

Sound Links

Collaborations between musical
communities and schools in
Victoria

Dr Brydie-Leigh Bartleet

Queensland Conservatorium Research Centre

Griffith University

Introduction

- ✦ ARC Linkage project 'Sound Links'
- ✦ Examining the dynamics of community music in Australia, and the models it represents for informal music learning and teaching.
- ✦ Focusing on a selection of vibrant musical communities across the country, and explores their potential for complementarity and synergy with music in schools.
- ✦ Project partners: the Music Council of Australia, the Australian Music Association, and the Australian Society for Music Education.
- ✦ Research Team: Huib Schippers, Peter Dunbar-Hall, Richard Letts, Brydie-Leigh Bartleet

The term 'community music'

- ✦ “Community Music is a vital and dynamic force that provides opportunities for participation and education in a wide range of musics and musical experiences.”
- ✦ “Community Music activities are based on the premise that everyone has the right and ability to make and create musics.”
- ✦ “Accordingly, such programs can act as a counterbalance and/or complement to formal music institutions and commercial music concerns”

(Policy statement of the Community Music Commission of the International Society for Music Education: “Present and Future Ideals”)

The Australian context

- ◆ High levels of community music activity ...

... However, the cultural and social contexts of these activities and their connections to schools remain open for further research.

- ◆ A similar situation can be found from an educational perspective, where considerable research has been devoted to formal Australian school music programs and their curricula ...

... However, much less is known about Australia's informal community contexts and their approaches to learning and teaching music.



Map of Australia with the musical communities involved in the *Sound Links* study.

Dandenong Ranges Music Council

What is special about it?



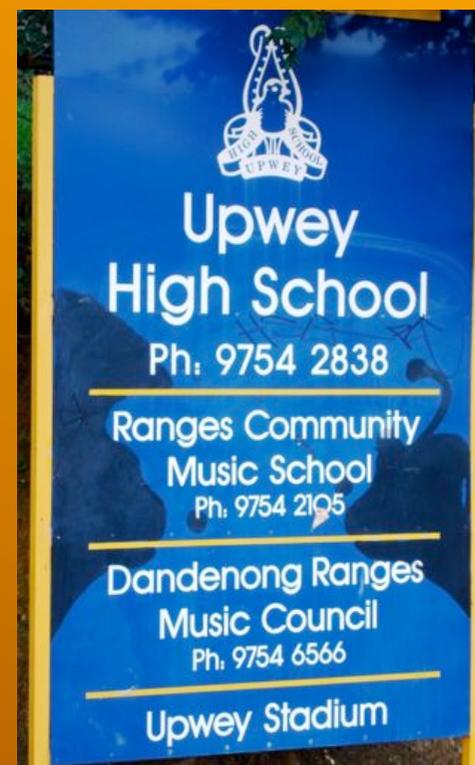
DRMC Community Music Centre

- ◆ The DRMC is an arts organisation located in the foothills of the Dandenong Ranges
- ◆ It is located at Upwey High School
- ◆ It serves the community of the Dandenong Ranges and the Shire of Yarra Ranges
- ◆ It has been funding, facilitating and teaching community music in this region for over 25 years

What makes it work? What makes it sustainable?

Everyday collaborations

- ◆ The school provides:
 - Facilities
 - Organisational support
 - A steady stream of students into the DRMC activities
- ◆ The DRMC provides:
 - Facilities and teachers
 - Organisational support
 - Projects that fill gaps in the music curricula
- ◆ It is a mutually beneficial relationship.



Upwey High School

Flagship collaborations

Fire Cycle project (2005):

- ✦ Origins in local events
- ✦ Local community partnerships
- ✦ A range of activities in the community and schools
 - community song writing workshops with composers
 - commissioning of new music composed for the project
 - the production of a Fire Education music CD with fire brigades and community musicians
 - the Fire Cycle Finale Concert



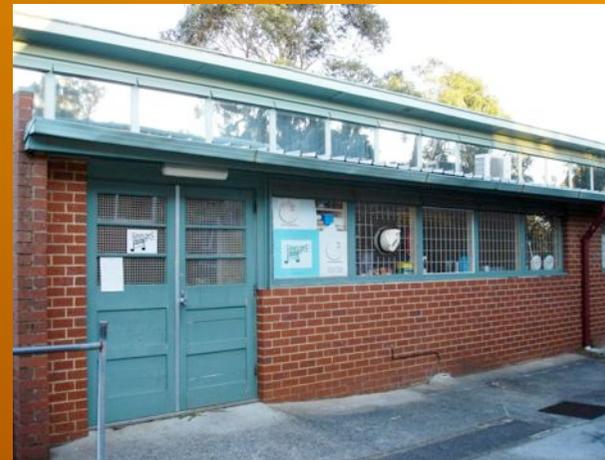
The Fire Cycle

What are the challenges?

- ✦ Support from teachers given the 'crowded curriculum'
- ✦ Securing ongoing funding
- ✦ Personnel and sustainable succession planning



Ferny Creek Primary Students
involved in the Fire Cycle



DRMC Community Music Centre

What can be learnt from this model?

The following elements are necessary for such a school-community collaboration:

- ✦ A collaborative **vision** in decision making
- ✦ A shared sense of **ownership**
- ✦ A clear structure for **communication**
- ✦ Clearly defined **roles** and responsibilities
- ✦ Adequate **funding**
- ✦ An active connection with the local **neighbourhood** and community issues
- ✦ A suitable **venue** that supports the collaboration