



# RIVMEO

Roundtable of Instrumental, Vocal  
and Music Education Organisations.

## Progress Report from our Working Group with NSW Health

RIVMEO is pleased to report that real progress has been made towards easing the current restrictions on vocal and instrumental music in NSW.

This comes after a very productive meeting of the RIVMEO Working Group with NSW Health to discuss the current advice for the music and education sectors.

The Working Group was established following RIVMEO's meeting with the NSW Minister for Health Brad Hazzard and Chief Health Officer Dr Kerry Chant last week.

The good news is that with rates of community transmission heading in the right direction, and a more nuanced understanding of existing evidence and uncertainties relating to vocal and instrumental music, there is hope for the easing of restrictions on musical activities in the near future.

RIVMEO, the Roundtable of Instrumental, Vocal and Music Education Organisations, is a voice for the NSW music community. Its membership of professional associations, organisations and significant performing arts bodies is the most substantial representation of the music sector assembled in NSW.

RIVMEO's current focus is to work in collaboration with NSW Government agencies to find a way for organised vocal and instrumental music activities to safely resume while playing their role in the whole of community effort to reduce and eliminate the spread of COVID-19 in NSW.

The RIVMEO Working Group and NSW Health exchanged helpful and relevant information about the existing science regarding the potential for COVID-19 to be spread by aerosols during singing and wind playing.

The many factors involved in the framing of the current health advice were discussed, with NSW Health outlining specific instances where musical activity has been a factor in the spread of COVID-19 in NSW. These instances have been mentioned in Health epidemiology reports, and it is understood Health will be publishing peer-reviewed research in due course to help inform the global pandemic response.

Acknowledging that the most effective strategy is to reduce and hopefully eliminate community transmission, the RIVMEO Working Group advocated that vocal and instrumental music are important to both education and community flourishing and that any restrictions should be proportionate, equitable, evidence-based and sustainable.

Regarding the current Health advice RIVMEO raised specific concerns relating to classroom singing and chanting, school vocal and instrumental groups, the mixed year groups issue, the use of peripatetic/contractor tutors in schools, indoor versus outdoor activities and refining the interpretation of public orders, especially regarding head-count limits on rehearsals and performances in public spaces.

The discussion encompassed the particular needs of professional and community settings, vocal and instrumental ensembles, classroom and peripatetic teacher/tutors and regional and metropolitan locations.

Uncertainties in the current advice were addressed, and RIVMEO members were able to provide specific and contextualised feedback based on the practical experience of the music communities it represents.

RIVMEO is pleased that through the Working Group process it has the opportunity for continuing dialogue with both Health and Education in NSW, with the common purpose of finding ways to return to playing, singing and learning music together while contributing to the greater community effort of reducing and eliminating the spread of COVID-19 in NSW.

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RIVMEO Facilitator

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