



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT
AND YOUTH AFFAIRS**

(Reference: [Inquiry into the cessation of the Music for Colleges course](#))

Members:

MR M PETTERSSON (Chair)
MRS E KIKKERT (Deputy Chair)
MS E LEE

TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE

CANBERRA

TUESDAY, 9 JULY 2019

Secretary to the committee:
Mrs N Kosseck (Ph: 620 50435)

By authority of the Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory

Submissions, answers to questions on notice and other documents, including requests for clarification of the transcript of evidence, relevant to this inquiry that have been authorised for publication by the committee may be obtained from the Legislative Assembly website.

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Amended 20 May 2013

The committee met at 9.32 am.

HENSHAW, MR ANTHONY (TONY), President, Friends of the School of Music ANU Inc

REKSTEN, MS MELINDA (LINDY), Committee Member, Friends of the School of Music ANU Inc

THE CHAIR: Good morning, and welcome to this public hearing of the Standing Committee on Education, Employment and Youth Affairs. The proceedings today are in relation to the committee's inquiry into the cessation of the music for colleges course.

Please be aware that the proceedings today are being recorded and transcribed by Hansard and will be published. The proceedings are also being broadcast and webstreamed live. When taking a question on notice, it would be useful if the witness used the words, "I will take that as a question on notice." This will help the committee and witnesses to confirm questions taken on notice from the transcript.

Witnesses are also asked to familiarise themselves with the privilege statement that is on the table, those pink sheets. Could I confirm that you have read the privilege card and that you understand the privilege implications of the statement?

Mr Henshaw: Yes.

Ms Reksten: Yes.

THE CHAIR: Would you like to make a short opening statement?

Mr Henshaw: Yes. Thank you for the opportunity for the Friends of the School of Music ANU to address the committee. We are a community organisation that has existed for nearly 40 years, in support of the original Canberra School of Music, and we have continued on, since the School of Music was transferred to under the ANU. We are a not-for-profit community association. We aim to be a source of practical and financial support to students of the School of Music as they study and as they move from study into the pursuit of a career in music.

We would also like to provide opportunities for the younger musicians who participate in the pre-tertiary programs at the school—including the music for colleges program, as it was—to perform as soloists or in ensembles at various venues. Those venues have included not just the School of Music but festivals, embassies and Government House over the years. We have a fixture at Government House every November. The Governor-General, for many years now, has asked us to host a concert. That concert has been to thank the supporters of Government House over the years. At that particular event we have a mixture of undergraduate, graduate and pre-tertiary students performing.

Why is the music for colleges program important to us? We had no role in the delivery of that program; we see our role as supporting the performers in getting access to professional practice and exposure to professional musicians of all forms—composers, performers in classical, jazz and contemporary music—and to give those

performers an opportunity to see what a professional life in music might look like.

This is important to us because we see the music for colleges program as a very important precursor to admission to any tertiary course in music, regardless of whether it is at ANU, a conservatorium in another state or a jazz and contemporary program or composition program in another state or, in fact, overseas.

All other jurisdictions in Australia, with the exception of the Northern Territory, have some form of special purpose, high performance music program, be it a conservatorium high school or an intensive music program in another year 11 and 12 institution, or multiple year 11 and 12 institutions.

Without music for colleges, students in the ACT will be left with no extension program for high performance music. We see that as a very significant disadvantage to them, whether they choose to enrol in a music degree at ANU or whether they are thinking of enrolling at Monash, the New South Wales conservatorium, in Brisbane or wherever. They just will not have the ability to audition, because most of these programs have not just an ATAR requirement but an audition requirement as well.

They need to be extended in a way that not only improves their personal music practice but also their ensemble music practice. And that is regardless of genre. Jazz musicians need to audition, the same as classical musicians. Without the music for colleges program we are concerned that in the ACT music will be left without high performance support.

There are analogies to other disciplines. Copland college, for example, has a technology and IT program, which means that kids who are really interested in software engineering or another engineering discipline can go and extend themselves at that particular institution. In visual arts, kids who are really interested in visual arts and drama can go to Narrabundah College and get extended as high performance students in a way that they could not have otherwise been extended. Until now the program at the ANU has provided that extension for high performance students. Absent that program, we are concerned that our students will suffer in their desire to pursue a musical career.

THE CHAIR: I will lead off with questions. In an ideal world what does the offering of music education for advanced students look like in the ACT? Is it simply the H-course that was in place or is there something different that we should be looking at?

Ms Reksten: Without the music for colleges program, there really is not an advanced music program. The colleges all, I think, have a music program, but it is a very general music program. It is geared so that any student can take music at year 11 and 12 level, but it is not geared for students who have been studying an instrument for years and years and have already reached a high level of competency. For these students there really is not anything in the college system, either private or public colleges, at the moment.

The thing about the year 11 and 12 students that is worth noting is that they tend to be very time poor. If they want to pursue music at a higher level, music takes a lot of

time. You have to practice; there are a lot of extra things that have to happen. These students really want to take music as one of their subjects in years 11 and 12. If they are not offered a course at the level that they wish then they take other subjects. They will end up taking five other subjects, leaving them with very little time, outside their schooling, to pursue music at a level that will enable them to enter tertiary music.

MR PARTON: And music loses them.

Ms Reksten: Yes, music loses them. Music loses them; exactly.

Mr Henshaw: There would be an alternative mechanism, using the same mechanism that is used in the states, that is, to have a special purpose secondary college, not specifically for music, but a program at a secondary college that is dedicated to high performance musicians.

That is a viable alternative but it would cost a lot more than the current music for colleges program costs. You would have to staff it; you would have to ensure that there were sufficient instruments, performance rooms and spaces, opportunities for ensemble performance, and so forth. It is our view that it would be significantly more expensive than an H-course program as it is being run as music for colleges at the ANU.

The other advantage of doing the ANU program is that it brings high performance musicians together. The analogy I would use there is that it is a bit like the ACT representative soccer team. If you are not practising with students of similar ability, you do not get the extension and you do not get the exposure. The other thing about the ANU is that the best coaches that you have in this city are providing the tuition. It is a really effective and much cheaper mechanism than perhaps having a high performance music program at a secondary college.

THE CHAIR: One of the titbits that has popped up in this inquiry is that 30 kids every year go through the H-course, and six to nine of them would go on to actually study music. Why do you think that that number of students is going on to study music?

Mr Henshaw: The statistics are a little different from that, if you look at recent years. We need to acknowledge that when the ANU was half-hearted about whether or not it was going to continue with the School of Music, there was a significant dip in local enrolments, and the kids who would have otherwise enrolled in the ANU went to Brisbane, Melbourne or Sydney.

There has been an uptick in recent years, when the vice-chancellor has made a very significant recommitment to the School of Music. I cannot remember the numbers in the ANU submission, but a dozen or 13 of last year's cohort enrolled at the ANU.

The other thing that those statistics does not capture is the students who enrol in double degrees at other universities. It is possible to enrol in double degrees at Brisbane and at Monash. A student who appears to have enrolled in law, architecture or whatever and has enrolled in a double music degree does not pop up in those statistics.

Our experience is that the students who have been through this program—and there is a pretty good longitudinal study of those who have been through and then continued with a music degree in jazz, contemporary or classical—attribute the program as having established not just their skill but their desire to pursue a musical career. The submissions show that there are so many students for whom this course was the pivot point that determined their future as a musician.

MRS KIKKERT: Thank you so much for coming in this morning. I just want to know: what has been the feedback from some of your students about the cutting of this H-course?

Mr Henshaw: Interesting.

MRS KIKKERT: And also the parents?

Mr Henshaw: The students who have been through the course, type 1 as it was originally or the H-course now, and who look back at it being a pivot point are saddened by the fact that students who are following them will not get that opportunity. You will see in the submission their comments attest to the fact that, for them, getting into the course they wanted to get into, whether it was at the ANU or elsewhere, and then being able to pursue music at the highest level was the difference between pursuing a musical career or not.

Many of those students have gone on to be individual performers in their own right, significant international performers in their own right, or performers in ensembles and orchestras of quite significant renown. I will defer to you, Lindy, and you can give us one or two examples of people you know who have pursued a musical career after doing the type 1 or H-course.

Ms Reksten: Yes, there are many of them: in the Sydney Symphony; in the Australian Chamber Orchestra; studying overseas. I am here as the Vice-President of the Friends of the School of Music but I also did teach the H-course and was teaching at the School of Music program for many years. There are just so many who have gone on to do interesting things.

MRS KIKKERT: Do you think it will be very difficult for upcoming students to enter ANU because they do not have the H-course available?

Ms Reksten: Yes, absolutely.

Mr Henshaw: They will not audition well.

MRS KIKKERT: They will not audition?

Ms Reksten: No. They will not be at a high enough level. When students audition at the end of year 10 and at the end of year 12, when they finally finish the course, there is an enormous difference in their level just because they have been exposed to high level education in that subject.

MR PARTON: I suppose it is about competency but it is also about confidence?

Ms Reksten: Yes, absolutely.

MR PARTON: It is about knowing that you belong in that space?

Ms Reksten: I think also in music as a subject it is very difficult to really achieve what you are capable of by yourself. It is really a subject where you need to have a cohort of other students also pushing themselves and wanting to work at a higher level. That is why a program like this somewhere in the ACT is just so essential for students who are interested in that area. I think the ANU offers H-courses in Chinese, astrophysics, maths and a variety of other things. These students have got that opportunity to really extend themselves.

But at the moment, without the music for colleges program, students interested in music really have to then be happy with just taking, for example, general maths and that is all they are able to do at college level.

Mr Henshaw: It is a good analogy. Somebody taking general maths is not going to get into a high level physics or astrophysics degree because they will not have the prerequisites that are required to do that course. We are talking exactly the same thing. They just will not have the prerequisites required to perform at the level that gets them into the course.

MRS KIKKERT: I am assuming that those maths students are competing with other maths students entering from interstate and university.

Ms Reksten: Yes, exactly.

MRS KIKKERT: Likewise with the music students.

Ms Reksten: With the music, yes.

MRS KIKKERT: They are competing with other students who have been exposed in previous years to H-courses to build their confidence?

Ms Reksten: Yes.

MRS KIKKERT: There is a competition there that they will probably—

Ms Reksten: There is a competition but they are no longer going to be part of it. They cannot be a part of it because they just have not had that opportunity.

Mr Henshaw: There is a trickle-back effect from the high-performance students from this program into the general music program. The evidence from the music teachers in schools and colleges is that the high-performance students tend to lead the bands or the orchestras—and I am using “bands” in the sense of contemporary bands and classical ensembles—and that they tend to be the glue that brings those programs together and become the leaders of those efforts in the general music programs, just as high-performance athletes tend to captain the school side or high-performance

mathematicians can tutor the less able students in their own schools. Many of the schools have those peer tutoring programs, and music is the same. Without the exposure to the high performance—especially the ensemble work—they do not get the opportunity to do that in their own school.

Ms Reksten: Taking 2017 as an example, there were about 22 classical students enrolled. My area was classical, as opposed to jazz, but jazz was very similar.

Mr Henshaw: Equal numbers.

Ms Reksten: Of those, 15 went on to study music in some form at tertiary level, whether it was in a double degree or a single performance degree. Some have gone overseas. There is a girl who graduated last year who has just got into the conservatorium in Toulouse in France to study percussion and something else. It enables our students to be on a level playing field with students from other states really, and that has been the value of it, and that is what the loss is if we do not have a course somewhere in Canberra for that.

MR PARTON: We have spoken a little about how you could potentially replace the H-course and we have talked about the cost-effectiveness or otherwise of an alternative program but what I would like to focus on is the cost-effectiveness on a family-by-family basis. You have suggested that students would no longer be able to compete in that tertiary race. The reality is that some of them would be able to because they could access private tuition and although it would not be the same as what would be offered in the H-course they could get to a level where they still could compete.

My concern, based on conversations that we have had and based on so many submissions, is the lower socioeconomic families who, I am thinking, are at enormous risk of just being priced out of further music study and I would like to get your reflections on that.

Ms Reksten: If they enrol in the H-course or music for colleges right now it costs nothing. It costs nothing, just the same as it costs nothing to study at your college. However, if you enrol in music at your college you do not get your individual instrumental lessons paid for. It is an absolute given that if you are going to study anything at a higher level—and if we just take music as an example—you will not succeed in that course, whether it is at a college or otherwise, if you do not continue to have individual lessons on your instrument. You just have to.

The value of the music for colleges program is not there, except for the lower socio. Just put that aside for a second. The value is in the communal activities. The classes, the chamber music, the performance opportunities, that is where the value lies in that program.

As it is of course, all the students in the music for colleges are also getting a 30-minute free instrumental, one-on-one instrumental, lesson which is extremely expensive for government to be funding. I think maybe we need to look at ways that people in low socioeconomic areas, a family, could, through bursaries or whatever, still have access to, be able to take, that program. They cannot do it at their school.

Because music lessons are expensive, at some point it is probably the students whose parents can afford it that continue with music lessons but there are various opportunities for getting bursaries. I am a cello teacher. I give scholarships to students. I waive fees. Along the way we all do something to enable a student who is really interested to continue with their studies.

Mr Henshaw: What it comes down to is that what is really important in this program is the exposure to high level tuition and professional musicians in professional practice. It is the opportunity to play in ensembles. Someone who is taking piano or cello lessons with a private teacher is getting one-on-one opportunities but they do not get the opportunity to perform in small ensembles. It is similar for jazz musicians. If you are learning saxophone by yourself with a good saxophone teacher, that is not enough for you to learn professional music practice as a member of a high-performing ensemble. The essence of the music for colleges program is the exposure to those opportunities.

For kids whose parents are already paying for lessons, our view is that it could be possible that those parents could continue to pay for those lessons and you could catch the lower socio-economic group through some form of bursary or scholarship to fund the half-hour of tuition, and that would reduce the cost of the music for colleges program delivered through the ANU. The important thing is that once the kids are at the ANU they get not just the half-hour and the opportunity to interact with their peers in ensemble work and so forth but also an exposure to the broader musical career stream they cannot get at their current college and they cannot get in one-on-one lessons with their current teacher.

Ms Reksten: I teach students who have been through the Music for Colleges program. I have taught many students who have been through that. They come to my place and we have cello lessons. That can be a stimulating experience and they have to work hard, but they are working in isolation. They are not working with a peer group who are also doing exactly the same in flute, in clarinet, and in violin. It is when they come into the music for colleges section of their education that they are being stimulated by other students. The difference between a student who is just coming along to my backyard and having lessons and one who is doing that and in the music for colleges program is night and day. There is a huge difference. Because they are learning in isolation, they have no benchmark. In music you need to be with others at the same level but you need to continue your own studies.

MR PARTON: That makes a clearer picture for me. You talk about the environment in which these students learn. It is all very positive and sounds like a very conducive learning environment, which makes the H-course very appealing. Is the appeal of the H-course that environment, or is it the things that go with being in an H-course, which means guaranteed entry into university and potentially more ATAR marks?

Ms Reksten: It is not that. The course has only been an H-course for about three years. Before that it was type 1 and it was part of the BSSS, so you were guaranteed nothing. You did not have entry into university. One of the advantages was that it was part of your year 11 and 12 program. It is a course that takes a lot of work. Your individual practice takes a lot of work, and all the composition things; everything takes a lot of

work. Students could take it as one of their subjects, so they did not have to take five other subjects and then try to do this on the side somehow. The appeal of it being an ATAR subject, I would say, is still relatively high in the student's mind as being probably the most important aspect of it: that it is one of their year 11 and 12 subjects, that they are taking something that is their passion and their strength as one of their subjects rather than having to take physics 101 or something just to make up the subjects.

THE CHAIR: So it is on the side of their college experience, not the university experience, in terms of those additional parts?

Ms Reksten: Yes, their college experience certainly, because when you are in years 11 and 12, college is your focus. Adding it now as an H-course has given that extra little thing, but it was just as popular before. It is really just what the course offers in terms of content.

THE CHAIR: I guess that that is the crux of what I am trying to get at. There is great interest in advanced music tuition at this age. It is about in what form it is best delivered and if not this, then what? That is good to know.

Mr Henshaw: I can speak as a parent. My son did the type 1 course. He is just about to graduate with a PhD in classical guitar. Classical guitar is a very individual instrument. What it gave him was the opportunity to be part of an ensemble with different instruments and with other guitarists, which exposed him to a whole different experience of not only the instrument but also making music with other individuals. Year 11 for him was a pivot point. He decided in year 11 that he wanted to pursue a musical career. The exposure to the people at the School of Music who were professional musicians pursuing teaching and performing careers was part of the mechanism that changed his view. He did take music as an ATAR subject and did well. I do not think he would have pursued music as a career if he had not had the exposure to those professional musicians who were part of that course at the time.

MS KIKKERT: You mentioned coaches. Say there are 20 students wanting to do the H-course and each of those students plays a different instrument, so they need different coaches. What happens if there are not enough coaches available?

Ms Reksten: The students have lessons somewhere in Canberra with one of the professional teachers, so that is not something that we really have to worry about here. These students have been studying with a teacher in Canberra and they continue to study with that teacher or they may—there are, for example, five of six cello teachers—choose to study with me, continue with me or move to me as a new teacher. In terms of how to structure the H-course, the actual individual lessons are not something that individual teachers, coaches, have to concern ourselves with.

MS KIKKERT: I thought that that 30-minute face-to-face session during the H-course was part of that training, with the one-on-one coach.

Ms Reksten: It is. Of course you have to do that.

MS KIKKERT: It is part of it but it is off-site?

Ms Reksten: Yes, it is off-site. Without doing that, there is no way you could—

THE CHAIR: Are there a certain number of one-on-one lessons that someone would expect to go through?

Ms Reksten: The students with the present H-course get, as part of their H-course, a half-hour lesson for 14 weeks a semester. But at that level a half-hour is not enough, so they are all topping it up and probably all having at least an hour's lesson a week. So the parents are paying for half, and out of the grant half the lesson is paid for. It is almost like saying, "This student is in the top soccer team. Of course he goes to training. You can't get there if you don't go to training." You cannot be in an advanced music program unless you are pursuing regular lessons at a high level on your instrument.

The coaches who are part of the H-course that really matter are the ones who teach composition and theory, take the ensemble classes and take the performance classes. There are not a lot of them, as opposed to the 30 individual teachers who, as you say, are each teaching a different instrument.

MS KIKKERT: Thank you for clarifying that.

MR PARTON: I just want to thank you for coming and also for your passion. We can feel it when you talk about this. We can see that this is so important to you, and I can certainly feel your frustration and your dismay. Does anyone want to reflect on that statement in closing?

Mr Henshaw: For us, the passion is based on two things. One is equity between disciplines: music versus science, mathematics, technology, drama or visual arts. We see the lack of the Music for Colleges program as inequitable in that sense, because students who are interested in high-performance music do not have an avenue anymore. It is also from the perspective of knowing that students who want to pursue a high-performance music stream will lose their competitiveness when it comes to enrolling in tertiary studies, regardless of whether it is at ANU or at other institutions around the country or internationally, because they just will not have exposure to the composition, theory and ensemble work that they need to audition well. There will be, as you say, Mark, some students who just achieve a great audition regardless, but the number that achieve the great audition will be significantly reduced in the absence of a high-performance music program.

Ms Reksten: I feel very passionate having taught in the program but also having worked with so many students who really just love the program and have benefited—

MR PARTON: I have a vision of you as a gardener overseeing a bed of flowers and nurturing each one of them to try to make sure that they grow.

Ms Reksten: It is probably true. I have been to a lot of international cello festivals, and one of the things that has always struck me is that students, for example students living in the UK or America, have access to amazing music schools—the Menuhin school, the royal college and all these places—not because they are more talented or

more dedicated but because they just happen to live there. So I feel really passionate about this program because our kids are just as talented and can be just as dedicated but they do not have that opportunity. I think we are letting them down if we do not have something that we can offer them.

THE CHAIR: On behalf of the committee thank you for appearing. The secretary will provide you with a copy of the proof transcript of today's hearing when it is available.

FISHER, DR ELOISE, Canberra Symphony Orchestra

THE CHAIR: Witnesses are asked to familiarise themselves with the pink statement in front of them. Could you acknowledge that you have read and understand the implications of that statement?

Dr Fisher: Yes, I have.

THE CHAIR: Would you like to make a short opening statement?

Dr Fisher: Yes, please.

THE CHAIR: Take it away.

Dr Fisher: Thank you for your interest in the H-course in music and for allowing me the opportunity to present on the Canberra Symphony Orchestra's position regarding its recent dissolution. I would like to take a few minutes to introduce myself and to cover the Canberra Symphony Orchestra's main points in the context of my own personal experiences.

I am a classically trained clarinettist and currently work at the Canberra Symphony Orchestra as both a performing musician and the CSO ensemble manager. I am also the clarinet lecturer at ANU, and as part of my role at ANU will be teaching the final semester of the H-course from July to November this year. I have studied in prestigious musical institutions overseas, including the Juilliard School in New York, where I received my doctorate, and I have performed in orchestras around the world.

Since I grew up in Canberra and participated in the H-course, then known as type 2, I can speak to its impact on young musicians from personal experience, and in many ways I credit my own musical career to the foundations of musical literacy and performance that the H-course provided.

The H-course is a critical element in Canberra's musical ecosystem. By musical ecosystem I mean the whole gamut of activities in the community related to music. This takes in everything from children learning an instrument to teenagers jamming together after school, community choirs performing at aged care facilities and full stage symphony orchestra concerts.

The H-course is an integral part of a functioning musical climate because it is where students with the desire to pursue music learn the skills that will enable them to go on to tertiary study in music, which may in turn lead to becoming a professional musician or to becoming an enthusiastic music lover participating in community groups and supporting the concerts that Canberra has to offer.

The H-course provides a quality musical education for musically inclined students beyond what is available in the school system. The students who are accepted into the H-course have typically long ago mastered all the skills covered in the school curriculum, which does not cater to those looking to hone their performance skills at a high level and to master music literacy concepts.

The ACT government's suggestion in their submission that in lieu of the H-course students can partake in school or community-based music programs is akin to suggesting that talented junior athletes should forgo squad training and elite coaching because they can simply participate in PE classes at school. The thought that we could train young sports people to a nationally competitive level without appropriate training and encouragement is ludicrous and would never be accepted in Australia. I question why the same attitude does not apply to music.

The Canberra Symphony Orchestra supports a generalist music education in schools and understands that it is not feasible or even desirable to provide all schools with the high level musical education taught in the H-course, but we do believe that students intending to pursue music as a career or as a passion deserve the chance to follow their dreams.

The impact of having quality musical education for high performing students at a pre-tertiary level cannot be overstated. Like sport, a musical career often begins with exceptional performance at a young age and must be nurtured and developed at this time.

Given national and international standards of music performance and literacy, if students wait until they graduate from school to begin developing their musical skills at that level, it is simply too late; they will not have the skills to enter musical conservatories or university music departments, thus stymieing any hope of a musical career.

The suggestion in the ACT government's submission that students will be adequately supported by other government-funded music programs, including activities through Music for Canberra, the instrumental music program and the Canberra Symphony Orchestra, is short-sighted and uninformed. All of these programs are taught by professional musicians.

The dissolution of the H-course would lead to a complete breakdown in the ecosystem that produces these musicians. In less than a generation, Canberra would not have musicians of sufficient proficiency to teach talented children and would have no professional musicians to lead the Music for Canberra activities or fill out the ranks of the Canberra Symphony Orchestra.

In effect, by breaking the chain of musical development, the ACT government would be reducing Canberra's attractiveness as a place to raise talented and creative children. Music is well known to provide academic, social and mental health benefits to both participants and listeners. The idea that the nation's capital wishes to destroy a healthy musical environment is inconceivable to me.

The Canberra Symphony Orchestra supports efforts to reinstate the high quality program of pre-tertiary musical education that has formed many of our current musicians, has inspired a love of music in many of our listeners, and will be the pathway of our future existence. I welcome your questions.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. I will lead off with questions and we will make our way

down. In your opinion, what is the ideal advanced music pre-tertiary education? What does that look like? Is it specifically what the H-course is or are there potentially ways you could improve, change or maybe go with a different program?

Dr Fisher: I think it can take a number of forms. I have attended universities and conservatories around the world, and all of them have a pre-tertiary program of some form or other. The fact that right now the H-course gives university credit is more or less irrelevant; I would not be opposed to having that separated from the university in that way. The reason that it makes sense to keep it at ANU is that the faculty is there. All the expert coaches, if you like, are on faculty at ANU; the musical environment is there; students can potentially perform in tertiary ensembles; or tertiary students can perform in pre-tertiary ensembles.

The fact that it is so intimately connected with the academics of ANU is not necessarily, I think, crucial. What is crucial is to have high level teaching: teaching where, if they graduate from this course here in years 11 and 12, they could enter auditions for universities anywhere around the world, nationally and internationally. If it is not at that level, there is no point.

The second thing is to have the peer group. Musicians push themselves, just like kids playing sport. If people are in a good sport group and they are all training every day, they are going to push themselves; they are going to get better and better. You see that all the time. It is the same with music. Unless we have a dedicated group of young musicians working together, they will not push themselves to reach that level.

For example, the Juilliard School in New York run a pre-tertiary program all Saturday, every Saturday. It does not count towards any school marks; it does not count towards any university entrance; it does not guarantee anything. What is important to the students who are enrolling in that—and coming from 500 kilometres away every Saturday to attend that program—is (a) the teaching level and (b) the peer group level.

THE CHAIR: You would have heard from the previous witnesses that pre-tertiary education counting towards college credit is quite important.

Dr Fisher: It is important to many of the students. As to the question “If that was gone, would people still enrol?” I do not know. I would have. I did this course, and I would have. Maybe some would not; I do not know. It is impossible to tell. When I did the H-course, it was not connected with university in terms of credit or entry at all, and that did not affect my career.

MRS KIKKERT: I want to ask about your personal experience of doing music courses before entering university. How did that boost your confidence and how did that help you get into university and also go down the pathway of going to university overseas in New York?

Dr Fisher: It was massive. I did what was called type 2, similar to the H-course, a pre-tertiary, high-performance class at the ANU. That was my theory and history training. From then on, at every university I went to I passed out of music history and music theory. The level was such that I never actually had to do those classes, because we had been taught it at a tertiary level already. That is enormous, to know that you

have that already. That is why I say that getting the university credit is more or less irrelevant: if you are at that level, whether you can pass out of that course or you do the course, you have already done the material; it is the knowledge that you have gained that is important, not the 0.2 on your transcript.

MRS KIKKERT: I am not aware of the alternative programs that you mentioned earlier that the ACT government is suggesting would work in comparison. What is the difference?

Dr Fisher: There is a huge difference. I am not sure why they used that as a possibility; I assume it is because they are uninformed. They mentioned Music for Canberra. They provide youth orchestras and potentially private lessons. All of those programs are taught by professional musicians. If we stop producing professional musicians, that goes out the window.

They suggested IMP, the instrumental music program. That is a program in public schools. In years 5 and 6 in every public school, children have the opportunity to audition and learn a musical instrument. That is where you get the school bands, and that continues on through high school, if the children want to. That is not at a level that will allow you to audition for a music conservatory university. It is great—I very much support the program—but it is not comparable.

MRS KIKKERT: For those age groups.

Dr Fisher: The third one was Canberra Symphony Orchestra. I work for Canberra Symphony Orchestra and I am here on behalf of Canberra Symphony Orchestra. We provide many amazing musical programs. It is important for the music students in the city that we are here and they can come and hear our music, but we are not providing anything that would train them like the H-course does.

The three options that they suggested are not in any way going to help replace the H-course, if we are talking about its demise.

MRS KIKKERT: Do you mean like history, music or what you studied earlier that helped you prepare to study at university? You do not offer that?

Dr Fisher: We do not teach theory; we do not teach history; we do not teach performance. Those are the three things that are covered in the H-course. What we provide is a high level musical environment. Students can come and listen to the symphony and go, “Wow, that is what I want to do.”

MRS KIKKERT: Yes, that is what they want to do.

Dr Fisher: Right, or “Wow, I love that instrument. I am going to have private lessons from that person.” So it is important that we are here. If the city did not have a symphony orchestra, the number of students pursuing music would I think almost disappear. But we do not provide the training. Many of our musicians do in other ways. For example, they work at the Canberra Symphony Orchestra. They also teach clarinet privately. They also teach at the ANU. So on a personal level, yes. But on an organisational level, that is not what we do.

MRS KIKKERT: Have you reached out to the ACT government and spoken to them about this?

Dr Fisher: I personally have not. I am the ensemble manager at the Canberra Symphony Orchestra. The Canberra Symphony Orchestra's submission was written by the CEO. I am not sure whether she has spoken to them about that, but I personally have not had any contact with them about that.

MRS KIKKERT: Have they reached out to you or—

Dr Fisher: No, as far as I know, we have not had contact in that regard. But you have to remember that the Canberra Symphony Orchestra is reliant on ACT government funding in other spheres. So while we find the H-course very important for our musical ecosystem, it is not necessarily the boat we want to rock.

MRS KIKKERT: Yes, fair enough. Thank you.

MR PARTON: Eloise, why did they send you?

Dr Fisher: I can only answer from my assumptions, and I would assume that I am the success story. I am the success story for this course, for growing up in Canberra and pursuing a high level musical career. I have won competitions around the world. I have played in symphony orchestras around the world. I came back here because I love Canberra and I wanted to contribute to the next level of musical education. I had a career in the US and then I had a career in Israel. I did not need to come back. I came back because I missed it and I thought the kids in Canberra deserve to come up to the level that kids in other cities are doing, and I can do that. That is why I came back.

MR PARTON: I really like the way you describe music as an ecosystem and that it encompasses all forms of music performance and enjoyment. You mentioned community choirs and kids jamming. Pretty much, I think based on your view, it gets down to people singing things in the shower.

Dr Fisher: Yes.

MR PARTON: That is what it is about. If there is a music climate in Canberra—let us think of it as a climate—is abolishing the H-course tantamount to bringing on extreme climate change?

Dr Fisher: It is. I think it is, honestly. It is like polluting the river more or less at the source. Let us say that we have our river coming down from mountains. The kids are still going to be singing in the playground; right? I do not think that abolishing the H-course is going to change that because it is such a primal human need.

But anything beyond that, anything in terms of what is the musical climate of our city, if we get rid of the H-course, we get rid of any hope of children, students, being able to pursue a musical career. Because I was sitting here, I noticed that there was interest in the statistics in terms of why are not 100 per cent of these kids going on to study

music? That is not important at all. Benefits in studying music go with you wherever you go. I think if we have an H-course of 30, and 12 go on to study music, and however many others go on to study astrophysics, and how many others go on to study linguistics, that is a 100 per cent success.

MR PARTON: Yes.

Dr Fisher: I do not think we should be looking for 100 per cent going on to study music at all. I think that when you get rid of the H-course and if we are polluting the river there, we are not only getting rid of the musical environment. We are actually cutting down academic achievement in general. It would be a massive impact.

MR PARTON: I take on board the comments you made earlier, that if we curtail that pathway, over 10 years there would be a noticeable effect on—

Dr Fisher: Everything will suffer. Everything will suffer. Set aside the H-course for a moment. As a case study, with the impact of ANU's music school problems—they are hopefully now in the past, but there have been problems; the level went down, the commitment from the university went down—the number of high-quality teachers now teaching kids in Canberra has been more than halved, I would say. Maybe we are up to a third of the number of high quality teachers teaching kids. Therefore, the level of kids has gone down.

We are not winning national competitions anymore. When I was a student in the Canberra Youth Orchestra, a large percentage of the kids in the Canberra Youth Orchestra were in the Australian Youth Orchestra. That is like, you know, the state team. A large percentage of that state team was in the national team. We have almost nobody now because of what happened to the ANU. That is now rebuilding. But if we get rid of the H-course, it will be the same but worse, because there is no way to get that to level.

THE CHAIR: Is there anything you can tell me about the process of applying for tertiary music studies and how competitive that process is? Why is a course like this needed to give someone that extra edge?

Dr Fisher: Yes, with most musical universities and conservatories around the world, it is 80 to 90 per cent based on your practical audition. That is performance based. To prepare for that audition you need to understand the requirements, and that is not just what is on paper; it is the expectations. What are we expecting in terms of the music you chose, what are we expecting in terms of the quality of your performance, how do you work with your accompanist, how do you turn up on the day? There are so many things that go into that performance that are built on experience and expectations. So throughout the H-course there is a performance class which happens every second week. You are getting the chance to get up and perform. Then once a semester that is assessed as a proper performance.

Each of those are kind of audition simulations. Each time you do that in the class, you get a little closer to understanding, “Okay, this is what I am going to be expected to do.” Maybe you will learn to control your nerves a little better. That is really important. You will understand how you collaborate with your co-performers. That is

really important. You will gradually, because you are seeing where everybody else is, get to the level that you need to be at to audition.

You can study with private teachers all you like but you have no way of knowing really the expectations of what you are meant to do when you walk into that audition room unless you have a system like the H-course where you are seeing it every week and practising it.

THE CHAIR: I am not sure if you would have the statistics but I am pretty sure anecdotally you would be able to tell me this. How competitive is it to actually get into one of these tertiary music programs? How many people are auditioning and how many people actually get one of the spots?

Dr Fisher: It is competitive, very competitive. It depends where. For example Juilliard School in New York say that they accept seven per cent of the kids who come to audition, and not everybody is invited to audition. So we are talking very competitive. That is probably the best school in the world; so of course it is competitive. But even at the Australian National University, anecdotally from audition panels that I have sat on, I would say—it depends on the university—that between 20 and 50 per cent would get admission. It is very competitive.

Those are again only the students who have been committed enough and interested enough to apply and prepare for the audition and to do the hours and hours of practice every day. The kids who would be looking at tertiary audition would be doing at least three hours personal private practice every day. And that is in addition to their school work. When I went through years 11 and 12 here in the ACT, I got up at 5.30 am every morning. I practised from 5.30 to 8.30 and then went to school. That was because that is what I wanted to do. Without the H-course on the other end of that school day, I am not going to say it would have been all for nothing but it would not have had the culmination that I had been working towards.

MS KIKKERT: I am good with questions but I just note that your opening remarks gave me goose bumps. I just thought, “You’ve got it.” Thank you.

Dr Fisher: Thank you.

MR PARTON: I want to talk about the mix of natural musical ability, which you are obviously blessed with, and hard work and perseverance. I think it is always a fascinating thing to examine. You talked about the fact that you were dragging yourself out of bed at 5.30 in the morning and practising for three hours. I am sure you get frustrated by people who believe that you just turn up and it happens. I guess I am trying to get a gauge on those students who progress through to the highest level. How much of it is about that natural given ability and how much of it is about the hard work and the tuition that we are talking about in the H-course.

Dr Fisher: People throw out the number 10 per cent talent. That is what they say: 10 per cent talent and 90 per cent hard work and opportunities.

MR PARTON: Do you think that is a fair assessment?

Dr Fisher: I would say maybe 20. Let us go with 20. Honestly, even with the 10 per cent, maybe you are not going to ever get to that world soloist level but you could get to a viable music career level. I believe that. Let us say that you have mediocre musical talent but a huge passion. I have seen cases like that. They go on to be excellent performers in a community sense; excellent and passionate music teachers; excellent and passionate advocates for the music community. That is really important. So I would be very anti saying, “Let us only encourage the ones with maximum talent.” That is not music at all to me.

I guess that it is kind of like sport, again. There are so many parallels, especially in a country where sport is considered so important and music perhaps less so. You would never pick a team of kids based on who has the most talent. You pick the kids on who is going to work hard and the ones who have talent who are actually going to maximise that talent. But all of them should have the opportunity to play. I think that is really one of my main positions about saving the H-course. It is not really just about saving the H-course for the kids who are going to do the H-course. It is about saving the H-course so that we can maintain this ecosystem which benefits everybody.

THE CHAIR: I am confident that I have heard enough.

MS KIKKERT: Yes.

Dr Fisher: Thank you for your time.

THE CHAIR: Thank you for coming along. You will be provided with a copy of the proof transcript when it is available. You have not taken any questions on notice. Thank you for coming.

Dr Fisher: Thank you.

Hearing suspended from 10.29 to 11.02 am.

BERRY, MS YVETTE, Minister for Education and Early Childhood Development
RAMSAY, MR GORDON, Minister for the Arts and Cultural Events
TYLER, MS SAM, Executive Branch Manager, artsACT, Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate
BRIGHTON, MS MEG, Acting Director-General, Education Directorate
HAWKINS, MR ROSS, Executive Group Manager, Service Design and Delivery, Education Directorate

THE CHAIR: Welcome back to this hearing into the cessation of the music for colleges course. Could I ask everyone to acknowledge the pink privilege statement that is in front of you? Everyone is nodding. Does anyone have a short opening statement that they would like to make?

Ms Berry: No.

Mr Ramsay: No.

THE CHAIR: We will go straight to questions. Could you tell the committee what the new music programs in the 2018 deed of grant with the ANU will include?

Ms Tyler: The new programs that are funded through the community outreach deed with the ANU, which goes from 2018 to 2020, include a program called girls jazz, which is a yearlong mentorship program for girls and women who wish to broaden their jazz and improvisation skills through instrument tuition, ensemble performance, workshops and master classes with industry leaders.

There is a community rock program, which is a yearlong program for adults in the community to extend their instrument knowledge and ensemble playing, for pathways for public performance. There is a my song program, which is a yearlong mentorship program with Gugan Gulwan Aboriginal youth centre, for young artists to learn about songwriting, recording and performance. There is a developing musicians program, which is a music education program for years 7 to 12 students through music tuition, workshops and ensemble performances, including for the public. That is open to all students, with no audition requirements.

In 2018 a proportion of the funding went to girls rock, which is a non-audition mentorship program for girls and transgender young people and non-binary young people, through learning an instrument, performing in a band and writing original music. The ANU are currently looking at what program will replace girls rock.

THE CHAIR: One of the recurring themes in all of the submissions is that the current H-course provides access to leading musicians, and provides that competitive edge for young people who potentially want to pursue a musical career. Is there anything in these programs that would provide something similar for people who want an additional edge as they try to get into those competitive positions?

Ms Tyler: These programs do not necessarily provide that very high-level support but they do provide access to music tuition and ensemble work that is outside what would be regularly provided through the school system. No, there is not anything that would

be a replacement.

Ms Berry: If I can talk about this from my experience with the girls rock program, I went along to that program. Whilst a competitive edge is probably not the language I would use, certainly it provided confidence for those young people to build relationships; there was mentoring of those very talented musicians. They started as beginning students who did not necessarily play an instrument at all. They learnt how to play an instrument, write a song and participate in a rock band performance afterwards, with all of the lights and activity around it.

That was certainly a successful program from the perspective of those young people. I could see, from the start of the program to the end of the program, the change that being part of that program during the school holidays last year had made in those young people's lives. Some of them did continue on and decide to pick up playing a musical instrument after that, when they had not played an instrument, sung or written a song, or ever dreamed of doing anything like that, prior to that program.

MRS KIKKERT: I want to refer to a submission by a music teacher. He said:

If ANU is incapable of H-course standard musical education in the ACT, then the lot falls to our Education Directorate. Otherwise music in the ACT will be a hobby for the rich. Our communities will be impoverished, our youth will be denied opportunities and move away from the ACT. I have ex-students who had to move to Queensland and Sydney because the ACT had no options for them.

What is your response to this music teacher?

Ms Berry: To start with, we can go to the funding that is provided by the Education Directorate to the university for H-courses, and the ANU's decisions about which H-courses that funding goes towards. If their decision is to move away from music education as part of that H-course program, obviously we try to work with the ANU about what that looks like, but at the end of the day the funding goes to the ANU and the ANU makes a decision about where the H-courses are.

In education, we can talk about the programs and assistance that are available in our public schools for the delivery of music education and where we support students to take up that passion, if that is what they would like to do.

Ms Brighton: I am the interim director-general. For the committee's information, Natalie Howson, the Director-General of Education, is on leave pending retirement, which was announced a number of weeks ago.

Thanks for your question, Mrs Kikkert. In schools the K to year 10 curriculum has quite a strength around its arts domain. That includes everything from the visual arts right the way through to music. In our public schools in Canberra, we have lots of opportunities for students to participate in music, right from the really early years of school, all the way through. There are in-school music programs that are run. We also augment that with our instrumental music program. That instrumental music program runs in schools. It also offers band programs. Students can participate in junior and senior concert bands and choirs.

In our college system we offer both accredited courses for students and tertiary packages. That sits across everything from the classical domain to rock, because students are looking for a whole range of different types of music experiences as part of their year 12 packages.

We do have quite a broad spectrum of offerings in schools. To go to the heart of your question around equity, if I have heard it correctly, at each stage of schooling there is an opportunity for students to participate in music regardless of their circumstances or their backgrounds. Students are able to participate in the extension program through the instrumental music program, based not on their early exposure to music but on their attributes as a person: their interests, their commitment and whether they are someone who could follow through and actively participate. That is regardless of whether you have had the benefit of a family who has invested in you outside school from an early age.

MRS KIKKERT: We understand that, and we are aware of the many school programs that are available for kids who want to pursue a career in music, or even develop and create that spark and energy about learning a new instrument or learning how to sing. We have heard from Dr Fisher, from Canberra Symphony Orchestra. She said that the H-course provides theory and history to music students and that none of these programs or courses is available in schools. It is great that music classes start in primary school and go right through high school, but the H-course is unique in its structure. It provides more than confidence; it provides history and theory lessons to these students, and it allows them to be ready for university.

Ms Brighton: As the minister outlined, with the funding for the H-courses—and I know this has come up several times previously—the government funds the H-courses, and that is through a deed of grant with the ANU. The ANU is making a determination about which program they offer. The artsACT funding that ANU has been receiving, historically, was used as part of their package. What we fund is the H-course. The ANU has been using the artsACT funding to offer a broader range of music services to students. We have seen the H-course as a separate mechanism, if you will, by which those programs are funded.

Certainly, I am hearing what you—and, having read some of the submissions, members of the community—are saying. We have had conversations with the ANU. We have not received a proposal from the ANU about alternatives. If, over time, ANU continue to make a decision not to offer music and there is a demand in our schools, we would look at how we augment accredited and tertiary packages to give them a broader dimension of music.

MRS KIKKERT: That was my follow-up question. The last time we had a meeting, you briefly spoke about having not so much negotiations but that you were waiting for ANU to come back to you about their decisions. Are you still waiting for that or have you followed it up with them?

Ms Berry: I think the conversations are continuing. I will ask Mr Hawkins to provide a bit of an update on where that is up to.

Mr Hawkins: I confirm that I have read the privilege statement. As the minister said

there have been various points of communication between the directorate and the ANU. The last contact we had with them would have been around March-April, around the course design.

Historically, the ANU have been very clear that the way they see the H-course for music being delivered—quite well structured and well regarded. They did not want to change the program design and configuration. But given the associated issues with funding, we have continued to work with them around what alternatives there could be, especially around the one-on-one tuition parts of that course. There is quite a heavy component around that one-on-one tuition that sits within the program. They have been looking at and reviewing what that composition could look like.

MRS KIKKERT: I thought that the one-on-one tuition was on site at ANU but apparently it is off site?

Mr Hawkins: It can take place at either location.

MRS KIKKERT: Is there an issue with finding coaches to come on site to teach and coach the students?

Mr Hawkins: Not that I am aware. There is only money to the ANU that I can speak about. Not that I am aware of.

MRS KIKKERT: I just thought maybe through your emails back and forth they would have mentioned it.

Mr Hawkins: No. The conversations have been more around—if you imagine the current cost composition of the way the ANU view the course, and I think there are various numbers but it was about a \$250,000 shortfall that they have spoken about—and part of our question and thinking would be around what this design is and what this course could be to support students to do this, what could a redesign of that look like that would still give that same enrichment opportunity but at not such a great cost to the territory. That is where the conversation with the ANU has been around: what could a redesigned, rescope, focused course look like?

MRS KIKKERT: Do you think that they would come back with a conclusion by the end of the year; by the end of October, November? I think people would like to know roughly when they can have an answer to this.

Mr Hawkins: Absolutely, yes. I think they should be coming back imminently to us on what that could look like. But, as I said, to date, today, they have been pretty clear that the course they would look to offer is the course they are currently delivering. And we have had that come at quite a senior level from the ANU, that confirmation. In the FOI documents that we have released that you would have had available to you it is very clear what they see the cost componentry of that course is. We are trying to reach out to say, “We would still like to have some offering for students,” and work through what that would be. And we would make the same offering to the ANU, to sit down with them at any time to continue those conversations.

Ms Brighton: I am sorry we cannot be more definitive but when ANU are in a

position to come back to us with a proposal then we will consider that and respond.

MR PARTON: I am trying to get my head around what has created the funding shortfall. The way it has been characterised here and in the submissions of Ms Berry and Ms Brighton is that there has not been a decision from ministers or the directorate to cut the H-course and that this is entirely an ANU decision. But I am trying to get my head around what has caused this funding shortfall. What has changed? And if anyone can help me to understand that I would find that beneficial.

Mr Ramsay: We can start. Over a number of years there have been conversations in relation to the arts funding, the community outreach funding that was going to the ANU for its community outreach program. In keeping with the government's arts policy and strategic framework there, the funding has been guided away from direct support in schools through to the broader community outreach and community engagement funding for the arts that Ms Tyler talked about earlier—those programs. That has been in conversations with the ANU for a number of years but the decision was made that the funding for that particular element of the arts funding would be into broader community outreach.

It had been, as I think Ms Brighton mentioned, historically used towards the H-course under the umbrella of the music for colleges program. But the guidance is more towards girls rock; girls jazz; community school of rock; my song; and the developing musicians program. That is at \$511,000 per year and that is still going towards the ANU for that element of the program. That is where the arts funding is going to be able to make sure that there is broader engagement with the arts; engagement with the arts across a wider range of people in the community, making sure that there is participation in and access to the arts. That is the first part of the story.

MR PARTON: Referring to the earlier set-up for that question, if there was a decision from government to discontinue funding of the H-course—it is from your directorate, Mr Ramsay—ultimately if we are making a decision to redirect funding into these programs it has to leave a hole somewhere. There must have been a clear anticipation that one of the consequences of this would be the discontinuation of the H-program?

Ms Tyler: The deeds of grant that the ACT government have with the ANU School of Music and School of Art and Design have been in place for a number of years. As part of our routine look at those deeds, when they were coming up for renegotiation, artsACT had a conversation with the ANU about opportunities to change the methodology by which they were offering programs to community for arts and music programs. And that conversation was around our policy objectives around participation and access but also our other funding guidelines that we have that arts funding is not used for school students during school hours.

The programs that we fund through the range of key arts organisations that we support are not offering programs during school hours to school students unless they are funded by the school itself. They offer after-school programs and things but those activities that are happening within the school are funded by the schools themselves.

MR PARTON: Is that in essence a retrospective decision that funding that had gone

from this area to the ANU, which had been used specifically for the H-course, was somehow wrong because it was offering tuition in school hours, that that was not what it was supposed to be used for?

Ms Tyler: The artsACT funding through the community outreach was for the music for colleges program, which was broader than just the H-course component.

Ms Berry: The H-course is not just a music program.

MR PARTON: I understand.

Ms Brighton: If I can, the territory has a deed of grant with ANU and we provide funding for them to offer an H-course program. And ANU did the work about what is the offering to school students in the ACT. The line of sight is this investment that the territory makes in that. The ANU also receives other funding—commonwealth supported places funding for students who participate in certain types of programs at ANU—and they would use that as part of their augmentation of funding in the sciences and in the languages domain. It is not dissimilar to that, ANU using funding sources to enable the totality of an offering.

MR PARTON: In relation to the discontinuation of the H-course, there is no question that it is based on a shift in funding. We have heard and I am sure you would have seen all the submissions and heard some of the evidence that has been given to this inquiry. Those in the space believe that this is going to trash the entire music ecosystem in the ACT. Are you going to sit here and tell me that they are overplaying that and that we are not sitting on the edge of disaster here?

Ms Berry: I do not think we are sitting on the edge of disaster but I think what we are in at the moment is a pause in our conversations with the ANU. We do not have a definitive answer to give you at the moment about what the ANU's intention is going forward with their H-course that is funded by the Education Directorate.

The problem, I guess for all of you and for us, is that we are still in these conversations with the ANU about what is going to happen now. We cannot tell you any more than that. The ANU have not provided us with some definitive information about what their plans are for the future of the H-course either. Maybe in a few months time, after this inquiry is finished, we will have finalised our conversations with the ANU.

MR PARTON: It is late in the day, though, is it not?

Ms Berry: It is late in the day but that has not been because the Education Directorate has not been prepared or, I would imagine, artsACT and the minister for arts as well being very open to a conversation with the ANU. Those meetings have occurred. Those letters have been exchanged. It is just part of a negotiation process. But the money is there. The H-course is being delivered. It is where the ANU now wants to put its priorities in that space. And I guess they are still figuring that out.

Mr Ramsay: And noting of course that there has been a change to the head of the School of Music in recent months as well. That has been an additional element

presumably from the ANU's side as to their capacity to make the decisions or to re-offer matters as well. That change was earlier this year, just a matter of months ago.

Mr Hawkins: Just to supplement Mr Ramsay's point on the money that we put in in terms of the H-course funding more broadly—the \$120,000, versus what the ANU would get from the commonwealth funding, which I think is to the tune of \$300,000-odd—we would have no visibility over how they configure and compile that funding to provide an H-course offering. That sits very clearly within the ANU's remit in terms of what they would look at, how they spend their money, how that is configured to the different colleges to support the current offerings of STEM and languages. This is why I think it is really important for us to be working with the ANU, because this gets into financial systems of how and where they would allocate funding to what services that sit within the ANU.

MR PARTON: Minister Berry, you have talked about priorities from the ANU in terms of the various H-courses that are delivered and that there is a priority decision that they have made here which, unless there is a late intervention, may lead to the end of the H-course for music.

Ms Berry: We have not heard that yet.

MR PARTON: What are we having this inquiry for?

Ms Berry: I do not know, but we have not heard that from the ANU through our conversations. That is the problem for us. We cannot be any clearer with you and the committee about the ANU's intentions because we do not know what they are. We are open and have been having conversations with them about what that could be.

MR PARTON: I hope that that this inquiry and this evidence being given now perhaps will quicken the process. Obviously those at the ANU are either watching now or reading this at a later date. I guess my question to you is—

Ms Berry: You can put that to the ANU, but we are open to conversations. Of course we have to work closely together. These are our kids across our city that we have to support.

MR PARTON: If you are saying it is a choice of priorities for the ANU, my question to you as education minister is: if they have to prioritise music at the top, what other H-courses would you suggest that they drop?

Ms Berry: That is not a question I could respond to for the ANU.

MR PARTON: But if there is a funding shortfall and they cannot fund all of them—

Ms Berry: That is a decision for the ANU.

MRS KIKKERT: Can I just clarify. Are the outreach music programs that you mentioned earlier funded by ANU?

Ms Tyler: They are funded from artsACT.

MRS KIKKERT: But that money is the money towards ANU? I am just trying to understand.

Ms Tyler: The funding that is provided for those community outreach programs—we provide funding to both the school of music and the school of art and design, and the funding goes to other community arts and outreach activities and capacity building programs across the arts sector—is not related to the H-course funding that the education directorate provides to the ANU.

MRS KIKKERT: I see. You just keep on bringing it up and I thought: what is the connection there? I suppose it is just music.

THE CHAIR: In terms of a student doing the H-course, how much more is involved with the music for colleges program? What separates the two? I am assuming that one is a subset of the other?

Ms Tyler: I do not have the detail of what part of that program is H-course and what part is music for colleges. That has not been clear to us in terms of how that reporting has taken place. My understanding is that the music for colleges component is the ensemble work, the work with other students, tertiary students, within the school of music. Some of the one-on-one tuition, I believe, is part of the music for colleges program as well. And then there are components of the H-course, accredited components, that are part of the H-course, not music for colleges.

Ms Berry: Chair, things have not finished; there are still pathways and programs that students in ACT public schools access to get them on their music journey, whether that is through H-course or some other pathway. Music has not stopped. This is not *Footloose*. We are still working on supporting young people to access music in all the different ways that are possible.

MR PARTON: “We are holding out for a hero,” is all I can say.

Ms Berry: Perhaps.

Ms Brighton: Chair, as the minister has said, with the pathways, students can, as I said before, undertake a tertiary level music program in colleges which would contribute to their ATAR if they want to go to university, or they could do an accredited package. Those students who do an accredited package might look at specialist music colleges like institutes of technology, not dissimilar to CIT. Students who are doing tertiary packages can still go on to do music at university level.

Many other jurisdictions do not offer extension programs with their local universities as happens here in the ACT. Some do. But our students here in Canberra who do a tertiary package are still very eligible to apply to do university at the Sydney con or the Queensland con, and explore a musical career based on what they have done in their year 11 and 12 studies.

THE CHAIR: I guess the crux of it is that getting into those schools is very hard and the pathway that many people have followed is going through the H-course, which

provides them with that level of support, that experience at that level, which has facilitated them to get into those prestigious schools. One of the concerns that is raised with us is that by limiting that pathway they do not have access to the same very experienced professionals who would better assist them in getting into those schools.

Ms Brighton: I really appreciate the concerns that previous participants or families may have, but there are students who can go on to do tertiary level at the cons in Sydney, Melbourne and Queensland, or even our own school of music, who would not have been through the H-course. They can still go on. The key thing will be that they have done a tertiary package that gets them in and they have done music as part of that tertiary package.

THE CHAIR: But in terms of the tertiary package that gets them in, getting into those schools is often not so much about one's academic rank, their ATAR score; it is mainly about their audition.

Ms Brighton: Yes. What a tertiary package and accredited package looks like in the ACT is that students participate in a theoretical body of learning as part of music but they are also individuals and part of ensembles in schools. In a number of our colleges, their ensembles would be as part of their learning; they will be participating in festivals and events to complete learning that is consistent with the BSSS—Board of Senior Secondary Studies—requirements where students are able to demonstrate a capability in both performance and theoretical knowledge.

MS KIKKERT: Who is teaching them that? Is it just a music teacher?

Ms Brighton: Music teachers.

MS KIKKERT: We have often heard that the difference is that the students who do the H-courses are being taught the theories and the history by professional musicians. It is quite different from what they are learning in high school; very different for many of them. They have also said you have been misinformed. I have to say that.

Ms Brighton: Sorry, I missed that last bit.

MS KIKKERT: They also mentioned that you have been misinformed in suggesting that there are alternative ways for kids to get into university. That H-course is the right way for them, and you actually provide a better way for them.

Mr Ramsay: Can I just make a personal observation. I have been involved with different parts of music and alongside people who have done the H-course—or, as it was previous called, type 1—and people who have not. I am aware of people who have ended up at the school of music, the Sydney conservatorium or WAAPA, some of whom did the H-course or type 1 and some of whom did not. I think it is overstating it to say that the H-course is the right way in or has been the right way in; there have been a number of pathways in, and there are still. As I say, I am personally aware of a number of people who have taken on tertiary education in music or performing arts who did not participate in the H-course.

MR PARTON: But you would have to concede that the H-course has been a

significant pathway. And I am assuming that one or other minister would concede that when you consider the cost of the course, it was quite small and had significant bang for buck in terms of those high performing students. Is that a fair assessment of it or not? Obviously not, because decisions have been made to redirect funding.

Ms Berry: Following the pathways of students who have participated in either the H-course or some other tertiary or accredited package to follow their music passion, in our submission we refer to the numbers of participants in the H-course and the number of students who actually went on to do music at ANU being very small. It was fewer than 10; nine maybe.

Mr Hawkins: It was six to nine, Minister, against the cohort of 30.

MS KIKKERT: Thirty per year?

Mr Hawkins: Yes: 30 in 11 and 30 in 12. Of those that go from 12, six to nine will go on to the ANU.

THE CHAIR: To the ANU, or to other musical institutions as well?

Mr Hawkins: To the ANU.

Ms Brighton: The information available for the territory was to the ANU. The ANU in its submission to the inquiry has outlined that, say, in 2018 there were 28 students and 13 went on to study music at a tertiary level in Australia. Twelve of those went to ANU and one went to another university. Our line of sight is only on those who have gone on to ANU. Their submission outlines two other jurisdictions.

Ms Berry: I am just trying to get the numbers of students. Then you can make the assessment of how many were H-course participants, and then the rest and where they came from.

Ms Brighton: Roughly, participating in the music H-course there are 60 per year: 30 in the year 11 cohort and 30 in the year 12 cohort. That was an average across the years. In 2018, 13 went on to tertiary studies. In prior years it has been as low as eight and as high as 16.

THE CHAIR: How many people apply to get into the H-course? There are 30 spots per year. I am assuming that there are more than 30 kids who would be interested in doing it in any given year.

Ms Tyler: My understanding is that it is an audition process. Students have to apply and audition—

THE CHAIR: Do you know how many people are auditioning?

Ms Tyler: I do not.

THE CHAIR: Do you want to take that on notice? That would be very useful.

Mr Ramsay: That may be more of a question for the ANU. If you have got the ANU at a hearing, knowing how many auditions there are for an ANU course would probably be a question better placed to them.

THE CHAIR: That is a fair call. There was mention previously of the differences in music education provided at our colleges. You mentioned that some baseline courses are offered in each college. Is there any variation in those courses, potentially different programs or ways that those courses are taught at our colleges?

Ms Brighton: There would be variation. Often that will depend on the cohort of students and the interests that they have. Across all the colleges, every course that is offered is BSSS accredited. Lake Ginninderra, say, have, I think, eight or nine different units that they run on a cycle. Those units run based on the packages the students are applying for and the interests the students have. That would include ensembles, individual tuition and classical music. Lake Ginninderra are looking at house and techno type music as well, as part of their package.

MR PARTON: I love the sound of the girls rock, girls jazz and community school of rock programs. I think they sound absolutely awesome, but in terms of what this inquiry is about I do not know that they are central to where we are moving. The fact that it is linked to a shift in funding preferences for the government is why we are talking about those. Can I—

Mr Ramsay: It is probably more accurate to say that it is linked to a clarification in the intention of the community outreach program, which has been the funding source that has been used for the H-courses. The intention of the community outreach program has always been to maximise the broader involvement of members of the community in access to and participation in the arts. That has always been its intention.

MR PARTON: So what you are saying is that that money should have been redirected, should never have been spent on the H-course?

Mr Ramsay: The government has been working with the ANU for a number of years now to make sure that the clarification of that funding has been applied and that the community outreach program supports members of the broader community to access music and also the visual arts in a number of organisations. The ANU is one of the recipients of that. Even within the ANU, part of it is to the school of music and part of it is to the school of art and design. There is also money through the community outreach program that goes to other organisations as well.

It has always been trying to make sure that broad participation is possible, that broad access is possible and that people have the chance to develop their artistic skills and access the resources of the ANU and other organisations themselves. There have been, over a number of iterations of the deed of grant, conversations with the ANU and with other organisations about how to ensure that the purpose of that funding is lived out in accordance with the broader context that we are in in the ACT.

MR PARTON: Interestingly, though, talking about community outreach, you would have heard the prophecies of doom from those who are suggesting that if the H-course

is discontinued we are going to eventually see fewer qualified people on the ground here in the ACT to undertake the sort of work which is included in that community outreach program. Are you concerned about those prophecies and those suggestions from people that what we are doing is trashing the model and trashing the pathway which eventually fosters greater community outreach just through the churning out of those qualified teachers?

Mr Ramsay: It is fair to say that the government has a very strong commitment not only to the ANU through the school of music and the school of art and design but also a very strong commitment to the arts, including music as part of the broader suite of the arts right across the ACT. This year's budget has \$10.6 million in investment in the arts. That is the largest investment that has ever been made in this area. That includes music, visual arts, dramatic arts and capacity-building for artists. What we have been doing is continuing to grow the pool of funding and also the breadth of access to the arts, including the breadth of access to music.

Programs such as the Developing Musicians program are another one of the ways of ensuring that there is good access to the development of people's musical skills. It not only develops particular artistic skills but also develops the brain in different ways. There are great things around involvement with that. But there is also the funding of MusicACT for capacity-building this year. A whole range of things is going on. I understand the purpose of the terms of reference of this particular inquiry, but seeing it in isolation from the broader work the government is doing across arts, including music, across capacity-building and across areas of education, is potentially focusing too closely on one aspect without seeing the overall ongoing development of musicians here.

MR PARTON: I know about your passion for music and music performance. Minister, you must have some concerns that these funding decisions from government will potentially lead to the end of this pathway for the high-performing students at college level, because it appears very clear that that will be the case. Doesn't that concern you?

Mr Ramsay: I understand that people who have been involved in the H-course and its predecessor courses for some time express, from their perspective, their concerns from their experience. Government has to look at what is appropriate in terms of funding and development of the arts, as well as the development of education. It is about where we are now, not necessarily where we have been in the past. We will continue to invest in the arts and in music, investing right across the area of the arts. That is what the government will continue to do in education as well. We will continue to work with the ANU, as Ms Brighton mentioned, to see what it is that can be picked up and developed into the future.

MR PARTON: If those 60 high-performing college students are just lost to music because they do not have this pathway, you are not concerned about that?

Mr Ramsay: I do not agree with the premise of the question. I do not agree that people will be lost to music or music development. At the same time it is also too early to say what is happening with the H-course because, as has been mentioned a number of times today, we are still awaiting the next round of communication from

the ANU. Let me reiterate that the conversations with the ANU around this particular deed started in December 2016. It is not something that has sprung from any late decisions. There have been a lot of conversations, and those conversations are continuing.

MR PARTON: How would you describe the mood of those conversations?

Ms Berry: Mr Hawkins has been involved in those conversations with the ANU.

Mr Hawkins: Yes. The last conversation I had with them, in March-April, was positive. I think there has been a shift in some of the individuals within the ANU. Certainly, the conversation I had with the dean there was supportive, and they were keen to continue a dialogue with us.

Ms Berry: Mr Parton, there were a couple of things that you touched on in your questions around the workforce, and concerns about the workforce in music. There is a national piece of work identifying workforce capacity within education. I refer to the changes that the government is making to the Teacher Quality Institute's responsibilities under the Education Act, around how we identify workforce capacity in the ACT and the different kinds of skills that are required to deliver classes. This includes languages but it would also include music instruction. That is a piece of the puzzle, and you need to bear in mind that there is work nationally going on about the teaching workforce in those spaces. I caught a little bit of Dr Fisher's presentation earlier, when she was—

MR PARTON: She was passionate.

Ms Berry: Very passionate, and I know that she has done work in the community around music programs, in her role with the Canberra Symphony Orchestra. I was also interested in how she spoke about music being not just open to those who are gifted but that others should be able to have an opportunity. The community outreach program is designed to do that. I agree with her in that space. Music can start at any time in your life. For kids who might not have had the chance earlier, and who want to get another chance through that community outreach program, or through the work that she does in the community in her role with the orchestra—

MR PARTON: They sound great. What I hear is a concern that this would become one of only two jurisdictions, in terms of large cities in Australia, where high-performing students who wish to follow a pathway into serious music study at a tertiary level do not have a clear pathway. Every other major city would have that, and we would not.

Ms Berry: Going back to our submission, and to what we have already spoken with you about today—I know it is frustrating because we do not have a complete answer for the committee—I know that there has been chatter over a number of years about what the ANU will do around their music school more generally, beyond the H-courses. I think everybody could agree that that would be a shame, that there is a great connection in the ACT community with the ANU music school, and that would be a disappointing outcome for all of us. But that is not a decision that the ACT government can make on behalf of the ANU. We would continue to work with

them on the programs that we have delivered with them, in partnership, through the H-course funding. We would like to see that continue. We would like to give those kids and those families the chance to participate in those programs, and that is why we have continued the funding and will continue to have—

MRS KIKKERT: That is what we have heard before. Friends of the School of Music were concerned that we give a lot of attention to students who are very much focused on maths and science; we offer them H-courses and we give them a pathway from year 10, year 11 and year 12, straight into university. They do high-level, top mathematics classes in university, and that is really good. They would not get into that level of uni studies if they had not done the H-courses in college, in years 11 and 12.

What they are getting at is equality. For all of these gifted students in college, there are programs offered to these talented engineering minds in college, but there are talented musical minds in college, and they do not want to have that disadvantage of not having that high quality in university if they do not get the H-course. It is about equality around the high achievers in college.

Ms Berry: The ANU have also wanted to make sure that students and young people who have lower ATARs do get access to that kind of university education as well, which is great, so that nobody misses out and their ATAR is not a barrier to an aspiration for a university education, if that is what they choose to do.

Ms Brighton: ANU have made changes to their admissions process for that very reason of being able to make sure that students, regardless of circumstances, have access to university-level studies. As the minister said, they have different pathways that they have implemented.

I would like to bring us back to the fact that participation in an H-course is just one component of a student's year 12 studies. Overall there are about 400 students in the ACT who participate in the H-course program, and that is 400 students across years 11 and 12. Any student who has a tertiary package as part of their year 11 and 12 studies can apply for a university. Even students who do not have a package like that can apply through alternative streams, if they want to go on to study at university. With your participation in an H-course, be it engineering, maths or music, it is not a predeterminer; it is not about saying that you can only go on to study those things at university if you have participated in the H-course.

MS KIKKERT: No, it is not. That is not what they are suggesting at all.

Ms Brighton: I wanted to make sure that that was clear.

MS KIKKERT: They completely understand that. It is about the preparation for uni life.

Ms Brighton: Yes. It does demonstrate that you are capable of working at that level, but there are thousands of students who go on each year to our university sectors who have not had that opportunity to take a university-level course as part of their final years of study.

MS KIKKERT: We get that.

THE CHAIR: It is a very rudimentary question: with these negotiations with the ANU about the future of the H-course, what is it that you are hoping to achieve?

Ms Berry: Hopefully, an agreeable outcome that supports the continuation of the H-course. We are in there; we have not removed ourselves from that funding, and we will continue the conversations with the ANU. At the end of the day, it is a decision of the ANU about what courses they want to deliver.

MS KIKKERT: Are they asking for an increase in funding?

THE CHAIR: I have a one quick supplementary on that. What is plan B if the ANU does not come back with a suitable H-course or an H-course at all?

Ms Berry: I guess we go back to what we were already delivering in schools. I guess we have a look at the relationships with other—

Ms Brighton: We would have a look at what the demand is, what students are after, what needs to happen in terms of our college offerings that students might identify. Is there a gap that students or families are identifying and what might we need to do to attend to that gap? Given the breadth of music offerings, from baroque all the way through to contemporary techno, there is range of opportunities for students. So we would look at the gap and have conversations with the Board of Senior Secondary Studies. Given the level of accreditation that is already there for our program, it may well be just an extension into different colleges as well.

Ms Berry: But that is a bit of a hypothetical, really. I think all of us, including the ANU, are keen to continue on with the delivery of the H-course. It is just what parts of the H-course the ANU wants to prioritise. That is the part where we are still talking with the ANU.

THE CHAIR: Yes, I do understand that. But I think that asking the hypothetical is actually quite important, because we are hanging our hats on ongoing negotiations which may or may not be fruitful. So I think it is important to consider what the alternative is.

MS KIKKERT: Is the ANU asking for an increase in funding during the conversations that you are having with them?

Mr Hawkins: No, there is a level of funding that they would say it costs to run the current program in its current configuration. Our question is: what changes could we make to that configuration and what would the impact be on funding?

MS KIKKERT: Are their suggestions or their recommendations about how much it will cost to run that program reasonable for you?

Mr Hawkins: They have given us some estimations. You will see in the documents that have been released through FOI that their request is somewhere in the region of \$250,000 to \$270,000. Just to put that in perspective, it costs us \$120,000 a year at the

moment for all of our H-courses for 400 kids. The \$120,000 used to include music. The ANU are currently asking for \$250,000 to \$270,000 for just the H-course music component part—

MS KIKKERT: What is their cost—

Mr Hawkins: and they are suggesting that is the differential.

MR PARTON: It must be said—you mentioned it earlier—that there are various funding streams, are there not?

Mr Hawkins: You are correct. From a directorate perspective there are various sources of funding that ANU have got. They get the \$120,000 from us. They get money from the commonwealth. We have no visibility over how they pull that configuration together. But they are saying to us through their communication that they think the funding shortfall is around about \$250,000 to \$270,000.

MR PARTON: But that funding shortfall is not originating from your directorate, is it?

Mr Hawkins: Sorry, I should be clear. They are not asking for that amount. In their communication they have put in what they perceive the shortfall in funding to be.

MR PARTON: Yes, but that shortfall is not from your directorate, is it? It is from—

Mr Hawkins: No. No, it is not us, either. It is within the ANU's funding envelope. So we have no visibility over how ANU spends its budget. Historically, there has been arts money going in; there is commonwealth money going in; there is directorate money going in in terms of the H-course. All that money flows in. There is no visibility we would have over how the ANU configure that funding and how they deliver a service.

That service historically has included music. They are saying that they cannot deliver that music component now. So we will have conversations with them but I have no visibility over the configuration of how ANU configures their budget and financially what decisions they need to make as an entity to ensure that they remain a kind of viable provider of services.

THE CHAIR: Will that ever change, though? Inherently, if we are giving them a deed of money and we have no oversight, the formation of the course does not change the fundamental program. We do not have oversight of how they spend it. Is that correct?

Ms Berry: I guess that is what we are trying to work through with them. We are saying, "Here is the funding envelope that we have provided to fund the H-courses for 400 students over the years." We are working with them. We are working with the ANU about how that program is delivered. That is where the conversation is at at the moment. How are we going to do that? I guess that the ANU will come back to us and we will work through how that will be delivered.

But at the end of the day, as we have been saying all the way through this, the ANU will decide which courses they want to prioritise and deliver and the funding sources that they use to deliver those programs. Our contribution has always been from the Education Directorate, the \$120,000 delivering the H-courses in the ANU.

MS KIKKERT: So in respect of the \$120,000 and their shortfall of \$250,000, would you consider that a lot of money? Considering that they are offering services to our Canberra students, do you think that \$250,000 is a lot of money that they are actually asking for? I mean, we just spend \$400,000 on the street party. You would think that education is far more important than a street party. Do you think that \$250,000 is really not that much that the ACT government can actually give them?

Ms Berry: No, just to clarify, in the conversations as I understand them that have been happening between the Education Directorate and the ANU, it is not suggesting that the ACT government fund the cost of those programs, which they say is their calculation of the cost of the music program.

Mr Hawkins: Correct.

Ms Berry: Our funding has always been for the delivery of the H-courses; 400 students across all the H-courses. That has not changed. Now, the ANU is working on how they are going to deliver those courses and whether or not that is a priority for them. We are working with them on ideas about how those courses could be delivered differently. This is the kind of conversation we are having with the ANU. That is where it sits at the moment. That is it. It is not about them asking us for more money. It is about them suggesting that this is how much it costs the ANU—

MS KIKKERT: That is why there is a pause, because there is a shortfall of money.

Ms Berry: Well, no. That is not the conversation that is being had with the ANU. It is about how we deliver the H-courses. That is it.

MS KIKKERT: With the right amount of money.

Ms Berry: The ANU gets funding from a whole lot of different places. The ACT is not the primary funder of the Australian National University.

MS KIKKERT: No, I get that but would you—

Ms Berry: We fund \$120,000 a year for 400 students to do H-courses. That is it.

MS KIKKERT: I get that, yes.

THE CHAIR: The time being 12 o'clock, I am sorry but I am going to have to jump in. On behalf of the committee, I would like to thank everyone for appearing today. The secretary will provide you with a copy of today's proof transcript when it is available. If witnesses have taken any questions on notice, please give those answers to the committee secretary as soon as possible.

The committee adjourned at 11.59 am.