique.
	Identification of composition devices in repertoire.
	Create video performances.
ACAMUM096: Perform and present a range of music, using techniques and expression appropriate to style (performance).	Perform simple riffs and chord progressions on the guitar.
	Perform simple melodies and chord progressions on the keyboard.
	Perform simple rock beats and basic rudiments on drum kit (singles, doubles and paradiddles).
	Individual performances.
	Group performances.
ACAMUR097: Analyse composers' use of the elements of music and stylistic features when listening to and interpreting music (musical analysis).	Discuss a piece of music (instruments used and how they are used).
	"Active listening" worksheets with leading questions.
	Listening/viewing other performers' interpretation of repertoire.
ACAMUR098: Identify and connect specific features and purposes of music from different eras to explore viewpoints and enrich their music making, starting with Australian music of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples (contextual analysis).	"Student voice" involvement in performances.
	Introduce historical context pertaining to specific styles and pieces of music.

Table 38: ACM content descriptions and School One elaborations for Year 7 Performance Music (ACARA n.d.-r, version 8.3 School One 2015a).

ACM content descriptions	School One elaborations (Year 8 Performance Music)
ACAMUM092: Experiment with texture and timbre in sound sources including aural skills (improvising).	Experiment with different sounds on their selected instrument to convey different textures relevant to the style being performed.
	Use of computers and electronics to create loops/sequences and manipulate [analogue] sounds.
	Aural analysis of repertoire.
ACAMUM093: Develop musical ideas, such as mood, by improvising, combining and manipulating the elements of music (theory and aural training).	Extension and development of [Year 7 content].
	Composition including chords/melody.
	Improvisations based around the blues scale.
	Use of computers and electronics to create loops/sequences and manipulate [analogue] sounds.
	Varied techniques on instruments/voice to experiment with the production of different sounds/timbre.
	Create personalised arrangements of popular music.
ACAMUM094: Practise and rehearse a variety of music, including Australian music to develop technical and expressive skills (practising).	Extension and development of [Year 7 content].
	Exploration of music of other cultures and eras.
ACAMUM095: Structure compositions by combining and manipulating the elements of music using notation (composition).	Development and extension of [Year 7 content].
	Composition developed around the 12-bar blues.
	Extension activities could include re-harmonising a nursery rhyme or changing modes of pieces.
ACAMUM096: Perform and present a range of music, using techniques and expression appropriate to style (performance).	Development and extension of [Year 7 content].
	Students are able to choose their instrument of study.
	Analyse techniques relevant to style being performed.
	Three individual performances or group performances per semester.
ACAMUR097: Analyse composers' use of the elements of music and stylistic features when listening to and interpreting music (musical analysis).	Development and extension of [Year 7 content].
	Dissection and analysis of how the elements of music are used in a piece of music.
	Compare and contrast using alternative arrangements (like a version).
	Create arrangements of repertoire.
ACAMUR098: Identify and connect specific features and purposes of music from different eras to explore viewpoints and enrich their music making, starting with Australian music of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples (contextual analysis).	Development and extension of [Year 7 content].
	Analysis of a diverse repertoire including music from other cultures.

Table 39: ACM content descriptions and School One elaborations for Year 8 Performance Music (ACARA n.d.-r, version 8.3, School One 2015a).

ACM content descriptions	School One elaborations (Years 9–10 Performance Music)
ACAMUM099: Improvise and arrange music, using aural recognition of texture, dynamics and expression to manipulate the elements of music to explore personal style in composition and performance (improvising).	Listen to repertoire and identify the structure, chord progression(s), riffs and rhythmic patterns.
	Analysis of form and structure in a contemporary music context, [for example] verse, chorus, bridge.
	Label chords relevant to key centres and identify chord progressions.
	Perform and develop improvisation skills centred around simple chord progressions.
ACAMUM100: Manipulate combinations of the elements of music in a range of styles, using technology and notation (theory and aural training).	Use of GarageBand and NoteFlight on iPads, laptops and/or other electronic resources.
	Use of technology to record rehearsals and performances.
	Listen to recordings and practice to encourage reflective rehearsal practices.
	Use of audio recording technology to compose original compositions and arrangements.
ACAMUM101: Practise and rehearse to refine a variety of performance repertoire with increasing technical and interpretative skill (practising).	Rehearse and perform in a variety of small ensembles or as soloists.
	Performance tasks based on theory concepts or styles.
	Perform three individual or group performances per semester.
ACAMUM102: Plan and organise compositions with an understanding of style and convention including drawing upon Australian music by Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander artists (composition).	Create compositions and arrangements influenced by the styles and genres studied.
	Melody writing.
	Chord progressions.
	Form and compositional conventions appropriate to genre and style including drawing upon Australian music by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists.
ACAMUM103: Perform music applying techniques and expression to interpret the composer's use of elements of music (performance).	Practical analysis and interpretation of arrangements.
	Reading music notation.
	Sight reading repertoire.
	Aural skills to transcribe and replicate music.
ACAMUR104: Evaluate a range of music and compositions to inform and refine their own compositions and performances (musical analysis).	Listening tasks—compare and contrast…performances of different versions/ensembles of the repertoire.
	Evaluate other performances to refine individual performances.
	Theory/composition exercises.
	Compare and contrast different pieces of music and different artists.
ACAMUR105: Analyse a range of music from contemporary and past times to explore differing viewpoints and enrich their music making, starting with Australian music, including music of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, and consider music in international contexts (contextual analysis).	Through listening and research tasks, students analyse the evolution and influences of different styles and sub-genres of music.
	Presentation task—students research and reflect on music that has influenced society or encapsulates the political or social sentiments of a point in history.

Table 40: ACM content descriptions and School One elaborations for Years 9–10 Performance Music (ACARA n.d.-r, version 8.3, School One 2015b).

School Two Programs

School Two 7–8 concert band assessment tasks	ACM content descriptions
Research task: Students are to select a genre and write a report responding to the genre characteristics and analyse and respond to a piece from that genre.	ACAMUM094: Practise and rehearse a variety of music, including Australian music to develop technical and expressive skills (practising).
	ACAMUM096: Perform and present a range of music, using techniques and expression appropriate to style (performance).
	ACAMUR097: Analyse composers' use of the elements of music and stylistic features while listening to and interpreting music (musical analysis).
	ACAMUR098: Identify and connect specific features and purposes of music from different eras to explore viewpoints and enrich their music making, starting with Australian music including music of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples (contextual analysis).
Composition (written): Students are to use their knowledge of graphic and standard notation to compose and notate a piece reflecting a sustainability issue.	ACAMUM092: Experiment with texture and timbre in sound sources using aural skills (improvising).
	ACAMUM093: Develop musical ideas, such as mood, by improvising, combining and manipulating the elements of music (theory and aural training).
	ACAMUM095: Structure compositions by combining and manipulating the elements of music (composition).
Composition (performance): Students will perform their composition as a solo piece for the class to demonstrate their technical skills and expression.	ACAMUM094: (practising).
	ACAMUM096: (performance).
Performance (band): Students will perform as a band demonstrating their technical ability, ensemble skills and use of expression.	ACAMUM094: (practising).
	ACAMUM096: (performance).
"Adjustable" tasks (theory folio, analysis folio).	ACAMUM092: (improvising).
	ACAMUM093: (theory and aural training).
	ACAMUR097: (musical analysis).
	ACAMUR098: (contextual analysis).

Table 41: School Two assessment tasks and ACM content descriptions for the Year 7–8 concert band (ACARA n.d.-r, version 8.3, School Two 2014a).

School Two 7–8 rotation assessment tasks	ACM content descriptions
Music critique (week 4): analysis of elements of music in a piece of music.	ACAMUR097: Analyse composers' use of the elements of music and stylistic features when listening to and interpreting music (musical analysis).
Performance 1 (week 5): perform for the class.	ACAMUM094: Practise and rehearse a variety of music, including Australian music to develop technical and expressive skills (practising).
	ACAMUM096: Perform and present a range of music, using techniques and expression appropriate to style (performance).
Composition (week 8): GarageBand composition.	ACAMUM092: Experiment with texture and timbre in sound sources using aural skills (improvising).
	ACAMUM093: Develop musical ideas, such as mood, by improvising, combining and manipulating the elements of music (theory and aural training).
	ACAMUM095: Structure compositions by combining and manipulating the elements of music using notation (composition).
Performance 2 (week 9): perform for the class.	ACAMUM094: (practising).
	ACAMUM096: (performance).
"Adjustable" tasks (theory folio, analysis folio).	ACAMUM092: (improvising).
	ACAMUM093: (theory and aural training).
	ACAMUR097: (musical analysis).
	ACAMUR098: Identify and connect specific features and purposes of music from different eras to explore viewpoints and enrich their music making, starting with Australian music including music of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples (contextual analysis).

Table 42: School Two assessment tasks and ACM content descriptions for the Year 7–8 rotation (ACARA n.d.-r, version 8.3, School Two 2014a).

School Two Music Industry elective assessment tasks	ACM content descriptions
Performance podcast (week 9): Students record themselves playing, distribute recording as a podcast.	ACAMUM103: Perform music applying techniques and expression to interpret the composer's use of elements of music (performance).
Composition (week 13): Notation or GarageBand composition.	ACAMUM099: Improvise and arrange music, using aural recognition of texture, dynamics and expression to manipulate the elements of music to explore personal style in composition and performance (improvising).
	ACAMUM100: Manipulate combinations of the elements of music in a range of styles, using technology and notation (theory and aural training).
	ACAMUM101: Practise and rehearse to refine a variety of performance repertoire with increasing technical and interpretative skill (practising).
	ACAMUM102: Plan and organise compositions with an understanding of style and convention, including drawing upon Australian music by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists (composition).
	ACAMUR104: Evaluate a range of music and compositions to inform and refine their own compositions and performances (musical analysis).
	ACAMUR105: Analyse a range of music from contemporary and past times to explore differing viewpoints and enrich their music making, starting with Australian music, including music of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, and consider music in international contexts (contextual analysis).
Concert production (week 18): Stage and produce a live performance.	ACAMUM101: (practising).
	ACAMUM103: (performance).
Live performance (week 18): Perform for an audience.	ACAMUM100: (theory and aural training).
	ACAMUM101: (practising).
	ACAMUM103: (performance).
"Adjustable" tasks (theory folio, analysis folio).	ACAMUM099: (improvising).
	ACAMUM100: (theory and aural training).
	ACAMUR104: (musical analysis).
	ACAMUR105: (contextual analysis).

Table 43: School Two assessment tasks and ACM content descriptions for the Music Industry elective (ACARA n.d.-r, version 8.3, School Two 2014b).

School Two Rock Music elective assessment tasks	ACM content descriptions
Research task (week 5): History and stylistic features of rock and roll.	ACAMUM101: Practise and rehearse to refine a variety of performance repertoire with increasing technical and interpretative skill (practising).
	ACAMUR104: Evaluate a range of music and compositions to inform and refine their own compositions and performances (musical analysis).
	ACAMUR105: Analyse a range of music from contemporary and past times to explore differing viewpoints and enrich their music making, starting with Australian music, including music of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, and consider music in international contexts (contextual analysis).
Performance 1 (week 9): Perform a rock and roll song for the class.	ACAMUM101: (practising).
	ACAMUM103: Perform music applying techniques and expression to interpret the composer's use of elements of music (performance).
	ACAMUR105: (contextual analysis).
Composition (week 13): Write a song in the style of 1970s classic rock.	ACAMUM099: Improvise and arrange music, using aural recognition of texture, dynamics and expression to manipulate the elements of music to explore personal style in composition and performance (improvising).
	ACAMUM100: Manipulate combinations of the elements of music in a range of styles, using technology and notation (theory and aural training).
	ACAMUM101: (practising).
	ACAMUM102: Plan and organise compositions with an understanding of style and convention, including drawing upon Australian music by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists (composition).
	ACAMUR104: (musical analysis).
	ACAMUR105: (contextual analysis).
Performance 2 (week 16): Perform a classic rock song for the class.	ACAMUM101: (practising).
	ACAMUM103: (performance).
	ACAMUR105: (contextual analysis).
"Adjustable" tasks (theory folio, analysis folio).	ACAMUM099: (improvising).
	ACAMUM100: (theory and aural training).
	ACAMUR104: (musical analysis).
	ACAMUR105: (contextual analysis).

Table 44: School Two assessment tasks and ACM content descriptions for the Rock Music elective (ACARA n.d.-r, version 8.3, School Two 2014b).

School Two Music Performance elective assessment tasks	ACM content descriptions
Performance 1 (week 9): Perform for a public audience.	ACAMUM101: Practise and rehearse to refine a variety of performance repertoire with increasing technical and interpretative skill (practising).
	ACAMUM103: Perform music applying techniques and expression to interpret the composer's use of elements of music (performance).
	ACAMUR105: Analyse a range of music from contemporary and past times to explore differing viewpoints and enrich their music making, starting with Australian music, including music of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, and consider music in international contexts (contextual analysis).
Performance analysis (week 10): Review the performances of others.	ACAMUM101: (practising).
	ACAMUM103: (performance).
	ACAMUR105: (contextual analysis).
Research and composition (week 15): Research stylistic protocols, compose using notation.	ACAMUM099: Improvise and arrange music, using aural recognition of texture, dynamics and expression to manipulate the elements of music to explore personal style in composition and performance (improvising).
	ACAMUM100: Manipulate combinations of the elements of music in a range of styles, using technology and notation (theory and aural training).
	ACAMUM101: (practising).
	ACAMUM102: Plan and organise compositions with an understanding of style and convention, including drawing upon Australian music by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists (composition).
	ACAMUR104: Evaluate a range of music and compositions to inform and refine their own compositions and performances (musical analysis).
Performance 2 (week 19): Perform for a public audience.	ACAMUM101: (practising).
	ACAMUM103: (performance).
"Adjustable" tasks (theory folio, analysis folio).	ACAMUM099: (improvising).
	ACAMUM100: (theory and aural training).
	ACAMUR104: (musical analysis).
	ACAMUR105: (contextual analysis).

Table 45: School Two assessment tasks and ACM content descriptions for the Music Performance elective (ACARA n.d.-r, version 8.3, School Two 2014b).

School Two Recording and Performing elective assessment tasks	ACM content descriptions
Research task (week 5): Research and analyse a piece for their own instrument.	ACAMUR104: Evaluate a range of music and compositions to inform and refine their own compositions and performances (musical analysis).
	ACAMUR105: Analyse a range of music from contemporary and past times to explore differing viewpoints and enrich their music making, starting with Australian music, including music of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, and consider music in international contexts (contextual analysis).
Performance (week 9): Students perform the same piece for the class with appropriate staging.	ACAMUM101: Practise and rehearse to refine a variety of performance repertoire with increasing technical and interpretative skill (practising).
	ACAMUM103: Perform music applying techniques and expression to interpret the composer's use of elements of music (performance).
Composition (week 14): Collaborate with other students to write a composition.	ACAMUM099: Improvise and arrange music, using aural recognition of texture, dynamics and expression to manipulate the elements of music to explore personal style in composition and performance (improvising).
	ACAMUM100: Manipulate combinations of the elements of music in a range of styles, using technology and notation (theory and aural training).
	ACAMUM102: Plan and organise compositions with an understanding of style and convention, including drawing upon Australian music by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists (composition).
	ACAMUR104: (musical analysis).
	ACAMUR105: (contextual analysis).
Recording (week 18): Work in a group to record a performance.	ACAMUM100: (theory and aural training).
	ACAMUM101: (practising).
	ACAMUM103: (performance).
"Adjustable" tasks (theory folio, analysis folio).	ACAMUM099: (improvising).
	ACAMUM100: (theory and aural training).
	ACAMUR104: (musical analysis).
	ACAMUR105: (contextual analysis).

Table 46: School Two assessment tasks and ACM content descriptions for the Recording and Performing elective (ACARA n.d.-r, version 8.3, School Two 2014b).

School Two Music Video Production elective assessment tasks	ACM content descriptions
Performance (week 6): Perform a song from a media source.	ACAMUM099: Improvise and arrange music, using aural recognition of texture, dynamics and expression to manipulate the elements of music to explore personal style in composition and performance (improvising).
	ACAMUM100: Manipulate combinations of the elements of music in a range of styles, using technology and notation (theory and aural training).
	ACAMUM101: Practise and rehearse to refine a variety of performance repertoire with increasing technical and interpretative skill (practising).
	ACAMUM102: Plan and organise compositions with an understanding of style and convention, including drawing upon Australian music by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists (composition).
Composition (week 10): Write the song that forms the basis of their music video.	ACAMUM099: (improvising).
	ACAMUM100: (theory and aural training).
	ACAMUM101: (practising).
	ACAMUM102: (composition).
Research task (week 12): Explore the history and development of the music video.	ACAMUR104: Evaluate a range of music and compositions to inform and refine their own compositions and performances (musical analysis).
	ACAMUR105: Analyse a range of music from contemporary and past times to explore differing viewpoints and enrich their music making, starting with Australian music, including music of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, and consider music in international contexts (contextual analysis).
Recording, filming, and dissemination of music video (week 18): Production of a music video and its presentation on a social media platform (e.g. YouTube).	ACAMUM101: (practising).
	ACAMUM103: Perform music applying techniques and expression to interpret the composer's use of elements of music (performance).
"Adjustable" tasks (theory folio, analysis folio).	ACAMUM099: (improvising).
	ACAMUM100: (theory and aural training).
	ACAMUR104: (musical analysis).
	ACAMUR105: (contextual analysis).

Table 47: School Two assessment tasks and ACM content descriptions for the Music Video Production elective (ACARA n.d.-r, version 8.3, School Two 2014b).

Appendix B: Categories, codes, and analytical notes

Category	Codes	Analytical notes
Teacher background	Perpetuation of previous experiences: *teachers actively or subconsciously using methods that they were exposed to in their education and training.*	Alice exhibited an acute and self-reflexive awareness of how her background influenced her present practice. She could specifically identify elements of her own secondary school experience that she mainly perpetuated, although sometimes rejected.
		Jody identified her background as a performer as the most significant influence on her present practice.
	Rejection of previous experiences: *teachers actively or subconsciously rejecting methods that they were exposed to in their education and training.*	Denise exhibited an awareness of how her background influenced her present practice. She explicitly rejected the traditional model of music education training that she received at university.
		Chris identified several points throughout his teaching career when the influence of others changed his overall approach. He rejected approaches that he experienced that encouraged the separation of music education from its context: for example, teaching theory through theory booklets.
		Sam rejected the methods of music teaching he experienced in secondary school. He attributed his present, highly structured approach as a reaction to the lack of structure in his school's music program.
	No response: *time constraints and non-response to follow-up questionnaires means that no further information can be derived from Matthew or Lorraine.*	Matthew.
		Lorraine.
Program identity	Practical: *programs that are described as being practical, either through a focus on performance or through practical engagement with all kinds of musical activities.*	Denise and Chris identified their programs as being *practical*, although with vastly different interpretations of the term. Denise's interpretation of practical was performance, while Chris and Sam explained practical to mean practical experiences in different kinds of tasks.
		Denise stated that the system of banding years, and the clear outcomes associated with this method of curriculum organisation, aligns well with her practically-based Concert Band Program.
	Conventional: *programs that are described as being organised in discrete sections (performance, theory, analysis, aural, context).*	Alice and Matthew both organise their courses into discrete sections that are interrelated but do not overlap. For example, students' performances are separate from their theory, although the links between the two are explained.
		Matthew elaborated significantly on the perceived benefits of having a national curriculum for music, including its validity across the entire country and its authority in the classroom.
Identity of ACM	Broad: *responses to the ACM that highlight its broadness and capaciousness in terms of structure, the language it uses, and its relevance.*	All teachers commented on the ACM being a broad curriculum in some way. Some teachers were positive about this characteristic and indicated that it allowed them significant freedom to interpret it in their own way. Other teachers indicated that broadness in language and structure mad the ACM overly generic and therefore irrelevant.
	Prescriptive: *responses to the ACM that highlight elements that are rigorous and prescriptive, are comparatively more structured than previous curriculum frameworks, or point to benefits of a*	All teachers stated that the ACM was more prescriptive than the previous ACT curriculum framework for music. All teachers commented on the impossibility of addressing all prescriptive content in the ACM in the time allocated to music.

	curriculum that can only be realised if the curriculum is standardised.				

		Capability	Easy to implement	No opinion offered	
Non-musical elements	Straightforward to implement: *responses to the General Capabilities in the ACM which are considered easy to implement or are dismissed because they are considered to be inherent to the act of teaching.*	*Literacy*	Alice, Matthew, Chris, Sam	Denise, Lorraine, Jody	
		Numeracy	Alice, Matthew, Chris, Sam	Denise, Lorraine, Jody	
		ICT capability	Alice, Matthew	Denise, Chris, Sam, Lorraine, Jody	
		Intercultural understanding	Alice, Matthew, Lorraine, Jody	Denise, Chris, Sam	
		Ethical understanding	Alice	Denise, Matthew, Chris, Sam, Lorraine, Jody	
		Critical and creative thinking	Alice	Denise, Matthew, Chris, Sam, Lorraine, Jody	
		Personal and social capability	Alice	Denise, Matthew, Chris, Sam, Lorraine, Jody	

		Priority	Easy to implement	Difficult to implement	Inconclusive	No opinion offered
	Difficult to implement: *responses to the Cross-Curriculum Priorities in the ACM which are challenging for music teachers to deliver because of limitations they identified in their training, limitations in the ACM, or a combination of both.*	*Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures*	n/a	Denise, Alice, Matthew, Chris, Sam, Lorraine, Jody	n/a	n/a
		Asia and Australia's Engagement with Asia	Matthew	n/a	Denise, Alice, Lorraine	Chris, Sam, Jody
		Sustainability	Denise	Alice, Chris, Sam, Lorraine, Jody	n/a	Matthew

Music education	General: *Responses about the general state of music education, including primary school music education.*	The teachers at School Four spoke at length regarding their ability to implement the ACM given the variable standard of students entering Year 7. Chris identified composition as a significant challenge in any music education program.	
	School-specific: *Responses or offhand comments that provide detail about the status of music within the school.*	**School One**: - 38.6–48.4 hours per semester. - 2–2.5 lessons per week.	

Classroom-based program	Curricular ensemble
Performance Music: - Term-long compulsory rotation course in Year 7 (unless students participate in the Concert Band Program).	Concert Band Program: - Year-long sequential elective course in Years 7–10.

		- Semester-based non-sequential elective course in Years 8–10.	
		School Two: - 70 hours per semester. - 3.5 lessons per week.	
		Classroom-based program	**Curricular ensemble**
		Classroom music: - Term-long compulsory rotation course in Years 7–8 (unless students participate in the Year 7–8 concert band. - Semester-based non-sequential elective course in Years 9–10.	Year 7–8 concert band: - Term-long elective rotation course in Years 7–8.
		School Three: - No indication of time in each course.	
		Classroom-based program	**Curricular ensemble**
		Classroom music: - Term-long compulsory rotation course in Year 7. - Year-long sequential elective course in Years 8–10.	Orchestras: - Year-long sequential elective course in Years 7–10.
		School Four: - 40 hours (one semester) in Year 7. - 100 hours per year in Years 8–10. - 2 lessons per week in Year 7. - 2.5 lessons per week in Years 8–10.	
		Classroom-based program	**Curricular ensemble**
		Classroom music: - Semester-long compulsory rotation course in Year 7. - Year-long sequential elective course in Years 8–10.	N/A

Table 48: Full table of categories, codes, and analytical notes.

Appendix C: Full list of Canberra secondary schools

School	Compulsory rotation format	Electives offered
Government schools		
Alfred Deakin High School	Year 7	Curricular ensemble Years 7–8, 9–10; classroom music Years 8–10 (Alfred Deakin High School 2012)
Amaroo School	No compulsory rotation	Classroom music Years 7–10 (Amaroo School 2017a, b, c)
Belconnen High School	Years 7–8	Curricular ensemble 7–10; classroom music Years 9–10 (Belconnen High School 2017)
Campbell High School	No compulsory rotation	Curricular ensemble Year 7; classroom music Years 8–10 (Campbell High School 2012)
Canberra High School	Year 7	Classroom music Years 8-10 (Canberra High School 2015)
Calwell High School	Year 7	Classroom music Years 8-10 (Calwell High School 2018)
Gold Creek High School	Unclear	Unique case: interested IB school (Gold Creek School 2018)
Harrison School	No compulsory rotation	Classroom music Years 7–10 (Harrison School 2018a, b)
Kingsford Smith School	Rotation through Years 6–7; middle school	Classroom music Years 8–10 (Kingsford Smith School 2014)
Lanyon High School	Years 7–8	Classroom music Years 9–10 (Lanyon High School 2014, 2017)
Lyneham High School	Year 7	Curricular ensemble Years 7–10; classroom music Years 8–10 (Lyneham High School 2018)
Melba Copland Secondary School	Year 7	Classroom music Years 8–10 (Melba Copland Secondary School 2018)
Melrose High School	Years 7–8	Curricular ensemble Year 7; classroom music Years 9–10 (Melrose High School 2017a, b)
Mount Stromlo High School	Years 7–8	Curricular ensemble Year 7; classroom music Years 9–10 (Mount Stromlo High School 2017)
Telopea Park School	Years 7	Unique case: IB school. Classroom music Years 8–10 (Telopea Park School 2016)
Wanniassa School	Years 7–8	Classroom music Years 9–10 (Wanniassa School 2014)
Non-government schools		
Blue Gum Community School	Unclear	Unique case: school highly focused on individually negotiated learning (Blue Gum Community School 2018b, a)
Brindabella Christian College	Years 7–8	Classroom music Years 9–10 (Brindabella Christian College 2018a, b)
Burgmann Anglican School	Unclear	Unclear: middle school program (Burgmann Anglican School n.d.)
Canberra Girls Grammar School	Years 7–8	Classroom music Years 9–10 (Canberra Girls Grammar School n.d.)
Canberra Grammar School	Year 7	Classroom music Years 8–10 (Canberra Grammar School 2018)
Covenant Christian School	Years 7–8	Classroom music Years 9–10 (Covenant Christian School n.d.)
Daramalan College	Years 7–8	Classroom music Years 9–10 (Daramalan College 2018)
Marist College Canberra	Years 7–8	Classroom music Years 9–10 (Marist College Canberra 2018a, b)
Orana Steiner School	Unclear	Unique case: Steiner structure integrates music comprehensively across all learning (Orana Steiner School n.d.)
Radford College	Years 7–8	Classroom music Years 9–10 (Radford College n.d.)
St. Clare's College	Years 7–8	Classroom music Years 9–10 (St Clare's College 2018)
St. Edmund's College	Year 7	Classroom music Years 8–10 (St Edmund's College 2018).
St. Francis Xavier's College	Years 7–8	Classroom music Years 9–10 (St Francis Xavier College 2017)
St. John Paul II College	Years 7–8	Classroom music Years 9–10 (St John Paul II College 2015)
St. Mary MacKillop College	Year 7	Classroom music Years 8–10 (St Mary MacKillop College n.d.)
Trinity Christian School	Years 7–8	Classroom music Years 9–10 (Trinity Christian School 2017a, b)

Table 49: Outline of schools, their compulsory rotations, and music electives in the ACT.

Appendix D: Correspondence and permission forms
Participant information sheet

Participant Information Sheet

Researcher:

My name is Alexander Clark, and I am a current PhD candidate at the ANU School of Music. I graduated with a Bachelor of Music (Honours) from the ANU in 2014, and my research interests during my degree included historical performance practice, music and globalisation, and music education.

As part of my PhD dissertation, I have chosen to conduct an evaluation of the implementation of the Australian Curriculum in Music in secondary schools in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) and Tasmania. This will incorporate interviews with individual teachers, conducted by me. If you agree to take part in this research, I would like to try and get a better understanding of your implementation of the Australian Curriculum in Music. I would like to understand what you think the strengths, weaknesses, and possible improvements of the Australian Curriculum in Music could be.

Project Title: **Appraising Australian music education: towards an inclusive and engaging high school curriculum.**

General Outline of the Project:
- **Description and Methodology:** There are three areas of analysis within this project: the first is a documentary analysis of the Australian Curriculum in Music (ACM); the second is analysis of interviews with practicing secondary music teachers, about their implementation of the ACM; and the third is an analysis of classroom syllabi/teaching outlines against the ACM, and the relevant teacher interview. The overall goal is to gain a better understanding of teacher process in interpreting and implementing the ACM.

- **Participants:** You have been chosen to participate because your school is implementing the ACM. Some of the questions I would like to ask you are:

  - What were your initial reactions to the ACM?
  - What elements of the ACM do you agree with/approve of?
  - What elements of the ACM do you disagree with/disapprove of?
  - What elements of the ACM have you found easy to engage and implement?
  - What elements of the ACM have you found difficult to engage and implement?
  - How closely does your understanding of the ACM align with that of the previous state curriculum? (if applicable)
  - How has your understanding of music and education influenced your implementation of the ACM?
  - What potential improvements to the ACM might be.

- **Use of Data and Feedback:** The data will be used and presented in my PhD thesis. As the nature of this research is qualitative, there will be no statistical elements. A summary of the thesis will be sent to all research participants at the conclusion and submission of my PhD thesis. To comply with the ANU Code of Research Conduct, I need to store data for five years after the publication/submission of the thesis. As there is potential for further research in this area, on a larger scale, data may be retained after

this five-year period in a de-identified format, and used in future research projects. If you require any more information, please contact me.

Participant Involvement:

- **Voluntary Participation & Withdrawal:** Participation in the research project is voluntary. You may, without negative consequences, decline to take part or withdraw from the research without providing an explanation at any time, until the work is prepared for submission. You can also refuse to answer specific questions. If you do withdraw, the data you provide will be destroyed and not used. However, you can opt-in to allow any data that you have provided to be used in the research project, until the thesis is submitted or until publication. Your participation in this project (or not) has no impact on the employment relationship between you and your school. If you have any concerns about your contribution, please contact me.

- **What does participation in the research entail?** Participation in this research project will involve being interviewed, and providing a copy of lesson plans/syllabi of the past year. The interview will be audio-recorded, and then transcribed for analysis. This involves you signing a consent form, and you do not have to agree to having your interview recorded. If you do not wish to be recorded, written notes will be taken during the interview. If you are happy to be recorded, a copy of the transcript will be sent to you for a check before the final analysis is completed. You can opt-out if you do not wish to receive this transcript. The nature of the interview questions will relate to your professional capacity as a music teacher, and your history with music and education. There will be no personal information requested outside of this scope.

- Please note: the interviews will be transcribed by an external, professional transcription service. This will be the only time anyone other than me will have access to your data. If this is a cause for concern, please contact me.

- **Location and Duration:** If you agree to participate in the research, locations for interviews will be discussed individually. In the interest of accurate audio recordings, locations should ideally be quiet and private. You will be required to participate in one interview, lasting for approximately an hour in duration.

- **Risks:** There is inherent risk in any research situation, regardless of best attempts to negate it. In this situation, there is potential for discomfort if interview questions, the scope of which are indicated above, touch on uncomfortable areas. In this instance, you can terminate the interview at any time with no negative consequences, and no need for justification. There is also the risk that information you provide may make you identifiable, despite best attempts to keep the data you provide confidential. If you wish, you can read a transcript of your interview prior to data analysis.

- **Benefits:** I expect that this research will improve understanding of the implementation of curricula/syllabi at the classroom level. This is an illustration of the freedom that individual teachers have when interpreting such documents. I anticipate that understanding and knowledge gained will inform further curriculum development in the field of music, which may benefit you individually. If successful, there is also potential for the methodology to be adapted to other subject areas, within the Australian Curriculum and also within other curricula/syllabi.

Confidentiality:

- **Confidentiality:** Audio recordings of interviews will be transcribed through a professional transcription service. This is the only occasion when anyone else will have access to the data you provide. The transcription service provider chosen must conform to the Australian Privacy Principles, and data must be encrypted.

- You can choose how you wish to be attributed in the completed thesis, either through full name, pseudonym, or no direct attribution. This will be indicated on the participant consent form. Alongside the thesis, the results may also be published in journal articles and presented at conferences, but your individual identity and school identity will not be disclosed. The confidentiality of information can only be guaranteed as far as the law allows.

Data Storage:
- **Where:** Data will be encrypted and stored on a personal computer at the Australian National University, which is also password-protected. An encrypted backup copy will be stored on a password-protected external hard drive. Any hard copies that you provide will be digitised, and the digital copies will be stored in the same locations as other electronic data. The original hard copies will be stored in a locked cabinet in a locked room.

- **How long:** Following submission of the PhD thesis, data will be retained for five years. This is mandatory, and complies with the ANU Responsible Practice of Research Policy, and the ANU Code of Research Conduct. I will store a copy on my personal computer – password-protected and encrypted – and a copy of the data will be stored by the University, as this will be after the end of my PhD candidature. Arrangements for this will be made at the appropriate time, with my supervisor and the Head of School.

- **Handling of Data following the required storage period:** Following the mandatory five-year retention period, data may be de-identified and archived. This is so further research into music curriculum implementation can be facilitated in the future. The data collected in the present study may be valuable to future studies. Hard copies will be destroyed in a safe and secure way.

Queries and Concerns:

For any further information, please don't hesitate to contact me:

Alexander Clark
Email: u5022470@anu.edu.au
Mobile: 0409 484 817

Supervisor: Dr. Kate Bowan
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Work: 02 6125 4251

Participant consent form

Australian
National
University

WRITTEN CONSENT for Participants

Appraising Australian music education: towards an inclusive and engaging high school curriculum.

I have read and understood the Information Sheet you have given me about the research project, and I have had any questions and concerns about the project (listed here

_____

_____)

addressed to my satisfaction.

I agree to participate in the project.   YES ☐   NO ☐

I agree to this interview being audio-recorded   YES ☐   NO ☐

I agree to be identified in the following way within research outputs:

Full name   YES ☐   NO ☐

Pseudonym   YES ☐   NO ☐

No attribution   YES ☐   NO ☐

Signature:……………………………………………….

Date:…………………………………………………

Background information questionnaire

Music teacher background information

Name: Date:

Please respond to the following questions in as much detail as possible. All background information sheets will be de-identified prior to analysis. If you do not wish to answer a question, please leave it blank. You are able to withdraw from this study at any time, with no repercussions.

Background in music:
In responding to this question, consider things like: when you started learning music; instrument selection/s; exams; competitions; tertiary music education; and why you decided to specialise in music.

-

Background in education:
In responding to this question, consider things like: what motivated you to become a music teacher; teacher training (qualifications); and teaching experience (different schools, jurisdictions, year groups, etc.).

-

How have your experiences in music and education influenced how you currently teach music?

-

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