



WATT

ADVOCACY
& COMMUNICATIONS

Independent Review into Murray Conservatorium

Staff and Public Briefing

28 October 2025



Topics

The Review Team

What is an Independent Review?

How we got here...

Timelines

Activities

Interviews

Staff Survey

Confidentiality and privacy

Terms of Reference

Requirements for participation

Q&A

The Review Team

Kel Watt

Team Leader. Interviews and Governance.

Louise Yabsley

Interviews and Governance.

Kirstie Ward

Interviews.

Tim Wickham and Thayer Parker

Music Tuition.

What is an Independent Review?

No Conflicts of Interest

An impartial assessment by a person who is not connected to it.

Personal or professional relationships

No benefit to reviewer/s.

What is an Independent Review?

Fair and unbiased

A third party review facts, processes and decisions to provide recommendations or a new decision.

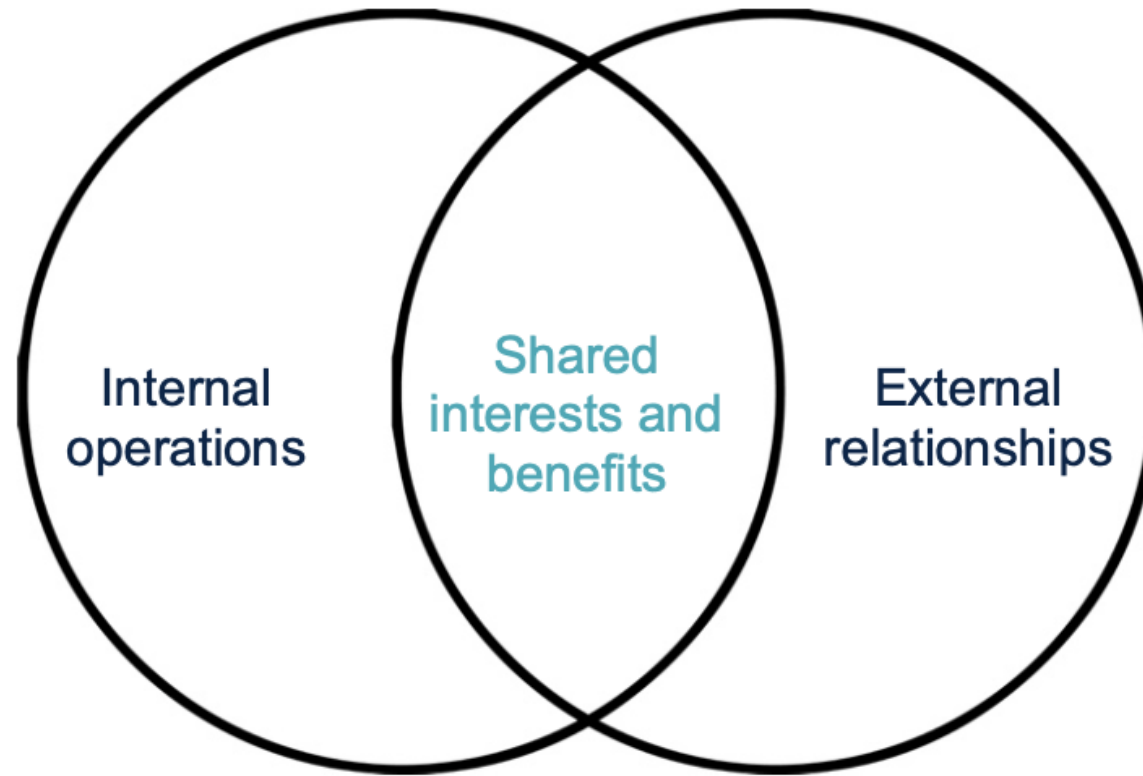
This is different to an internal review.

It is used in contexts like disputes, program assessments, and professional guidelines.

How we got here...

Murray Conservatorium Board

- Ensure viability and sustainability of Conservatorium.
- Internal Review will assist with Government funding and obligations, while ensuring 'continuous improvement' ethos is pursued.
- Albury-Wodonga Music Network (AWMN) letter on 14 September 2025 led to a unanimous decision at Board meeting on 15 September 2025 to conduct a review that would consider internal and external issues and stakeholders.



Timelines

The following proposed timeframes have been pushed back approximately two weeks to allow stakeholders to return from School Holidays and ensure preparatory work.

Timelines



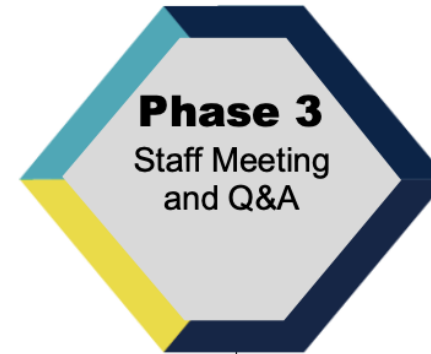
Commencement
16 September 2025

Length
One week



Commencement
22 September 2025

Length
Three weeks



Commencement
13 October 2025

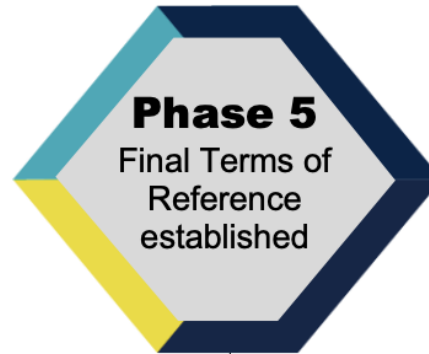
Length
One week

Timelines



Commencement
13 October 2025

Length
One week



Completion
No later than 24 October 2025

Length
One week



Commencement
20 October 2025

Length
Two weeks

Timelines



Commencement
20 October 2025

Length
Three weeks



Commencement
27 October 2025

Length
Four to six weeks

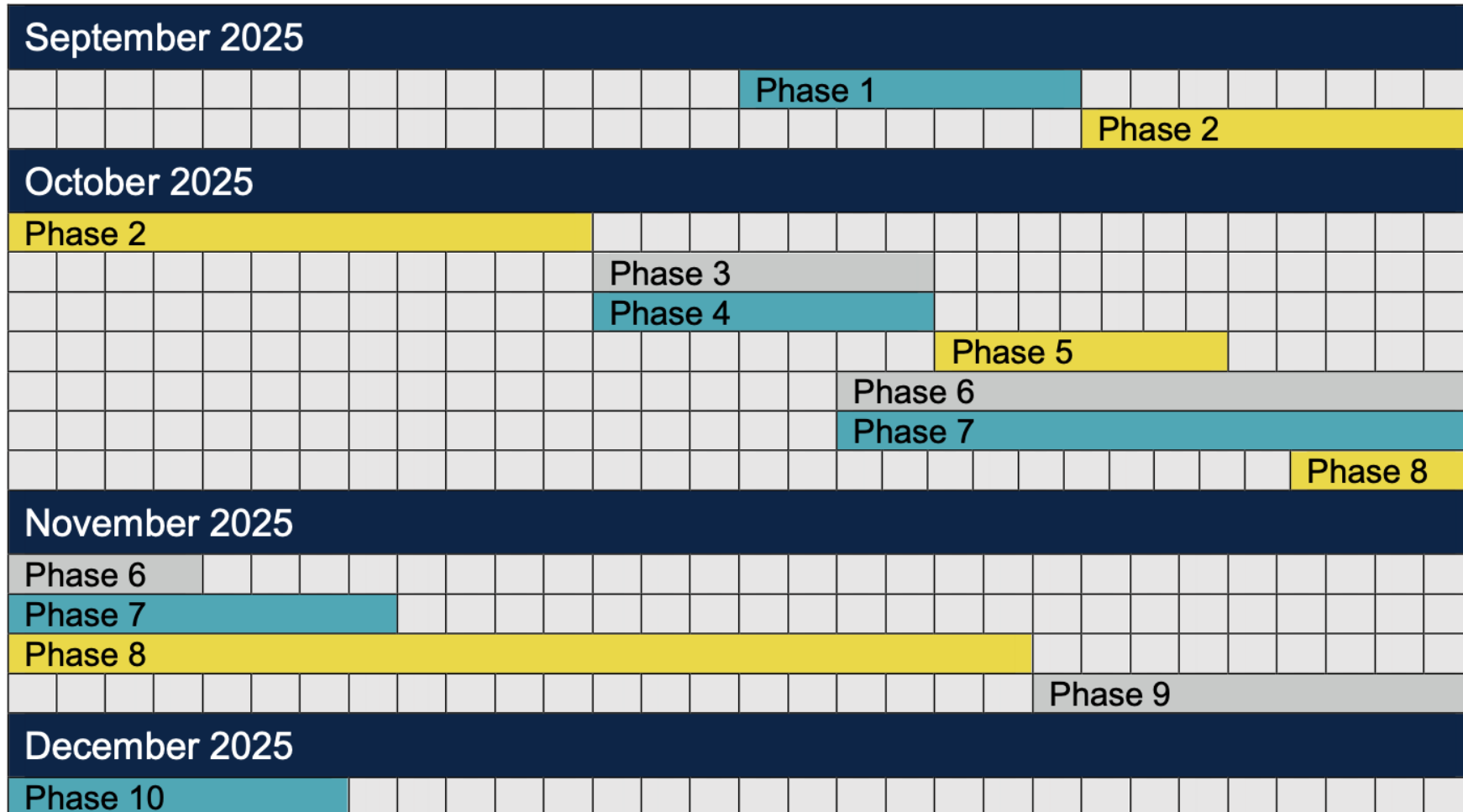


Completion
28 November 2025



Completion
4 December 2025

Timelines



Activities

Preparation and preliminary work

Meeting with some internal and external stakeholders

Identify near-exhaustive list of stakeholders to contact and prioritise

Desktop reviews

Create online tools and resources

Prepare for interviews

Communication to stakeholders

Activities

Preparation and preliminary work

Terms of Reference

Requirements for Participation

Ensure safety

Ensure privacy and confidentiality

Ensure accessibility.

Activities

Terms of Reference

Version 2.0 now available

Submissions accepted until Friday 1 November 2025

Final version released Saturday 2 November 2025.

Activities

Conduct stakeholder activities

Interviews

Surveys

Submissions

Activities

Conduct stakeholder activities – then assess

Align with Terms of Reference

Match to day-to-day business and philosophical needs

Focus on long term results and outcomes

Activities

Report

Findings

Recommendations

Practical and reasonable work, timeframes and costs.

Activities

Report

Preliminary Report

Final Report after checking for errors and reasonable response.

Board-in-confidence / Commercial-in-confidence issues?

Privacy, including redactions and de-identification

Report for public release

Interviews

Staff Interviews

Internal and external issues – all Terms of Reference

Private and confidential

Not compulsory

You will not be identified.



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Independent Review into the Murray Conservatorium

Book your interview to contribute to the Review

Your details

All information is confidential and will not be shared with any person outside of the Independent Review Team.

Name *

First Name

Last Name

Contact Number *

Please enter a valid mobile phone number.

Email Address *

example@example.com

Address *

City

State

Post Code



I am: *

☐ 18 years or older

☐ under 18 years of age



I am contributing to the Independent Review as a: *

- ☐ Current Teacher
- ☐ Former Teacher
- ☐ Current Student
- ☐ Former Student
- ☐ Parent/Guardian of Current Student
- ☐ Parent/Guardian of Former Student
- ☐ Current Staff member
- ☐ Former Staff member
- ☐ Current Board member
- ☐ Former Board member
- ☐ Music Teacher (Non-Conservatorium - please add a brief explanation below)
- ☐ Musician (Non-Conservatorium - please add a brief explanation below)
- ☐ School representative (Please add a brief explanation below)
- ☐ Community group representative (Please add a brief explanation below)
- ☐ Person assigned to represent an organisation (Please add a brief explanation below)
- ☐ Member of the local music community (Please add a brief explanation below)
- ☐ Member of the public and not part of the local music community (Please add a brief explanation below)
- ☐ Other (Please add a brief description below)

Brief explanation about why you have selected the option above:

One word and up to one sentence is all that is required. You can tell us more during the interview.

Terms of Reference and Requirements for Participation

I have read and understand the Terms of Reference and Requirements for Participation available on the Murray Conservatorium website (This document will be emailed to you on request): *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Unsure

Interview Time, Date and Location

I prefer my confidential interview to be held: *

- ☐ In person at the Murray Conservatorium (Private room)
- ☐ Online via Zoom
- ☐ In person at a venue requested below

I would like to request an in-person interview at the following venue:

We will attempt to accommodate your request, but travel times and other factors may result in a change to time or other negotiated venue. You will be contacted as quickly as possible to discuss options.

I am most interested in discussing these topics in my interview:

Interviews are not limited to your suggested topics.

Will you be submitting documents or other information at my in-person interview or via Admin@WattAdvocacy.com

- ☐ Yes - I already have
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Unsure

What date and time work best for you? (Interviews should take 15 to 45 minutes)

03/11/2025

November

2025

MON

TUE

WED

THU

FRI

SAT

SUN

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Monday, November 03

<

>

10:00 AM

11:00 AM

12:00 PM

1:00 PM

2:00 PM

3:00 PM

4:00 PM

5:00 PM

6:00 PM

7:00 PM

Australia/Sydney (09:58 PM)

Any other specific date and time, if the above selection is not suitable.

10-22-2025

09:55

PM

Date

Hour Minutes

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Something else?

Is there something we can do to help? Is there something else you would like to add?

Questions?

Email Admin@WattAdvocacy.com or leave a question here:

Submit



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Thank You!

Your submission has been received.

We will be in touch soon to confirm your meeting details.

Staff survey

Distributed next week following questions and input

Online

Not compulsory

Private and Confidential

The survey will cover subjects including:

- work-life balance
- workplace culture
- career development
- management support
- pay and entitlements.

Confidentiality and privacy

Applies to every participant, including (especially) staff

Every verbal and written request for confidentiality will be respected.

Any participant may request a signed Confidentiality Agreement.

All Review documents, including the Final Report, will allow contributors to have their names redacted or excluded upon request.

Confidentiality and privacy

Applies to every participant, including (especially) staff

All contributors will be listed in alphabetical order in the Final Report, unless they have asked for their name to be withheld.

Names will not be aligned with the provision of information or submissions without their knowledge and requested approval beforehand.

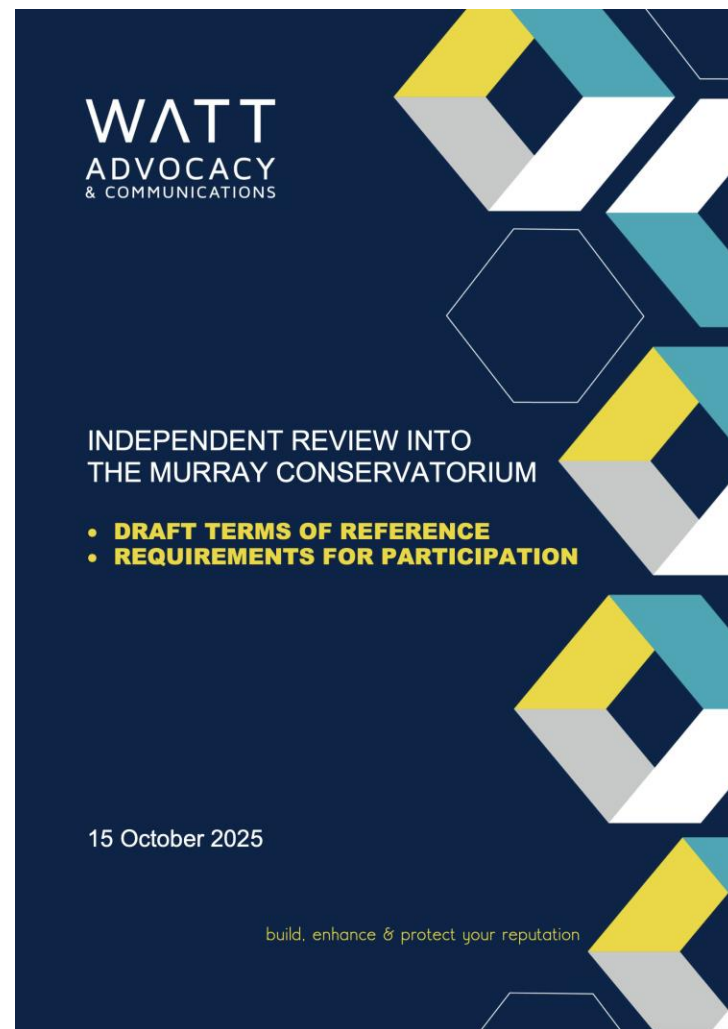
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Applies to every participant, including (especially) staff

Any information that identifies you or risks identifying another person without their permission will be omitted.

Identifying and personal details, such as contact numbers and residential address, will be redacted and/or removed from documents.

Terms of Reference



Terms of Reference

Draft Terms of Reference

Principles, scope and conduct

The Review of Murray Conservatorium will focus on:

- Leadership and management competency of Board members, staff, and teachers
- Organisational culture, business and administrative processes and operations, financial strategy, and alignment with NSW Government Department of Education Funding Guidelines

This Review will:

- actively engage with key stakeholders across schools, community organisations, parents and students
- deliver a safe and supportive environment for participants and contributors
- provide confidentiality as requested or required
- produce a Report encapsulating findings and recommendations, and be evidence-based
- be conducted by external experts with proven experience in music education, performance, and governance in a regional setting, and community consultation

Concerns and criticisms outlined in a letter addressed to the Conservatorium Board on Sunday 14 September 2025 will be incorporated into interviews and fact-finding efforts.

Specifically, the Review will consider and include, but not be limited to:

1. Working with independent legal advisors and independent HR advisors review and assess:
 - Recently completed (last five years) Reviews for effectiveness, implementation and shortcomings in practice
 - Existing operating and administrative documents, and identify gaps and shortcomings
2. Examine the factors affecting workloads, including:
 - systems, resources and processes
 - opportunities to better support the work being undertaken

- changes in community expectation of, and engagement with, the music community and broader public, including methods of engagement such as social media, email, branding, advertising and promotions
 - Conservatorium functions, hours of work, including additional responsibilities, hours of expected availability, functions, duties and associated workload of teachers and staff
 - support systems and processes currently available, and identify gaps and shortfalls
 - training and professional development needs for teachers, staff and Board members
 - current staffing resources, including workforce profile, capability requirements, adequacy of staffing levels, adequacy of qualifications, adequacy of accreditations such as WWVP, supplementary or alternative labour options, attraction and retention issues and the use of volunteers, trainees/cadets or interns.
3. Examine and report on workplace culture and provide advice on any systemic and institutional issues.
 4. Examine any claims made in relation to inappropriate conduct and behaviours and provide advice on:
 - best practice responses to such complaints
 - whether referral of such complaints should be made to any other authority
 - what support services should be provided to complainants.
 5. Examine and report on the existing workforce policies and complaints management practices to ensure their relevance and appropriateness in achieving satisfactory outcomes for all parties.
 6. Provide findings and recommendations for further improving workforce culture
 7. The Review should consider requirements demanded by relevant federal, state and local governments interacting as a stakeholder, and other relevant authorities, **including assessment of the Conservatorium's adherence to, and alignment with, the Key Performance Measures (KPMs) contractually required by the**

NSW Department of Education to attract and maintain funding eligibility through the Regional Conservatorium Grants Program.¹

8. Establish a factual record of circumstances relating to the request to borrow the Ruth Whyte bequest piano in August 2025.
9. Establish a factual record of matters relating to how a person qualifies for membership of Murray Conservatorium and attendance at an Annual General Meeting (AGM).

¹ Additional text added to Draft Terms of Reference for this version shown in **bold and teal text**.

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Terms of Reference

Currently in DRAFT (v2.0) format

Submissions close 11:59pm Friday 1 November 2025.

Final versions released Saturday 2 November 2025.

Requirements for participation

Principles

All participants, stakeholders and interested parties have a right to expect the Independent Review will be conducted fairly, safely and honestly.

Regardless of their views and opinions, everyone wishing to contribute to the Review will be provided with channels and opportunities to do so.

All parties have the right to expect that processes implemented during the Review will:

- ensure all participants are treated equally
- maximise and encourage participation
- ensure the highest quality of factual, evidence-based and useful information will be elicited
- establish an environment that maximises contributions to the Review's conduct and its outcomes.

Not providing public commentary

A condition placed upon all participants is that there is to be no public commentary, including, but not limited to:

- Posts on social media
- Statements to media outlets
- Speeches, statements or reflections upon individuals and the Review process at public events
- Publishing comments in blogs, newsletters and through other channels.

There will be a zero-tolerance policy on this requirement, ensuring no individual or organisation may claim doubt about what commentary is acceptable or unacceptable.

This requirement is in place from 6 October 2025.

Why this requirement is in place

Experience shows that, intentional or not, providing public commentary is the most likely way to harm or derail a fair process.

Watt Advocacy & Communications uses this requirement throughout many investigations and reviews conducted over more than a decade to help ensure Review processes and outcomes meet the principles identified above.

Public comment, media statements and social media posts (for example) can be used to intimidate participants, discourage involvement, and undermine confidentiality goals.

It is inappropriate for accusations, speculation and allegations to be part of a public commentary running alongside the Review. They should be raised directly with the Review team for their consideration and investigation.

Removal from the Review

If someone wishes to make public comments and undermine the fair process, established by attempting to influence opinion or perceptions of reputation (good or bad), they will self-eliminate from the Review.

Any person choosing to breach this requirement will no longer be a participant in the review.

Any person discovered to provide public statements 'anonymously' will be excluded if they are identified.

If asked to make a public comment

Any participant asked to make a public comment should provide the following statement, or words to the effect:

It is a requirement of my participation in the Independent Review into the Murray Conservatorium that I do not make any public comment, including online and to media queries.

The Independent Review team can provide a copy of the principles and rationale for this requirement, and how it underpins a confidential and fair process.

Please direct your questions or requests to the Independent Review team via email Admin@WattAdvocacy.com or call Review Team Leader Kel Watt on 0411 707 489.

Questions



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