



**Australian
National
University**

Professor Bronwyn Parry *FRSA*
Dean, College of Arts and Social Sciences
University Lead for Social Impact

3 September 2025

RE: Joint Letter from Students of the ANU School of Music

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your letter of 21 August 2025. Members of the University Executive have received it, and we appreciate you sharing your concerns so directly.

We wish to reassure all current students that the Renew ANU Change Proposal is currently under review. Critically, the Implementation Plan has not yet been agreed to, nor commenced.

There has been some confusion between two separate processes. The first is the College of Arts and Social Sciences Change Management Proposal, which is part of Renew ANU, a University-wide process focused on financial sustainability and organisational structure. For the School of Music, it proposes a reduction of 3.5 FTE positions (not the seven reported in some places) and the creation of a new School of Creative and Cultural Practice, of which music forms a key component. This affects staffing and structure, but not the content of the Bachelor of Music.

The second relates to amendments to the Bachelor of Music program, which have emerged from a curriculum review led by the School of Music that has been underway for the past 18 months. This is part of normal curricula renewal to ensure we remain aligned with international best practice, disciplinary shifts, and student demand. It's important that these two processes are not conflated. The curriculum redesign is a separate process that predates the change management proposal and reflects careful, research-led planning by the School itself.

The amended curriculum does not disestablish performance and composition. Students will continue to have opportunities to study performance, composition, and musicology in depth. Indeed, the amended Bachelor of Music has been carefully designed to ensure there are no fewer opportunities in performance and composition than before. No fewer than six courses in each area will continue to be offered, alongside a rich range of small and large ensembles including the ANU Orchestra, ANU Jazz Orchestra, Recording Ensemble, Songroads Ensemble, Baroque Ensemble, ANU Chamber Choir, Llewellyn Choir, and multiple small classical and jazz ensembles. This does not represent a "gutting" of performance and composition.

Office of the Dean
Beryl Rawson Building 13
Canberra 2600, ACT Australia
The Australian National University

CRICOS Provider No. 00120C
TEQSA Provider ID: PRV12002 (Australian University)

It is a core responsibility of any world-leading university to continually refresh and refine its pedagogical offerings to ensure they remain fit for purpose and aligned with global best practice. When such evolutions are made for future cohorts, they will be clearly and accurately reflected in our promotional and marketing materials for incoming students.

The changes to the curriculum will affect students entering the Bachelor of Music from 2026. Current students will continue in the structure and delivery of the degree in which they enrolled. This includes the provision of one-on-one performance tuition for those students currently in that pathway. While there may be some changes to the range of courses on offer, this is a usual process across the University, as we amend our programs regularly, and is in alignment with the policies that govern tertiary education providers. Llewellyn Hall continues to operate as a commercial venue, which means access for students must be balanced with external demands. This is not a new challenge and has not changed over the course of current students' enrolment. The Whitworth Roach Competition runs biennially, alternating with funding support for the ANU Orchestra. Other competitions, such as the Concerto Competition, depend on administrative capacity and student interest.

The University is fully committed to complying with all its legal and statutory obligations, including those under the *Australian National University Act 1991* (ANU Act) and Australian law. Section 5(1)(d) of the ANU Act rightly sets out the University's enduring statutory obligation to provide facilities and courses in the visual and performing arts while 'promoting the highest standards of practice in those fields'. To fulfil this mission in a rapidly changing world, the University must continually evolve and adapt. This includes proactively benchmarking our programs against world's best practice and reviewing our curriculum to ensure they not only meet, but define, excellence for the 21st century.

Assets associated with the 1991 merger were entrusted to the ANU for the support of music education and continue to be used for their attributed purposes in 2025. Additionally, the National Institutes Grant (NIG) recognises the University's unique role as a national university and provides funding to maintain and enhance research and education excellence. The ANU as a National Institute is fundamentally aligned with this purpose; and upholds this obligation in re-orienting some of the core functions of the College of Arts and Social Sciences to enhance its research productivity and focus which must be a key element and output of a University-based Music program.

The Renew ANU process is about ensuring the long-term strength and sustainability of the University. Should any proposal progress to implementation, the University is committed to continue to ensure there is no material reduction in the quality or breadth of our educational

offerings. If a staff member leaves, for whatever reason, students are always supported by another professional teacher. Students benefit from learning with a range of experienced academics and industry practitioners, including those who often bring unmatched industry experience. While staff changes can be difficult, no individual teacher is solely responsible for a student's development. We remain committed to ensuring that every student has access to professional, high-quality teaching. Music clearly remains a vibrant discipline at ANU, one that we continue to fully support.

We do, however, also recognise that change inevitably brings a sense of uncertainty. We understand this and have consequently already provided structured opportunities through which to feedback concerns, including via School Town Halls, meetings with the SoM executive, and with the Dean. We remain committed to keeping these channels of communication open and to providing clear and timely communication to all students via On Campus, Renew ANU, individual and group conversations, as our change proposal progresses.

Sincerely



Professor Bronwyn Parry
Dean, College of Arts and Social Sciences
University Lead for Social Impact