

Case study

AIR - *Sounds Across Oceans* and *Guitar Alchemy* Kedron State High School

Details

What:

Professional guitarist and composer Anthony Garcia worked with students from years 7 to 12 at Kedron State High School to extend their skills in composing and musical improvisation. Developing these skills and fostering intercultural awareness was the focus of two project ensembles, *Sounds Across Oceans* and *Guitar Alchemy*.

Sounds Across Oceans was designed to engage students from a variety of cultural backgrounds within Kedron's school community. It enabled them to compose and improvise music in a creative and welcoming environment.

Guitar Alchemy engaged English as a second language (ESL) students and students studying Spanish from the Languages other than English (LOTE) department, thereby promoting cross-curricular learning at Kedron.

When: July 2015 – June 2016

Where: Brisbane

Key stats:

- 1 Artist
- 40 Students
- 5 Educators



Sounds Across Oceans. Photo: Rohan Hardy

Arts Queensland contribution:

\$15,000 – Artist in Residence Fund

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Outcomes

- Kedron State High School now has a growing guitar ensemble program focused on delivering a culturally diverse repertoire which will continue beyond the life of the project.
- The *Guitar Alchemy* ensemble provides opportunities for students outside of the regular extra-curricular music program such as ESL learners and international visa students.
- *Sounds Across Oceans* provided a platform to trial new ideas for students who were seeking extension opportunities in musical composition and improvisation.
- The program incorporates Spanish language into practice sessions and improves the students' understanding of music and cultural diversity.
- The guitar ensemble program has been recognised as an important asset to the school as it has given students a greater sense of belonging, particularly those who prefer to participate outside the traditional modes of music making.
- The work of the *Guitar Alchemy* and *Sounds Across Oceans* ensembles was celebrated four times during the year. The concerts were held within the school and outside the school at the Old Museum and were warmly received by parents, students and staff within the school community.



Guitar Alchemy. Photo: Rohan Hardy

Learnings and reflections

The Kedron State High School Head of Department for the Arts reflected on the project and how to refine it for future delivery:

Due to the promotional opportunities and appropriate funding pathways, the program was enthusiastically received by the target group of students (ESL and international visa students) and the school community from the beginning.

In the future, the program may be refined by targeting students based on demographics. It would be especially aimed at promoting the welfare and cultural understanding of students from various nationalities.

My advice to others is to develop a program that fits well within the context of your school. An artist in residence can value add to the quality of work you are doing in your school and boost the diversity of your arts program.