

Key guests to acknowledge

- **Senator Mitch Fifield**, Shadow Minister for Disabilities, Carers and the Voluntary Sector
Manager of Opposition Business in the Senate,
Liberal Senator for Victoria
- **Professor Brian Caldwell**, Managing Director,
Educational Transformations and Associate Director,
International Networking for Educational
Transformation (iNet) (*co-author of book*)
- **Dr Tanya Vaughan**, Senior Consulting Researcher,
Education Transformations (*co-author of book*)
- **Caroline Aebersold**, CEO, The Song Room
- Representatives of the Macquarie Group Foundation,
who supported the research

- Thank you for that kind introduction.
- It is great to be here this evening at the world-famous National Gallery of Victoria to launch this fantastic new resource – ***Transforming Education through the Arts***.
- Firstly, I would like to thank the students at Debney Meadows Primary School for their wonderful performance.
- I would also like to pay tribute to the authors **Professor Brian Caldwell** and **Dr Tanya Vaughan** for delivering such an important new work.
- I know that both Brian and Tanya have carved out distinguished careers in education and I am delighted that they continue to make such valuable contributions to education reform.

- Their book makes a compelling case for arts education.
- It tells us that arts education can combat student disengagement and close the gap between high and low performing students.
- The evidence in this book points to how engagement in the arts can lift performance across a range of indicators, both in academic achievement and wellbeing.
- As you know, the bulk of this evidence comes directly from research and evaluation of ***The Song Room's*** work in disadvantaged schools in western Sydney.

- **The Song Room's** positive impact on student achievement and school attendance is of great interest to the Victorian Government.
- We are particularly interested in how participation in your program translates to better academic and literacy results, and higher rates of attendance.
- Closer to home, I was interested to read about **Dandenong High School** and the performing arts focus in the school's master plan.
- I was impressed to see that attendance on days when performing arts programs were offered is higher than on days when they are not.
- At a school with a considerably low socio-economic student population – it is the hard truth that a combination of sports and arts programs has kept more kids from turning their backs on learning.

- The compelling body of evidence in this book adds to some of research undertaken by my Department and Arts Victoria since 2009.
- Most recently we evaluated the impact of partnerships between schools and the professional arts sector, including artists-in-residence and exposure-to-arts programs, on student outcomes.
- I am delighted that our research found that these partnerships are working – they are providing students with new horizons, and developing core skills they need to succeed across the whole curriculum.
- Partnerships like this are core to my commitment to build **Victoria as a Learning Community**.

- By this I mean encouraging parents, community groups, businesses and organisations - including those in the arts - to have a stake in the education of our young people.
- By pooling our ideas, resources, and talents – we are positioning ourselves to provide a range of learning experiences that develop the whole child and benefit the whole community.
- We need to work together to provide learning experiences that not only open doors, but extend our children academically and creatively.
- The Victorian Government is proud to support an arts education program befitting of our reputation as the arts capital of Australia.

- Take the **State Schools Spectacular**, which annually brings thousands of students together from across the state in two large-scale performances.
- This program is not just about the live shows – it's about giving young people the chance to learn from industry professionals, like choreographer **Kelley Abbey**, and partner organisations like the **Australian Chamber Orchestra**.
- I would like to acknowledge the important work of Arts Victoria in developing partnerships between schools and our many world-class artists and arts organisations.
- I would also like to acknowledge the many volunteer artists and craftspeople who continue to play their part in building Victoria as a learning community.

- The Victorian Government is proud to have supported **The Song Room** over the years to deliver programs in Victorian schools – and remotely through **Ping – Remote Music Education Project**.
- I congratulate Caroline and her team at **The Song Room** for their wonderful work.
- Finally, I want to congratulate Brian and Tanya, the authors of ***Transforming Education through the Arts***, for their contributions to advancing arts education in Australia.

Thank you

