



# opus

a newsletter for the Australian Society for Music Education WA Chapter Inc

[www.asme.edu.au/wa](http://www.asme.edu.au/wa)

term 3 2021



Formidable Vegetable • Spring Fling PL • How do you get to school?



## Contents

- 3 From the Chair
- 4 From the Editor
- 5 Spring Fling PL
- 6 Formidable Vegetable at Mt Barker Community College
- 8 Blazing Bands at JSRACS
- 9 How Do You Get to School?
- 12 Ten Questions for Verity Brockman
- 14 Relief Teachers Register
- 15 ASME Committee Members and Contacts

Cover: The JSRACS Tuba Quintet

Back: Mary Poppins the Musical  
Primary School production at JSRACS

## 2021 Calendar

**NETWORK MEETINGS:** An informal music network meeting is held in various locations on the fifth Wednesday of each term, from 3:45 – 5:30pm. Themes vary. For details contact [wa@asme.edu.au](mailto:wa@asme.edu.au)

Please check the relevant websites for the following events in case details have changed due to COVID 19 restrictions.

SEPT 29 - OCT 1: ASME XXIII NATIONAL CONFERENCE, Online

JAN 10 - 14 2022: ORFF-SCHULWERK NATIONAL CONFERENCE, Adelaide, SA

JULY 17 – 22 2022: 35th ISME WORLD CONFERENCE, Brisbane, Qld

SEPT 29 – OCT 1: XXIII ASME NATIONAL CONFERENCE, Hobart, TAS

JAN 10 – 13 2022: 21ST NATIONAL ANCOS CONFERENCE, Adelaide, SA

## Music Network News

Want to keep up with music and music education news from around WA, Australia, and even the world? The Music Network News is a valuable source of notices, information, upcoming concerts and events, and more. To subscribe please contact Anne Trigg: [triglads@westnet.com.au](mailto:triglads@westnet.com.au)

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## Advertising rates in Opus

1/4 page \$30; 1/2 page \$60; Full page \$120



## Help Desk @ ASME

Do you have a music problem and you're not sure who to turn to? Want a friendly ear to chat to? Need some help with ideas, resources, students or curriculum? Hang on! Help is on its way!

Experienced teacher and ASME WA Committee member, Anna-Maria Agnello is more than happy to offer support and a listening ear to you, our members. Drop her an email at: [wa@asme.edu.au](mailto:wa@asme.edu.au)

# FROM THE CHAIR



**In the midst of a busy term three, and all the festivals and performances that we are preparing our students for, we can often feel overwhelmed and at the end of our capacity to cope and dredge up the**

**energy required to help our students aspire to that next level of success and achievement. I am in that space now and have sometimes asked myself in the past few weeks, 'Is it worth all the effort, anxiety, energy and head space to make this happen for our students? Do they appreciate it and do they get anything out of it?'**

And the answer of course is, 'Yes!' Like all music teachers, we do it for that student for whom this is their entire world, the place where they feel most at home. We do it for that student who only achieves success in the music world. We do it for that student who only smiles when singing, who finds they can only express themselves fully when playing their instrument or whose only social connections are with those with whom they play in band or orchestra or choir.

I am frequently reminded of the inestimable value of children having the opportunity to be involved in making music when classroom teachers observe them in performance or rehearsal and remark with astonishment at their engagement, their joy, their capacity or their enthusiasm and say, 'I have never seen them so engaged or enthusiastic about anything!' And so, we respond and say, 'And that is why we do what we do: to give those students the opportunity to shine and to truly express who they are.'

We can advocate for Music Education by quoting from the unequivocal research which proves the immense value of music in brain development, language acquisition, organisational skills, and executive function. We can prove that students who are musicians are better equipped to be successful in life, are more creative and have better memory skills. And that is all very important and true and makes our case for Music education in every school even more powerfully compelling. But, in this world of chaos and uncertainty, in this world of escalating mental health issues, the power of music to transform and equip our students to find their voice and express it, the power of music to speak to the core of what it is to be

human, the power of music to communicate all of the human condition, is by far the more imperative reason to advocate for music education for all children.

So, be encouraged in this busy time of the year and celebrate the myriad reasons we do what we do and the students for whom we live out our passion. This time last year there were no festivals and we were barely able to even meet and rehearse. We are by far, the luckiest state to be in at this point in time, as our festivals and events are gearing up to go ahead or have already occurred.

**For your further information, there are several events coming up.**

- Saturday October 16th is a free PL for members and will be held at Penrhos College. There will be two concurrent sessions for secondary and primary teachers. The topics are around composition in the lower secondary years, embedding indigenous culture in primary and secondary music classrooms and eco-sustainable resources and practices in the primary music room. Please register using this link:  
<https://asmewa.wufoo.com/forms/p1p515f50g13sln/>
- Summer School will be happening in January on 17th and 18th and will be held at Edith Cowan University, Mt. Lawley. Please keep an eye out for the registration which will be out by the end of Term 3 and begin planning now to attend and apply for financial assistance from your school. More details to come.
- The National ASME conference was scheduled to be held in Tasmania in October this year. Due to COVID considerations, the conference has been converted to a fully online conference and fees have been significantly reduced. You still need to register and all details are on the National ASME website at:  
<https://www.asme.edu.au/asme-xxiiird-national-conference-2021/>
- The SCSA Exemplars are beginning to be published on the SCSA Extranet platform and there are Curriculum Support Teachers running PLs for teachers to familiarise them with the published exemplar documents. All workshops and online PLs are being advertised on PLIS and you will need to register your interest in attending any of the sessions, which are free.

- All teachers have been allocated a half day relief in order to attend a CST Exemplar workshop and I urge you to take advantage of this opportunity. The exemplars are not mandated but are merely an example of how a teacher might address the curriculum imperatives at an appropriate level with a view to valid and relevant assessment processes. They are based on the Western Australian Curriculum and NOT the ACARA documents which are currently under review. All Department of Education Schools must use the WA Curriculum in all subject areas, and not the ACARA curriculum. If you have any questions about the differences, please contact me.

I wish you well in your Term 3 endeavours and a restful and replenishing October school holidays.

**Mandy Herriman**  
**Chairperson ASME WA**

## FROM THE EDITOR



**As Mandy has written in her chair report, we can sometimes be left asking ourselves, 'Why am I doing this? Why do I teach music? How is music education important in the overall scheme of things?' I have been asking myself these questions for the past 9 months. I have also been trying to figure out how to reconcile and combine my passion for music and education with my new understanding of the environmental issues currently facing humanity.**

Recently, my ASME WA colleague, Rhianna Reynolds, told me about a band called Formidable Vegetable. [See Rhianna's article on page 5] The band was formed by Charlie Mgee, a funky musician with a passion for permaculture. I watched Charlie's TEDx Talk entitled, *More than a tune: make music with purpose, change your world*, and began to connect the dots. Charlie's description of music as 'a powerful learning tool' unlocked a door for me. I began to see that music is the ultimate form of communication.

Throughout history, musicians have used music to express their connection with the environment and to communicate emotions and ideas related to their world. From indigenous cultures to pop culture, from classical music to heavy metal, music has had a role to play in conveying information, expressing emotions, and exploring complex issues. In the case of Formidable Vegetable, music is used to make learning about permaculture principles fun and easy. My challenge now is to find more musical activities that will help me teach my students about environmental issues such as climate change and sustainable living.

To this end, I have been collaborating with Robyn Veitch to put together a Professional Learning session on Environmentally Responsible Teaching. Robyn has a wealth of knowledge from many years spent teaching in both classrooms and music rooms. Together, we hope to inspire other music teachers to use music to help build a better world for us and our students.

For details on this and other sessions on offer at ASME WA's next Professional Learning day, see the flyer on page 7.

Find Charlie Mgee's TEDx talk here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7FOxuA07zO8>



Many thanks to Rhianna and Verity for their contributions to this term's edition of Opus.

**Sonya Elek**

# Spring Fling PL

Register Now!

<http://www.asme.edu.au/wa/event-directory/>

Saturday, 16 October 2021  
PENRHOS COLLEGE, COMO

## PRIMARY AND SECONDARY STREAMS

with sessions from Kieran Hurley (Lower Secondary Composition), Coen Fowler (Opening Plenary), Jane Nicholas (Embedding Indigenous Cultures in Primary and Secondary Settings), Robyn Veitch (Primary Music Activities), Sonya Elek (Environmentally Responsible Teaching)

# FORMIDABLE VEGETABLE



A few years ago, there was a day where I was sitting at my desk, with my music library on shuffle, trying to do some organising, and suddenly, I've heard this amazing song coming from my speakers. Firstly, I thought, 'I've never heard this before, what's it from?' Turns out I'd bought Jam Plus (2018) and uploaded it without listening to it carefully. Oops! But then I thought, 'Oh man, my music students are going to loooooove this one!' I played it for them, and they adored it immediately. *My Dad's Dunny (Doesn't Flush)* by the amazing Formidable Vegetable is now on regular rotation in my choir, and as soon as they hear the funky opening bars, my kids cheer!

This band has been performing together since 2012. Charlie Mgee, Mal Webb and Kylie Morigan are the original founding trio, but many musicians also help them out, including Michael Barker from the John Butler Trio, and Alex Burkoy of Tinpan Orange.

Formidable Vegetable are one of those bands that puts their ecological money where their mouth is. They get to gigs via waste veggie oil-powered vehicles or hitchhiking; they sleep on friends' couches or camp in fields; and they eat locally grown or foraged foods. According to the BBC, they are the first band in the world to turn down a spot at Glastonbury Festival due to their concern over their ecological footprint. Luckily, due to Covid, the festival went online, and the band were able to perform from Australia.

On the WA Day weekend 2021, my daughter and I went to the Denmark Festival of Voice, super excited to see Formidable Vegetable play. It was one of the best shows I've been to – and it was only a 30-minute

gig! The kids (and adults in the crowd!) were enthralled the whole time.

We got to have a chat with Charlie after the performance, and my darling daughter told him that our choir was going to sing *My Dad's Dunny* at our Primary School Music Festival in Albany in September. He then mentioned that as he and his partner have moved to Denmark, they'd love to come and work with the kids at my school to excite them about permaculture and the garden – AND do a performance for our community – AND perform live with my kids on stage at the Music Festival! What an amazing opportunity!

So - Formidable Vegetable, folks, remember the name!! (And if you don't know them already, make sure you check them out on YouTube, Spotify or Apple Music!) They have some fantastic educational programs available to schools – drop them a line via their webpage:

<https://formidablevegetable.com.au/contact-us>

**Rhianna Reynolds**

**Editor's Note: Rhianna inspired me to book Formidable Vegetable to do some concerts at my school in Duncraig on November 25!**

# THE WORKSHOP



# THE PERFORMANCE





## BLAZING BANDS

at JOHN SEPTIMUS ROE ANGLICAN COMMUNITY SCHOOL



Blazing Bands was a toe-tapping concert featuring performances from the JSRACS Concert Band, Jazz Orchestra and Big Band. Audience favourites of the night were the A Saint-Sational Trio which featured our three leading trumpet ladies playing the solo parts of this Dixieland style concert band arrangement based on *When the Saints Go Marching In*; the beautiful hymn *Salvation Is Created*; *Route 66*; *Boom Boom*; *Christopher Columbus* and Gordan Goodwin's *The Jazz Police*.

We were also fortunate to have our newly formed Brass Ensemble perform *Jupiter* by Holst and a number of trumpet, tuba and trombone solos as well as a lovely clarinet duet of *Somewhere Over the Rainbow*. For the first time in JSR history, we had a tuba quintet who performed a rich arrangement of a *Bach Chorale*.

**Diane Marsh**



## HOW DO YOU GET TO SCHOOL?

About 10 years ago, I was living in Quinns Rocks and teaching one day per week in Warnbro, a round trip of 180km. Despite leaving home at 6am, there was heavy traffic all the way and I dreaded the drive each week. These days, I live in Padbury and teach in Duncraig – only 2.5km away. I ride my bike whenever it isn't raining and the journey to and from school has become something I look forward to.

But I have a confession to make: for three years, I drove the 2.5km trip to my current school. It's only been in the last 6 months that I have made the effort to ride my bike regularly. Initially, I convinced myself that it was too difficult and inconvenient to ride to work. However, my thinking began to change when I started learning about the environmental impacts of driving.

The first thing I learnt was that driving my car contributes to increasing atmospheric carbon levels. In Australia, transport contributes 19% of carbon emissions, 60% of which comes from cars. I began to research options to reduce my own transport-related emissions.

On the surface, plant-based biofuels appeared to be a simple solution. However, I soon realised that biofuels aren't a viable long-term fuel replacement. The main problem is that they are produced by growing crops on land where food crops could be growing. With millions of people already starving and global population predicted to reach 9.6 billion by 2050, we need every bit of available space to grow food. In addition, biofuels are an inefficient fuel source: fossil fuel-powered tractors drive millions of kilometres

and apply tonnes of chemicals and millions of litres of water to the crops which then need to be picked, processed, and transported before being used.

Since changing my fuel wasn't a viable option, I started looking into changing my vehicle. In 2015, I had bought a small diesel hatchback, thinking it was good for the environment since it was more fuel efficient than a petrol car. However, I discovered that diesel engines produce toxic emissions, including nitric oxide and fine particulate matter. Exposure to these can cause respiratory problems, and fine particulate matter has also been linked to various cancers and coronary health issues. While fuel filters can reduce the amount of fine particulate matter released into the atmosphere, their use increases production of nitrogen dioxide, another toxic gas.

The obvious alternative was an electric vehicle, but at a starting price of over \$40k, they were well out of my budget. The range limitations of the more affordable electric vehicles was also an issue. This led me to the more affordable hybrid vehicles, which have both a petrol engine and a battery-powered electric motor.

However, I began to realise that every vehicle has an environmental cost: petrol and diesel engines are powered by carbon-emitting fossil fuels (with the added problem of the pollutants produced by diesels), while electric and hybrid vehicles still require electricity (most often produced in a coal-fired power station). In addition, all vehicles produce tyre dust (due to the friction between the tyres and the road surface), which is the main source of microplastics in the ocean. I also learned that annually, the global manufacturing of



If Greta can make a sacrifice of time, so can I. But maybe not this → Find out what works for you.



new cars requires about 80 million tonnes of steel and 14 million tonnes of plastic and produces 600 million tonnes of CO2 emissions. This means it's often better to keep driving your existing vehicle for as long as possible.

In the end, I concluded that my best option was to keep my current car and reduce how much fuel I use. I began riding to work, initially just on Professional Learning days, since I could wear casual clothes and avoid getting my work clothes creased in my backpack. It was also easy to ride on PL days since I didn't have to worry about lugging my clarinet or saxophone to school.

I started talking to other teachers about how they avoided creasing their work clothes when riding, and one suggested just rolling up a work top in my backpack and changing into that when I arrived. I also found a locked office where I could store my saxophone at school and got a basket fitted to my bike so I could carry my clarinet. I started riding my bike most teaching days, but still resisted riding on the days when I have a rehearsal before school since I didn't want to have to wake up 15 minutes earlier.

Then, a few months ago, I watched a documentary about teenage Swedish climate activist, Greta Thunberg. She spent two weeks travelling across the Atlantic Ocean by boat to avoid the carbon emissions

produced by flying. Her commitment to living true to her values inspired me and I figured if she could make that kind of sacrifice, I could get up a bit earlier and ride to school on rehearsal days.

In addition to these changes to my own driving habits, I convinced my 17-year-old son to share my car, rather than buy his own. This wasn't difficult, since it saves him a lot of money! The concept of avoiding investing in a 'stranded asset' (since most cars sit unused most of the time) also appealed to him as an Economics student.

If you would like to reduce the environmental impact of your commute, I would encourage you to start with small, maintainable changes. Everyone's situation is different, so you need to find what works for you. Ask other people for suggestions and be creative; I remember hearing about a cello teacher who kayaked along the Swan River to school – with their cello! Whatever you do, aim for progress rather than perfection.

Small changes to reduce transport-related carbon emissions:

- Accelerate slowly and brake gradually; avoid tail gaiting and don't speed
- In a manual car, drive in the highest gear possible to reduce the engine load
- In an automatic, use the 'eco' setting if available (this smooths acceleration)



- Use cruise control when possible
- Release the accelerator early to reduce speed before braking
- At low speeds, avoid using the air conditioner, which accounts for 4-8% of fuel use; use the fan or wind down the window instead. Due to drag, it's more efficient to use the air conditioner when travelling at 80km/hour or more.
- Remove excess weight from your car, eg. roof rack, bike rack, bull bar, tools
- Reduce idling by turning off the engine when parked and avoiding drive-throughs
- Keep tyres inflated correctly (this can reduce fuel use by 10%!)
- Plan trips to avoid extra driving, eg. stop at shops/ gym on way home from work
- Get your car serviced regularly and replace filters frequently
- Carpool/ride/walk/use public transport on PL days
- For instrumental teachers, schedule teaching to avoid driving in peak hour
- If your household has more than one vehicle, use the most fuel efficient one whenever possible

Bigger changes for a bigger reduction:

- Carpool/ride/walk/use public transport whenever possible
- If you need to replace your car, buy the most fuel-efficient model you can afford. I recently heard about a company called eeev which hires out Electric Vehicles (EVs). Seems like a great way to

try before you buy; it also enables EV owners to recoup some of the purchase cost.

- Reduce/limit the number of cars in your household

### Resources and Further Information

<https://theconversation.com/fact-check-are-diesel-cars-really-more-polluting-than-petrol-cars-76241>

<https://academic.oup.com/toxsci/article/135/2/437/1657889?login=true>

<https://rac.com.au/car-motoring/info/hybrid-cars-australia>

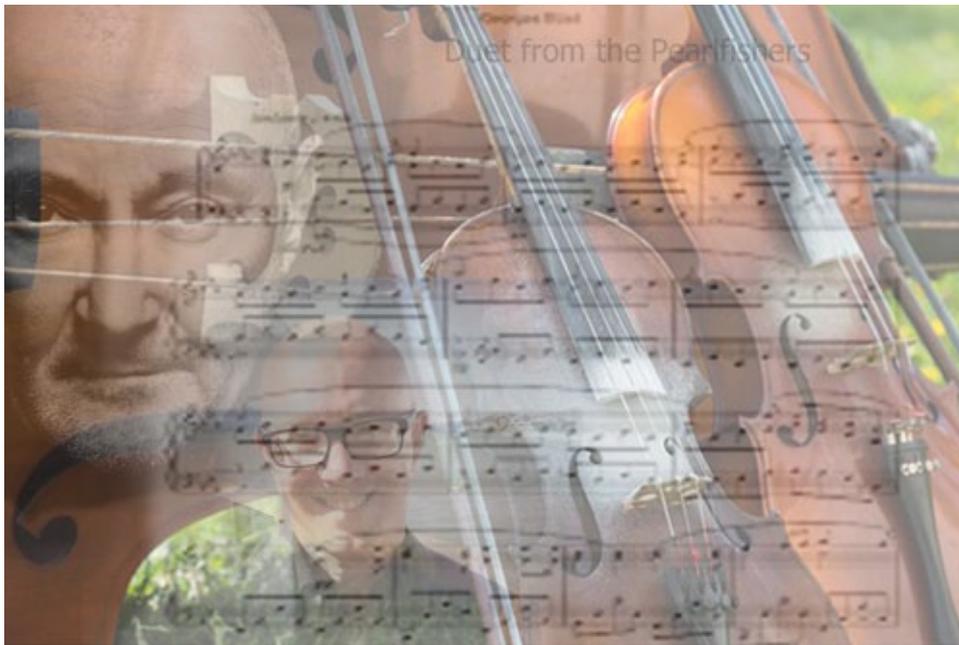
<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/green-living-blog/2010/sep/23/carbon-footprint-new-car>

<https://greenvehicleguide.gov.au/>

<https://www.racq.com.au/cars-and-driving/cars/owning-and-maintaining-a-car/fuel-saving-tips>

"Greta Thunberg: A Year to Change the World" available on ABC iview

"Your Life Your Planet: What You Can Do Right Now!" by Geoff Ebbs (Australian Geographic; 2021)



## TEN QUESTIONS FOR VERITY BROCKMAN

### **How did you first get started / interested in Music?**

As a youngest sibling, I think you inevitably go in one of two directions: either you follow in your older siblings' footsteps, or you deliberately set out to do the opposite. I adored my older brother and sister, so when they both started having piano lessons, I desperately wanted to as well. As a result, I started learning piano when I was 6, and music has been a part of my life ever since.

### **Why did you want to become a music teacher?**

Again, I think I was hugely influenced by the fact that my older sister was already a music teacher. I began teaching violin and viola to private students whilst studying my Viola Performance degree at UWA. When I finished studying, I faced the inevitable crossroads: to pursue further study in performance, or to teach. After accepting violin teaching positions at one, then two, then three schools, I found myself accidentally teaching full-time. Thankfully I loved it. The transition into classroom teaching several years later was also a bit of an accident. Circumstances drove me into studying the Graduate Diploma of Education at ECU and I discovered a real passion for classroom teaching. In the classroom I got to experience so much more variety and use my creativity to design a holistic education for my students. Now I am extremely fortunate to have 2 days of instrumental teaching

with IMSS, and 3 days of classroom music teaching at Hollywood Primary School; I feel like I get to experience the best of both worlds.

### **What instrument/s do you play?**

I am primarily a singer and viola player. I learnt violin until Year 11, when I discovered the beauty of the viola, and now I teach both violin and viola with IMSS. I studied piano up to Grade 5 AMEB, so I should be much better than I am, but I remember enough to get by. I know the obligatory 5 chords on guitar and taught myself enough cello to direct school string orchestras.

### **What piece is your band or choir really excited about performing?**

My Senior Choir at Hollywood PS is preparing for the Massed Choir Festival, which is always full of great repertoire. My kids have particularly enjoyed singing *Against The Odds* by Mark Puddy, and *Shackleton* by Paul Jarman. *Shackleton* holds an important place in my heart, as it's the song I most remember singing when I was in choir at school! It was the first solo I was invited to sing in high school, and I performed it on tour to New Zealand with Rossmoyne SHS. I am so glad that my students have loved singing it too.



### **What is your favourite IT resource for teaching?**

I have found Chrome Music Lab to be a fun and versatile online resource for students. Students from Pre-Primary to Year 6 have loved exploring the physics of sound through spectrograms and soundwaves. I also use it for pre-notation exercises and composition tasks, using the Song Maker section.

### **What music are you currently listening to?**

I enjoy listening to Classic FM on the radio to and from school each day. When I need to relax on weekends or holidays, I will pull out one of my many Scottish Fiddle CDs. Celtic music is my happy place.

### **What is your favourite year group to teach?**

I always find I enjoy teaching Year 3s. They are the perfect combination of youthful enthusiasm and maturity. They are starting to work more independently but haven't yet developed too much attitude like their Year 5 and 6 counterparts. I can take their music skills to the next level, whilst still indulging in some fun lower primary games.

### **Who is your favourite composer?**

This is a hard question as my musical tastes are extremely eclectic. I love everything from the

Pearlfishers duet to Phil Collins. For easy listening Classical music, there's something comforting about the familiarity of Mozart. For choral music, I love the crunchy harmonies of Eric Whitacre. For instrumental music, I really enjoy listening to and playing the Danish String Quartet's arrangements of traditional folk music.

### **What is your favourite music resource?**

People. Some of my best ideas have come from observing other teachers and attending workshops such as the ASME summer schools. My teaching style is an amalgamation of ideas taken from Dalcroze, Kodály, and Orff workshops.

The other resources I love to use are story books. Every January I spend a fortune on new picture and story books for the year and base my planning around these. Students of all ages love their weekly "story time", and it's a great way to establish a thematic link for the lesson, expose students to recorded music, and explore the role of music in telling a story. It also provides the students (and me) with much-needed quiet time away from a screen.

### **What is your favourite untuned percussion instrument?**

There is something hypnotic about a rain stick...

## MUSIC TEACHERS AVAILABLE FOR RELIEF

Please note: ASME WA does not endorse these teachers and takes no responsibility for the quality of their teaching. If you know of other music teachers who may be available for relief, please ask them to contact Sonya Elek ([sonyapetelelek@gmail.com](mailto:sonyapetelelek@gmail.com)).

Name	Phone	Email	Days	Yr Levels	Location	Comments
Adams, Clayton	0407 084 752	37dart@gmail.com	M – F	K – 6		Class music and general relief. Primary only.
Bird, Tamara (Tami)	0407 942 598	itami.bird@icloud.com	Tu, W, Th	K-12	South	Class music and choir. Will do general relief.
Brean, Verity	0415 094 441	veritybrean@gmail.com	F	7 – 12	Will travel	Class music & voice
Cann, Graham	9448 2318 or 0437 634 421		M – F	K – 6		Music, phys ed & art
Costello, Sophie	0481 197 022	sophiecostello@gmail.com	M – F	K – 6	Prefer within 20 mins of Bassendean	Music specialist, guitar, and general relief.
Fong, Francis	0413 397 907	francisfong@iinet.net.au	M, Tu, W, F	K – 12	Metro area	Class music, piano, violin, choirs, & string ensembles. General relief also
Hall, Amy	0426751645	amyhall3842@hotmail.com	M – F	K – 12	South of river, up to 1 hour from Perth	Classroom music, piano, voice, flute
Happ, Michael	9387 7046 0457 361 341	mfp Happ@gmail.com	M – F	K – 12	Metro area	Classroom music (primary & secondary), woodwind & brass teacher.
Karpathakis, Christos	0415 249 293	karpathakis1@optusnet.com.au	M – F	K – 6	Will travel	Class music. Kodaly Levels 1 & 2 (secondary & primary), choral conducting, voice and beginner piano.
Mackay, Heather	0403 081 623	heather.mackay@iinet.net.au	F only	1 – 12	North pref, will travel	Primary Music Specialist. Can also do Drama, Choir and general relief.
Martin, Deric	0402851338	deric.martin@education.wa.edu.au	M, Tu	K – 6	Metro area	Primary Music Specialist. Can also do Drama, Choir and general relief.
Neeson, Elizabeth	0407 048 956 or 9250 5756	neesonhouse@internode.on.net	M, Tu, W	K – 6	Will travel	Not a specialist but can read music & play guitar & mandolin in a group. General relief also.
Nelis, Nicholas	0421 823 744	cnelis@wt.com.au	M – F	K – 12	North & South	Specialist & secondary classroom music. Can also teach IT, arts, drama and instrumental music (Bass & guitar).
Rosario, Marguerite	0428 375 253	mumma@bigpond.com	W, Th, F	K – 9	Will travel	Music including guitar & ukulele. Kodaly interest



Back row: Jane Nicholas, Robyn Veitch, Selena Clohessy, Verity Brockman, Anna-Maria Agnello,  
 Middle row: Rhianna Reynolds, Sonya Elek, Mary-Anne Goyder, Pippa Chapman, Sandy Marwick  
 Front row: Mandy Herriman, Jason Boron  
 Absent: Paul McCarthy

## ASME WA 2021 COUNCIL

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