

Media Release

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Melbourne's new music school – an international 'powerhouse'

Melbourne will be home to the most comprehensive music school in Australia when the University of Melbourne's Faculty of Music and Victorian College of the Arts (VCA) School of Music join forces to create the **University of Melbourne School of Music**.

The University's two music teaching and research arms will come together in a single school of music with a strong identity and a clear vision for international excellence in music training, scholarship and research.

This move follows a recent Review of Music in the University.

The Review Panel, chaired by Professor Pip Pattison, President of the University's Academic Board, comprised Professor Catherine Falk, the University's Dean of Music; Associate Professor Su Baker, then Acting Dean of the Victorian College of the Arts; Associate Professor Ian Holtham, Head of Practical Studies and Keyboard and Associate Dean (Teaching and Learning) in the Faculty; and Professor Jonty Stockdale, Head of Music and Associate Dean (Learning and Teaching) at the VCA.

Professor Don McLean, Dean of the Schulich School of Music, McGill University, Canada, was the external member of the Panel.

Professor Pattison says the process for the Review included extensive consultation and discussion with staff and students in the Faculty and the VCA School of Music, and with external experts and stakeholders.

The new School will be home to around 1000 undergraduate and postgraduate students. It will build on the distinctive strengths of both the current Faculty of Music and VCA Music in music performance, both classical and contemporary, improvisation, musicology and ethnomusicology, music therapy, music education, composition and conducting.

Professor Pattison says the Review Panel supported a unified course offering in music at the University of Melbourne for several reasons but, most particularly, for the strength that would come from combining the academic and artistic expertise of the Faculty and of the VCA School into a single entity with a suite of undergraduate and graduate courses.

"For instance, a new Melbourne Model style of undergraduate course will be designed to take advantage of the internationally-recognised academic and artistic expertise of the Faculty and of the VCA School of Music in a broad range of fields. It will retain the name of Bachelor of Music and entry to the course will require an audition as well as VCE or equivalent."

Professor Pattison says the University will move quickly to appoint a head for the new School. She says the appointee will have the skills to lead the development of the School's vision and to secure the necessary resources for its establishment and successful operation.

The new School will be part of a newly-constituted Faculty encompassing the University's programs in music, visual and performing arts, whose identity will reflect both the Faculty of Music and the Faculty of the VCA.

Professor Falk says the new School will enable the University to provide the very best opportunities for all its talented music students, and to work closely with the community and the profession as a single large and very impressive gathering together of internationally-recognised staff in music performance, composition, music therapy and scholarship.

"This is an exciting outcome for students, the art form, the discipline and the University in the regional, national and international environment. We look forward to developing further high quality, innovative and relevant undergraduate and postgraduate offerings."

Professor Stockdale noted the substantial progress made towards the creation of a framework for developing a unified music offering within the University.

"VCA Music and the Faculty of Music already interact and co-operate on a number of levels and we look forward to building on this as we move forward. The coming together of two outstanding musical entities with a shared vision for Music in Melbourne is a landmark achievement, and will enhance significantly our national and international standing.

"In the short term, students and stakeholders will notice little structural change; that will be in the longer term, and will ensure the preservation of the heritage of both Faculties," he said.

All academic programs currently offered by the Faculty of Music and VCA School of Music - including the New Generation Bachelor of Music degree and the continuing Bachelor of Music Performance - will be offered in 2008, and all current and enrolling students will be able to complete their studies.

Music at Melbourne will retain a strong presence on both Parkville and Southbank campuses, enabling students in other New Generation degrees to take breadth subjects from the Bachelor of Music and to undertake the concurrent Diploma of Music (Practical).

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