

To whom it may concern

RE: ENSURE INCLUSION OF ADEQUATE MUSIC, PERFORMANCE, CREATIVE ARTS & LANGUAGE FACILITIES FOR NEW BUNGENDORE HIGH SCHOOL - on behalf of the Bungendore Youth Orchestra.

The Bungendore community requires a capable, innovative and well-resourced High School to cater for estimated growth into the future. To ensure a new High School development remains fit for purpose for the community it educates and serves, we seek assurances that adequate facilities are planned and built for music, performance and the creative arts (including languages).

It would be a wasted opportunity, and to the detriment of Bungendore's young people and community, if such facilities are not factored into the new Bungendore High School, particularly given the current interest and growing demand for music, performance and creative arts tuition in Bungendore. Adequate international language facilities (teachers and resources) should also be included to ensure compliance with NSW curriculum, distinguish Bungendore High School from neighbouring towns, and to provide our young people with life skills that broaden their skills, minds and opportunities to be well-rounded, and well-educated, global citizens.

I write this submission on behalf of the local Bungendore Youth Orchestra (BYO). BYO provides opportunities for musical tuition, creativity and personal development for young people in the Bungendore community and surrounds.

BYO has been operating for several years, directed by professional music teachers, with the support of a volunteer committee and local community patrons. BYO has grown to over 20 young players (aged 6 – 15 years on violin, viola and cello) and has played at numerous local community events including the Spring Ball, The Southern Harvest Festival, St Mary's Spring Fair, Majors Creek Folk Festival, The National Press Club (Canberra), along with other local performances and fundraising events, including for former Deputy NSW Premier at events regarding the announcement of the Bungendore High School. BYO players also represented Bungendore at the NSW Education Department Music Showcase at the Sydney Opera House and the District Arts Festival (Canberra).

Need for adequate facilities

There are limited public facilities to cater for the sporting and cultural needs of the growing Bungendore community. The only public venues used for creative and performing arts are the Memorial Hall, Bungendore Public School Multi-Purpose Hall and School of Arts. Whilst charming and of important historic significance (Memorial Hall and School of Arts in particular), all are old and have inadequate facilities. The Memorial Hall has an old stage, but does not contain backstage facilities, sound system, stage lighting or adequate seating. The Bungendore Public School Multi-Purpose Hall is as the title suggests, a multi-purpose hall, used for a range of school activities, concerts, sport, and public events like the Spring Fair. The multi-purpose school hall does not contain adequate backstage facilities, sound system, stage lighting or adequate seating. The School of Arts is the only venue regularly used for music lessons and creative endeavour (such as BYO rehearsals, choir, art classes, yoga class, meditation). This venue is small and does not contain a stage or other performance facilities (as listed above). The local dance school seeks alternate performance venues (in Canberra and Queanbeyan), as Bungendore does not have adequate performance facilities. A new High School is the perfect opportunity to build new, purpose-built facilities to support quality music and creative arts education programs (similar to those found in Canberra and Sydney high schools) that will also cater for the growing interests and needs of Bungendore's youth and the broader community.

Facilities required-sought:

- A large, well-resourced performance hall/stage with reasonable acoustics;
- Modern stage lighting and sound system capability;
- Backstage facilities (dressing rooms, toilets);
- Small number of music practice rooms (with piano and ideally sound proofed); and
- Multi-purpose creative arts rooms/facilities (for dance/movement, drama, languages, visual arts and innovation activities).

Such facilities would be used by the school and students; for school assemblies, productions and concerts; before, during and after school tuition; individual lessons during class time (by endorsed external teachers), for combined school activities, subjects, workshops and holiday camps, for hire by the Bungendore community and external organisations (for art classes, language classes, dance, music or orchestral events, choir, public meetings, lectures, adult education opportunities, dance concerts, gymnastics, physical fitness classes, other sporting activities).

Increasing need for space

There are increasingly issues with availability of public spaces for community activities in Bungendore. The School of Arts is already close to capacity (music teachers often have to juggle or find alternate spaces each month due to double bookings). Further, the local dance school, which is large and currently at capacity, goes to Queanbeyan and Canberra for performances due to limited facilities in Bungendore for larger scale events. As the Bungendore community grows, particularly with high school students and teenagers seeking during and after school in Bungendore, we will outgrow existing facilities. This issue will become increasingly problematic. More adequate, affordable and properly resourced venues for music, performance, creative arts and other activities will be required.

Leveraging and Resource Sharing across High-Schools

There is an opportunity here to think creatively with the strategic sharing of resources across regional NSW public schools into the future. If Braidwood already provides a dedicated agriculture-agri-tech program, could Bungendore students join this program on a weekly or fortnightly basis? Could off-site excursions and learning opportunities (say at functioning farms) be possible? Or can we leverage the work in particular subject areas that each respective High school delivers, so that subjects are not duplicated but a diversity of subjects are available across Bungendore, Braidwood and Queanbeyan High Schools? Taking this example, could Bungendore specialise in the creative arts, languages and/or new technologies? This would create opportunities to share teaching expertise and provide tuition across a good range of subjects that future students will be seeking and requiring.

The benefits:

New, good quality music, performance and multi-purpose creative arts facilities at the New Bungendore High School will be an invaluable asset, not only for school students but for the entire community (which could utilise these after hours). Further, such new resources and facilities will free up existing spaces for use in Bungendore.

The benefits of a creative, and in particular, a musical education, are well researched and documented. *'Trained musicians are less easily distracted than non-musicians when performing*

demanding tasks', researchers from the Centre for Advanced Research in Education (University of Chile) have found.

In the words of legendary Australian conductor, teacher and music education advocate, Richard James Gill AO,

'Music education does not just make children more musical; it unleashes their creative powers... We learn music because it stimulates creativity at a very high level. Australia has never been in greater need of creative minds... A truly educated mind has had music as part of its education. Every child in this country should have an opportunity to have a truly educated mind.' Richard Gill, Limelight.

Gill was a well-known advocate for the importance of music, arts and physical education for all children. The new music-based, *Richard Gill National Music Academy* school in Muswellbrook New South Wales has a school curriculum based around music, physical activity and the STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering and mathematics), making it a STEAM-based school (science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics). Students are drawn from the general community and music is seen as a part of the core curriculum for all students, not just those students exhibiting a gift in the area of music.

Would it be possible to take a little from this example? Not plan for a school that provides only the basics, but strives to provide something innovative, different, important, engaging, and transforming. A school for which people will move to Bungendore for their children to attend.

We have an opportunity to think out of the box and create something special in Bungendore, that will be future ready for our children. As the community grows, which there is no doubt – it will, we will require more high quality and innovative before, during and after school activities, particularly to cater for the larger proportion of teenagers remaining in Bungendore that will be looking for music, performance, creative arts, STEM and sporting/physical activities here in Bungendore. **This is a growth opportunity for a range of educators and businesses!** There are also many parents and young adults in the Bungendore community with skills and talents that could be utilised for after school tuition and support.

Let's give our kids the opportunity to receive a world-class education. We have the ability to provide Bungendore's young people with the skills and confidence to walk their own paths, find and create meaningful careers and work. For this, a local High School with the right fit-for-purpose facilities and teachers are essential.

Your sincerely

Nicole Murphy

Bungendore Youth Orchestra