

Editorial by Professors Peter Roennfeldt and Richard Vella

The National Council of Tertiary Music Schools is the peak body for the sector in Australia. Its members comprise the state conservatoria, some of which have long histories extending back to the late 1800s, as well as music schools and faculties within universities including the Group of Eight, the Innovative Research Universities of Australia network, the Australian Technology Network, various regional universities, and some private Higher Education Providers. This very diversity of institutional histories, specialisations and approaches to curriculum is one of the great strengths of NACTMUS.

While NACTMUS has not held regular conferences, many staff from its member institutions are frequent presenters at such fora throughout Australia and internationally. However, it was felt that the timing was right in 2007 for a second national conference, the first being held in Byron Bay New South Wales in 2001. The themes were deliberately chosen to focus upon contemporary issues affecting higher education in music, both discipline-specific and institutional imperatives and challenges, rather than those which are normally dealt with in other similar fora presented by the various professional organisations.

From the field of topics presented, a number of strands of inquiry and debate emerged, including emerging technologies in both teaching & learning and research, the increasing diversity of the student body and their specialisations and graduate outcomes. This publication is therefore an important and timely insight into the current state of the Australian tertiary music sector, and the concerns, challenges and aspirations as perceived by its member institutions and staff. Their research into these topics will hopefully make a significant contribution to the sector and its stakeholders. We hope this publication will also provide a forum for dissemination and dialogue with others whose experience extends beyond this country.

In addition to the 17 articles written by delegates to the 2007 conference, all of which were double blind peer-reviewed, NACTMUS is delighted to also publish the two papers by its invited keynote presenters. Professor Malcolm Gillies and Helen Lancaster, both of whom have had extensive experience in leadership positions within the tertiary music sector, both in Australia and beyond, presented stimulating papers on aspects of leadership and the place of music within the academy. Their timely presentations were indeed highlights of the conference.