

# Julia Rennick-Report for AGM 2017

## 2016/2017

Student numbers in the ECM Program (0-8 years) for the above period were as follows:

Terms  $\frac{3}{4}$ , 2016 - 48

Terms  $\frac{1}{2}$ , 2017 - 55

Although our numbers continue to grow, we have had a huge shift from 4-5 years classes to Toddler and Baby groups. This I believe has come about as more and more preschool places are being offered and families are taking the opportunity of having their children attend preschool for a whole day rather than coming to music for 1 hour. As a parent I completely understand this. I do however have some ideas to counteract this for 2018.

I continued running classes at Baptist Preschool, Gunnedah Public School, Mary Ranken (school readiness program), and also Winanga-li Early Learning Centre and L'il Achievers.

I continue to cover as much of the Music Outcomes from the Arts Syllabus in my Stage 1 Program at Gunnedah Public; as well as considering outcomes in the new F/K-2 Australian Curriculum. This allows students to develop their knowledge and understanding, skills, values and attitudes in performing, organizing sound and listening by experiencing musical concepts e.g. pitch, dynamics, tone colour, etc. This often crosses over with other outcomes in PDHPE and Dance. The dance elements of action, dynamics, time, space, relationships and structure; as well as 'moves in response to various stimuli' or 'performs simple dance sequences incorporating basic movement skills and patterns' in PDHPE relate to the music syllabus. We have 3 x 1 hour classes in most weeks of each term. The program is determined on the children's previous musical experiences and my rationale then develops from there. Singing is the focus.

In terms of professional development, I attended ISME in Glasgow whilst over visiting my family. Once again, this conference offered a great opportunity to catch up with music teachers/lecturers from all over the world, many of whom I'm

now honoured to know. This Conference offered so many opportunities to grow, improve and build on my knowledge of music and dance and to learn new repertoire, which can then be passed on and shared with the children of Gunnedah. I attended workshops that ranged from ‘*Yoga for Musicians*’ to ‘*How to get parents/guardians on your side,*’ ‘*Early childhood music education*’ applied pedagogies (active music making), ‘*Singing and dancing in the chorus of a musical*’ to ‘*the works of Robbie Burns.*’ Lecturers came from Finland, USA, Italy and everywhere in between.

Due to some health issues I’ve participated in a number of webinar PD sessions this year that I can do from home - *Music Management techniques, Music and the Brain, Going on Safari* and this week - *12 bar blues on the ukulele.*

I was really happy and proud again to be chosen as a Music Mentor by the Department of Education and Training Arts Department. I attended a 2 day Master class in Hobart at MONA where we were once again inspired by Richard Gill, OAM. Rebecca and I visited South School towards the end of 2016 and did a spiel on the benefits of the mentoring program and music in general and I was assigned Gunnedah South School with 2 x stage 1 teachers this year. This has to be an absolute highlight of my music-teaching career. The teachers and children have been an absolute joy. We have all learned from each other.

Rebecca and I have been trying to find other teachers interested in this area of music and movement for young children who could ultimately take over from me. In term 1, I mentored a teacher from Mary Ranken who took the shared knowledge back to the Centre and did a great job. Finding someone to continue here at the Con is proving to be more of a challenge; no doubt we will find the right person in due course.

As I have reported in previous years’ reports, the children are not only learning about music. They acquire skills such as turn taking and sharing. Their listening skills are developed and extended.

They learn about musical concepts such as tempo and pitch, and how to discriminate between different instruments, sound sources and body percussion sounds. They acquire a repertoire of songs, both new and old. These are taught through games, dramatizations and other fun activities. Songs without lyrics are sang every week. This enhances the children's ability to focus on the melody rather than the words.

They are beginning to learn French time-names, and improvise with body and scarf movements to a wide array of musical pieces from various genres.

Lots of movement and dance is incorporated, to assist with gross motor skills and co-ordination. Art to music continues to be a popular activity.

More and more parents are realizing the benefit of music in these younger years, and it's value across all areas of their child's development. As always, I hope that many of these youngsters will continue on further with their musical education and embrace what we have to offer at the Con.

My sincere thanks go to Rebecca for supporting me, and to the Board and Rebecca for making the Town Hall move a reality. We have a great staff of teachers and I enjoyed being involved in a tiny way with Sandy Clark's wonderful *Abba* Show last year. Thanks too to the Admin staff - Rosemary, Anne and Steff.

Julia

