

Andrea Hull: Moving to the Melbourne Model

[[The University of Melbourne Voice Vol. 1, No. 7 - /uninewsarchive.php?volume=16&number=10&publication=un](#) 11 - 25 June 2007]

The VCA plans to come on stream with the Melbourne Model in 2009.

The Melbourne Model and its associated curriculum reform bring landmark changes for the University of Melbourne and the Victorian College of the Arts (VCA). The VCA, a long-time affiliate of the University, has become a faculty of the University under the radical educational reforms which are reshaping Melbourne. VCA Director Professor Andrea Hull speaks to University of Melbourne Voice writer Silvia Dropulich on the VCA officially joining the University.

Q What will the VCA's move to the University of Melbourne mean for the VCA, both in the long term and in the short term?

A The VCA has had a long association with the University of Melbourne as an affiliated body whose courses have been accredited by the University of Melbourne for 16 years, so the relationship was already a good one.

The big change is the change in governance and the loss of the VCA's independent Act of Parliament. The governing authority of the VCA was the VCA Council whose authority was derived from the (State Government) VCA Act and the Director was the CEO of the VCA with accountability to the VCA Council. That Act was rescinded and the University Council is now the ultimate authority.

The past two years have been dominated by negotiations and then transition tasks as we move to University systems and organisational structures. Now we are responding to the challenges of the Growing Esteem strategy and the Melbourne Model.

Q Has there been any trade-off for the loss of independence?

A The VCA educates and trains artists in drama, dance, film and television, art, music and production - what we do and how we measure ourselves is commensurate with the world's best.

In order to train artists at the highest level there has to be an upfront investment. The Federal Government's educational reforms under Minister Nelson led to a 35 per cent reduction in funding for the VCA. In 2004 the University of Melbourne was directed by the Minister to restore that funding. This was a difficult position for both the University of Melbourne and the VCA. The VCA needed a sustainable future and the Heads of Agreement between the VCA and University gave the VCA Council that assurance.

There are also clearly mutual benefits - the University of Melbourne now has a prestigious visual and performing arts faculty with a history dating back 140 years and the VCA has all the benefits of being part of Australia's leading University. Under the Melbourne Model there will be enhanced curriculum options for both VCA and University of Melbourne undergraduates.

Q The University of Melbourne has a Faculty of Music and the VCA has a School of Music - as a potential music student, where do I go, and how do I decide which is the right music course for me?



VCA Director Professor Andrea Hull

The Voice

Cover Story

- [Walking the regulatory tightrope](#) - /news/5889/?menuLink=/uninews.php

- [Piecing it together](#) - /news/5890/?menuLink=/uninews.php

News

- [Caucasus treasures uncovered](#) - /news/5891/?menuLink=/uninews.php

- [Engaging adaptation](#) - /news/5892/?menuLink=/uninews.php

- [From the Vice-Chancellor](#) - /news/5893/?menuLink=/uninews.php

- [New Provost's Model view](#) - /news/5897/?menuLink=/uninews.php

- [Way out Westwood](#) - /news/5906/?menuLink=/uninews.php

- [Innovation with paint](#) - /news/5907/?menuLink=/uninews.php

Reviews and Previews

- [Getting under your skin](#) - /news/5900/?menuLink=/uninews.php

- [The truth about Mother](#) - /news/5901/?menuLink=/uninews.php

- [Footy passion play](#) - /news/5902/?menuLink=/uninews.php

Knowledge Transfer

- [The psychology of dehumanisation](#) - /news/5894/?menuLink=/uninews.php

- [PM Editor shock!](#) - /news/5895/?menuLink=/uninews.php

- [Melbourne's a better place](#) - /news/5896/?menuLink=/uninews.php

- [Over the moon with India](#) - /news/5898/?menuLink=/uninews.php

Alumni

- [Alumni talent at work](#) - /news/5899/?menuLink=/uninews.php

Sport

A It is an issue for the University. Both the Faculty of Music and the VCA School of Music have equally distinguished records. We both do some things the same, eg. we both have strong classical repertoire and composition courses, but we do other things differently.

The VCA has an outstanding Improvisation and Jazz Department and a vocal department which underpins music theatre and opera. The Faculty of Music has strong research, musicology and music therapy programs.

There are six new generation degrees currently on the table, one of which is Music. The VCA plans to come on stream with the Melbourne Model in 2009 and the University of Melbourne has advised that there will be only one New Generation Visual and Performing Arts degree. Clearly then the VCA and the Faculty of Music will deliver into one new generation degree and over coming months discussions will need to take place.

Q How do you see the Melbourne Model and its curriculum reforms impacting on the VCA's courses?

A The Melbourne Model is challenging for the VCA because students here are ready to get on with their professional, intensive training. Students at the VCA are highly motivated and focused. Many of them are mature age having already undertaken tertiary training and have had life and artistic experience. Dancers and classical musicians tend to be school leavers, and they need to maintain physical intensive engagement with their practice to be competitive.

In accordance with international best practice for leading artists training and education institutions, entry to the VCA is talent based, through audition or portfolio and interview. Any New Generation undergraduate degree for the visual and performing arts will therefore need to recognise this specialisation and talent and allow for intensive majors or streams in all of the art forms.

In 1999 the VCA introduced its own 'breadth' equivalent with a common curriculum for all undergraduates for 37 credit points. This 'arts in historical, social, political, ethical context' program introduces our students to different ways of knowing, and encourages dialogue and collaboration across the artforms. We are keen to retain the Common Curriculum or a form of it as a breadth subject open to all University of Melbourne undergraduates.

For VCA students, particularly those with no tertiary education experience, access to University courses under the breadth component will be a positive option. The VCA welcomes the opportunity to deliver specifically designed breadth subjects to a broader University cohort. Given the 75 credit points principle, to remain nationally and internationally competitive in the education and training of artists we'll need to consider a specialist Honours year - as I understand the Music Faculty has done.

The VCA has only recently commenced its internal discussions on how best to respond to the Melbourne Model template and consultation with students, staff and industry/professional colleagues will inform that response.

• [On the path to success -](#)
</news/5904/?menuLink=/uninews.php>

• [The University of Melbourne in](#)
[Community Sporting Events -](#)
</news/5905/?menuLink=/uninews.php>

• **What's On**

• <http://events.unimelb.edu.au/>
- <http://events.unimelb.edu.au/>