Just for interest…

With the new coalition government in Sussex Street, the Department of Education and Training - DET - has rebranded itself as DEC – the Department of Education and Communities. The Con received no formal explanation of the reasons for the change of name or what the implications may be for Regional Conservatoriums. However, for the past few years DEC has increased its focus on collecting data on our involvement in the community broadly and in particular on our engagement in delivering music education in schools.

Music is everywhere today except in many of our primary schools…

DEC wants us to be involved more in music in schools! We have very successful music programs running at Bangalow and Bexhill Public Schools, and Byron Bay Community School. Albert Park Public has engaged us to run hip-hop classes.

Music lessons in school hours?

If you are finding it a challenge fitting your child’s music lesson in at the Con after school - why not encourage your school to explore getting our instrumental teachers to teach music during school hours?

Some Principals, teachers and parents are fearful that children may miss half a class or a work sheet but the research on how children benefit is now well established and uncontested.

Here are 5 major benefits:

1. Playing A Musical Instrument Makes You Smarter
Many studies suggest that children who play an instrument, do better in school than those who don’t, have a higher reading age and improved learning capabilities in all subject areas.

2. It Teaches Discipline
Learning to play an instrument is like learning to speak another language - and it can be challenging at times. You have to be disciplined in order to master playing your instrument. You have to set time each day to practice, practice and practice some more.

3. Playing A Musical Instrument Doubles the Fun
Sure it can be a lot of hard work but there is no denying playing an instrument is fun. Once you get better at it, opportunities arise for you to share with your family and friends. It’s even more fun to play with others and you also learn about cooperation.

4. It Gives a Sense of Achievement
Whether you’re a beginner or learning to play a brand new piece, it can be frustrating. But once you’ve mastered it, the satisfaction you’ll feel is not only priceless, you will have achieved another goal and that is certainly something to be proud of.

5. Playing A Musical Instrument Relieves Stress
We all have days when we are stressed and just want to get away from it all. Have you ever noticed that listening to music can make you feel more relaxed? Playing an instrument can do that and more.

1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5 = Powerful Pleasure…

Music is one of life’s simple joys; it helps both train and calm the mind. Playing a musical instrument opens up a lot of good possibilities that will surely enrich both your child’s and your life…

What’s New?

Apart from Imogen Wolf and Andy Downer’s baby, Lilybel? (see inside)
Music Department News

Video-conferencing equipment... DEC is supplying Regional Conservatoriums with state-of-the-art video-conferencing equipment. Ours has arrived in about 17 different boxes and will be assembled by mid-August. All public schools have similar equipment and it means that we will be able to deliver one-to-one lessons or group lessons to remote schools with ADSL Internet access. It will also enable us to access instrumental teachers from other Regional Conservatoriums if we cannot provide a teacher here on site.

We will also be able to gain access to master classes and special lectures for our Certificate and Diploma students - such as those offered by the partnership between The Australian National University Music School and the Manhattan Music School in New York.

EFTPOS facility... Need further proof that the Con is entering the Internet age – we have finally got an EFTPOS machine to facilitate the payment of fees. Hurrah!

Janis Balodis
Director

Semester 1 ended with a flurry of activity as students frantically finished their assessments and prepared for their performance exams (Diploma students) and creative ensemble performances (Certificate IV and Diploma). The Ensemble night was a great evening with some fine performances and memorable original songs being performed.

Semester 2 will see a number of real world projects being undertaken by the students. In the creative ensembles, the Certificate IV students will continue to write and rehearse their own songs and pick the best to record in September. The Diploma students will engineer these recordings and hone their production skills in editing and mixing. As part of the music business component of the course, all the ensembles will produce a media package intended to promote and market their group that includes a website, album artwork, band photo and electronic press kit. The Diploma students will also be organizing a major end of year performance for all the creative ensembles that will be a great showcase for the intense collaborative efforts undertaken this year.

Students will also be undertaking studies in music theory, multimedia, composition and arranging and continue on their individual instruments or vocals with Anita Bellman taking over Imogen’s vocal students this semester. We are very pleased to welcome some new staff this semester: Ben Blay will be teaching project management to the Diploma students, and Gyan will be taking the Certificate IV students for songwriting classes.

Auditions for the 2012 course will soon be happening so keep an eye out for the application dates.

Matt Hill
Acting Head of Music

Pulse Cafe

Anita Bellman and Jill Aitken attended the graduation ceremony for Jackson Morrow and Kayrenia Kelly at Pulse Cafe on Friday August 5th.

Jackson and Kayrenia are the first graduates of the Community in the Kitchen program run by the YWCA, which aims to place disadvantaged or at-risk young people into training in the hospitality industry. They have completed the Certificate II in Hospitality at Wollongbar TAFE and have found full-time work as cooks at Pulse, where they did the work experience module of their training.

Pulse is on the ground floor of the Conservatorium and serves delicious, inexpensive food from Tuesday to Friday, it is a popular cafe for our students and the general public.

Imogen and Andy recently welcomed the arrival of Lilybel Aasta born on July 12th, 2011 at 6.22pm.
The inaugural Hallelujah Choralfest was held in Bangalow on a blustery day in late May. The chill outside was more than made up for by the warmth spilling from the four venues filled with the sounds of people singing together throughout the day.

As a local community choir director and music teacher, I was delighted that the Northern Rivers Conservatorium and the Bangalow Chamber of Commerce recognised the local popularity of choral activities, and therefore the potential for an event such as this one to be a success. Their confidence was well founded, with a great turnout for both the morning workshops and the afternoon concerts.

There were four workshops in the morning run by three local choir directors (Simon Chate, Peter Lehner and me), and two guest directors (Brian Martin and Rosemary Saunders) invited to Bangalow for the event. We were able to offer a good variety of workshop experiences, from learning songs in different genres from African to pop to more traditional choral styles, as well as a vocal technique workshop. These workshops were attended by 123 people all up, a great turnout. This underlines the enthusiasm and commitment of community choristers and their support networks.

There was a quick rehearsal in the middle of the day for the big sing finale event, ably led by Brian Martin who came down from the Sunshine Coast to coordinate the finale (and to run a workshop with me). Then the afternoon concerts began in three venues around the centre of Bangalow. These were also well attended, with good numbers at each venue throughout. The only complaint I heard was that with three concerts on at the same time, audience members (and choir members) couldn’t see everyone!

The day ended with the finale event in the A&I Hall. Brian opened the show with an improvised vocal piece, the choir directors sang a couple of songs as an ensemble, and then 150 people gathered at the front of the stage to sing the two pieces we’d rehearsed earlier in the day. It was a rousing way to end what had been an action packed but relaxed day.

The event provided the local choral community with an opportunity to network, showcase their activities, learn some new skills and to connect with the broader community.

I had many people contact me afterwards to say what a wonderful day it was. There was a real sense of warmth and community around the whole event, which is indeed what community choirs generate and why so many people gather to sing together each week. Bangalow is a perfect town to host such an event, as it is reasonably central in the region and has a great range of suitable venues close together. I had some new members join my choir as a result of the day, and I’m sure mine wasn’t the only choir to benefit from the exposure the Choralfest provided.

I look forward to a bigger and better event next year.

Imogen Wolf
Choral Director, Choir Baby

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Imogen Wolf
Choral Director, Choir Baby
The Community Studies Department has been chugging along very merrily thus far in 2011. A revised, slim-line edition of our practice diary is now in use and the reports from teachers and students are mostly favourable. Some students in particular are taking great pride in logging their practice times and personalizing their diaries with stickers and drawings. We have executed three successful concerts this year during terms 1, 2 and most recently at our Open Day.

Congratulations to all the staff and students who contributed to our Open Day and Cushion CONcert on August 6th – it really was a fantastic day. The weather was perfect and a large appreciative crowd gathered on our front lawn to enjoy a concert showcasing the talents of our staff and students. Passers-by also stopped to enjoy the music and take advantage of our free aptitude testing and open classes. Some of our youngest students performed on the day wowing the audience.

Our Music in Schools Program is gaining momentum with music and dance programs now operating in Bangalow, Bexhill and Albert Park Primary Schools. In addition we are running Early Childhood Music Programs at First Steps Early Childhood Centre and Dunoon Pre-school.

Wendy Turner’s youngest piano students recently attended a Piano Party where they played piano for each other, played card games with musical notes and enjoyed a shared afternoon tea. It was a lovely occasion and everyone is looking forward to the next one!

Good luck to all the students who will be competing in the upcoming Lismore Eisteddfod – we know you will do very well. Congratulations to our three strings students who have been accepted to participate in the ACO Workshop in Bangalow in September: Emma Goodwin, Nina McClure and Jesslyn Ramsay-Orr. Best wishes also are extended to the students preparing for the 4th grade AMEB theory exams.

The Community Studies Department is humming with excitement as preparations for the Annual Gala Concert are heating up. This year’s Gala Concert will showcase the Children’s Choir, Youth Jazz Orchestra, Combined Strings, Little Strings, Hip Hop, Youth Drama, Early Childhood Music, Choir Baby and MORE… We would love to see you there.

Anita Bellman
Head of Community Studies