



# Gwabegar Public School



## Case Study

***No longer beating around the bush when it comes to music  
Music is now beating a path to their door!***

## Executive Summary

**The Music Room** broke down the barriers of distance, time, size, staffing and expense. It has proven to be the perfect solution for Gwabegar Public School.

Finally there is a viable option for schools in rural and remote areas, schools of small size or schools who cannot attract a music teacher on site. Students at these schools no longer need to miss out on a quality music program.

# Overview



Gwabegar Public School is a remote, small school in the north west of NSW. The township is located approximately two and a half hours north of Dubbo and two and a half hours west of Tamworth.

Student population is 7 students spread across Kindergarten - Year 5. Students all come from a low SES environment with limited ability to fund their own musical development.

The school is classified as rural and remote.



# The Challenges

Gwabegar Public School faces the dual challenge of being both small and remote. This means that the prospect of being able to contract or employ a specialist music teacher is almost impossible.

Attracting quality onsite educational programs and being able to provide their students with the same opportunities as larger, metropolitan schools is a perpetual challenge.

Acting principal, Katie Sullivan explains *"I have found that most educational programs are quite expensive and require a lot of set up for the program. Being a rural and remote school, we are located quite a distance from neighbouring towns, so the opportunity to be engaged in quality Professional development for teachers can be difficult (ie musica viva) and can mean long travel times for students to go to a performance which ultimately impacts on their learning time."*

Being such a small school, in a remote location, with a single teacher, also acting as principal, Ms Sullivan, who confesses to having limited musical skills and no success in attracting a musically minded teacher.

Ms Sullivan expressed that it was sad that there were in fact instruments at the school but no one knew how to use them.

She says *"I wanted the students to have an appreciation of music as I believe it is important for all children to be exposed to music and develop a love for it. I also wanted students to have a basic idea of notes, beats and rhythms."*

# The Solution

Gwabegar Public School commenced the Music Room program at the start of Term 1, 2020 as part of a trial program.

Live, interactive weekly music lessons were streamed directly into the classroom. Each lesson follows the format below:

- Knowledge (approx. ten mins) - musical elements are introduced and explained
- Skill (approx. ten mins) - students will use this knowledge in a practical way, either by singing, playing, composing or moving to music
- Explore (five mins) music appreciation - a short video or a fun activity showcasing different styles, genres and cultures in music.

At the completion of the trial term, Gwabegar Public school re-engaged The Music Room to continue through to the end of 2020 and potentially into next year.

## Curriculum Outcomes

Ms Sullivan has been delighted with the success of the Music Room program.

She believes that it has greatly assisted in the teaching of beat and rhythm. Despite the multi stage groups in the one class, the lesson has successfully catered to each of the ability levels - with extension exercises utilised where necessary.

Ms Sullivan made a special comment regarding the instructor *"Ben is fantastic with the students and has the patience of a saint given that there is such a range of abilities in the room. He is engaging and the boys particularly are excited to have a male teacher."*

Ms Sullivan says she has been surprised at just how engaged the children have been, saying *"Students are very excited to participate in music lessons and look forward to the lesson every week....Students are wanting to learn more about music and are now asking about learning to play an instrument!"*

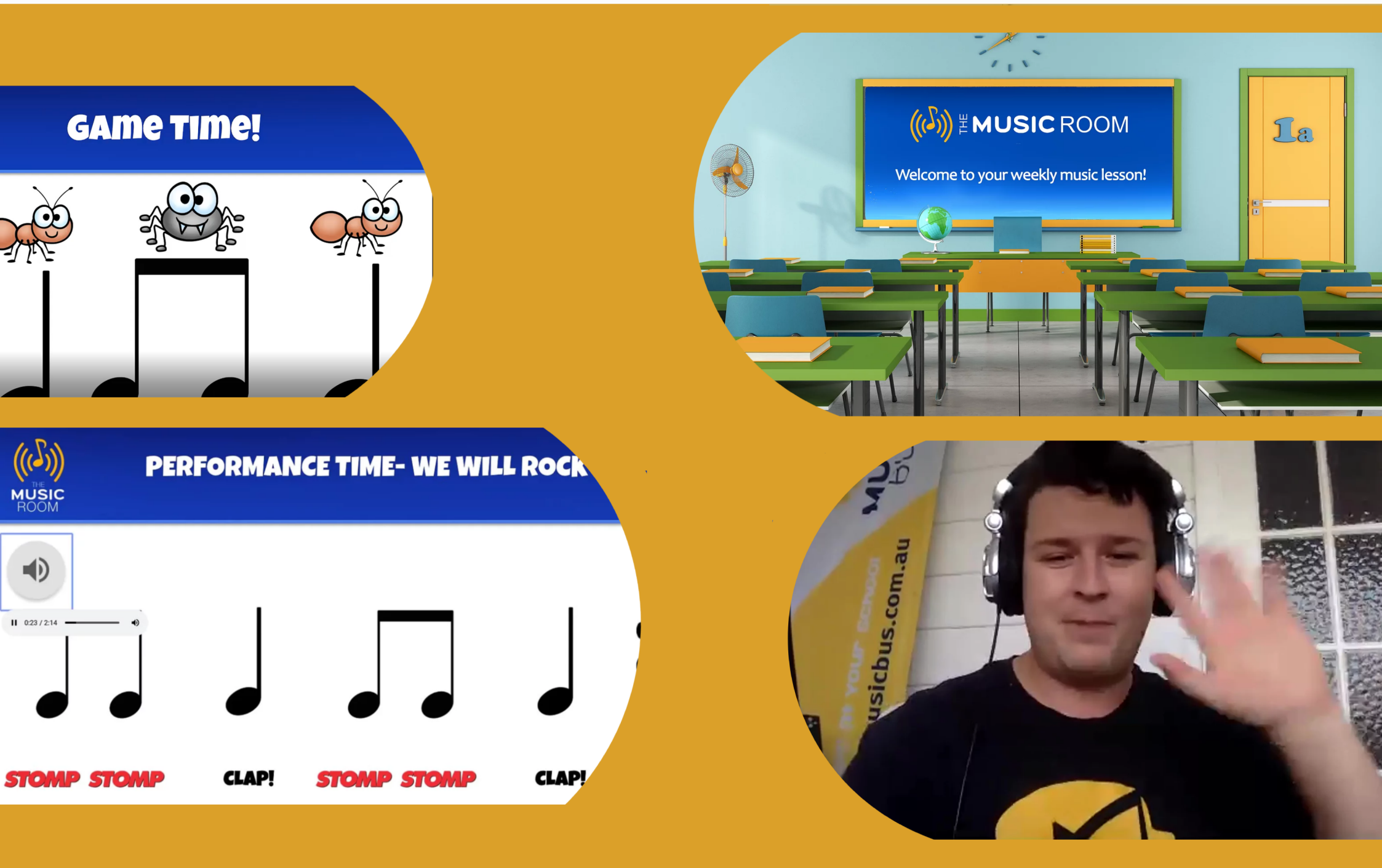


# Other Benefits

Ms Sullivan has been very pleased to see 3 students, who normally don't engage on a high level with their learning, across most subjects, showing a keen interest in the music lessons - now constantly asking about music. She said there has definitely been an increase in all the students' interest in music and she is hopeful that this will spark some of them to learn an instrument

The benefits of music, across other subjects, in particular mathematics, have long been espoused, however Ms Sullivan was able to identify an unanticipated outcome. One of the unexpected benefits of the implementation of the program was the cross over to their spelling. Some of the students have been using their new found rhythmic skills and division of beat learnt in The Music Room class to apply to their learning of syllables in spelling.

Certainly a vaulable offshoot!



# The Verdict and Moving Forward

Ms Sullivan explains that:

- The program was easy to implement and technology very simple to understand
- Lessons have run very smoothly and the level of support prior to and on lesson day is fantastic
- The program was affordable and gave good value for money
- On any occasion that the school needed to reschedule due to a clash of schedule, The Music room was able to accommodate.
- Communication has been good

The Music Room broke down the barriers of distance, time, size, staffing and expense. It has proven to be the perfect solution for Gwabegar Public School.

Finally there is a viable option for schools in rural and remote areas, schools of small size or schools who cannot attract a music teacher on site. Students at these schools no longer need to miss out on a quality music program.

*“We will be looking at continuing the program next year. Initially, we were only going to use the program for term 1, however, the students all commented on how much they enjoy music and I could see that they were genuinely interested in learning more about music and decided to continue on for the rest of the year.”* says Ms Sullivan.





## Final Word from the Principal



*“Students have been thoroughly engaged in lessons and look forward to their weekly lesson. Having very little music background myself it has been fantastic to come across a program that caters to the levels and abilities of all students, that is fun and engaging for everyone in the class. The only complaints I receive from students is that the lesson is too short and that it is only once a week!”*

*- Katie Sullivan  
Principal - Gwabegar Public School*