

To Chris Cook, Sharyn O'Neill and Robert Player,

We, the undersigned music teachers with the Department of Education and Training, are writing to express our concern over the proposed implementation of the Music Course of Study in 2008.

We believe strongly that the course implementation should be delayed until 2009, and that the Department of Education and Training needs to represent our concerns to the Curriculum Council.

The delay is more than justified on the basis of the documents presented at recent Curriculum Council "Awareness Days", in that they show a course which has unresolved problems: in course structure, unit content and assessment practice. The course has been completely rewritten since PD day 3 and will leave teachers with inadequate preparation time if the Course is implemented in 2008.

We wish to draw attention to the following:

- The 2007 Course is based on wholly different outcomes to the 2006 version.
- The Units of study in the 2007 course are completely different to the 2006 course – any teacher who has begun organising their materials along those lines will need to start again.
- PD delivered to teachers by the Curriculum Council in 2006 can in no way be considered preparation for this new course.
- The rewritten outcomes have new implications for assessment in 'Performing' that are neither current practice in schools, nor were suggested in the 2006 course documents.
- The sample exam uses types of student responses and assessment that have not been used at this level in Western Australian Schools, namely the use of graphic notation, charts and storyboards in the aural perception part of the paper. Teachers in WA have not had training in these techniques, and have had no PD in making fair and valid judgements in assessing them.
- We have deep concerns as to how these parallel assessment options are comparable. Sufficient research needs to be carried out to

measure the comparability of the “staff-readers” and “non-staff readers” assessment papers, and teachers need time to be trained in making these comparisons.

- These new types of assessment have not been trialled in Western Australian schools. The 2006 version of the course was trialled here, but the results of this trial, and the provided work samples are of little use in the context of the new 2007 course, because it is completely different.
- Based on attendances at the (non-compulsory) Curriculum Council Awareness Sessions, most DET music teachers have not seen the new course, as it has yet to be presented officially. This will occur on the 1st of June.
- There will only be 2 days of PD on this new course possible before the timetabled implementation in 2008 is adhered to. This is inadequate for any course, let alone with one which so radically departs from current practice in schools.
- Prospective students will be making their Course selections shortly after this date, and cannot be properly counselled in their choices by music teachers.

We believe that any of these points is sufficient to ask for a delaying the course, but in total they create a compelling set of reasons for postponing implementation until 2009.

In that time, the most controversial aspects of assessment can either be resolved by proven research, trial and professional development of teaching staff, or the course can be split into two discrete and soundly constructed Courses of Study.

In either case, and in the interests of Western Australian Music students, more time is needed.