



This document serves as our official response to the “St Mary’s – FAQ” created by the Dean of St Mary’s Cathedral Perth, Fr. Sean Fernandez. The purpose of the Dean’s document was purportedly to “inform” and persuade musicians who were uncertain about continuing their working relationship with the Cathedral and its Choir.

However, we have identified numerous inaccuracies and misleading statements within the document.

At Every Voice Matters, we firmly uphold the values of truth and transparency, especially in circumstances like this, where clarity is crucial. To ensure the unfiltered truth is made available, we have addressed the claims presented by the Dean.

In this response:

- The Dean’s original words remain unchanged and unedited, including all content, spelling, and grammar.
- Our responses and clarifications are provided in red, categorised as “FACTUAL TRUTH,” or “CORRECT ANSWER” to distinguish them clearly.

We invite you to review this document, confident that it reflects our commitment to honesty, accountability, and respect for all parties involved.

Yours faithfully,

Every Voice Matters (Current and ex-members Musicians of St. Mary’s Cathedral Perth)

Disclaimer

The Every Voice Matters online campaign, aimed at informing the general public about the hasty and ill-informed review that led to Jacinta Jakovcevic's unfair redundancy, has not been instigated by Jacinta Jakovcevic nor created using information provided by her.

All content shared has been published in consultation with certain current and former musicians of the Cathedral music program, who are also members of Every Voice Matters. The purpose of this campaign is to promote transparency and fairness.





St Mary's Cathedral Music Program Frequently Asked Questions

This document has been prepared as a public document to ensure everyone has accurate information concerning the Music Program Vision going forward and the process undertaken.

Unfortunately over the past few weeks information has been circulated about the recent Music Program Review which is inaccurate. The Dean of the Cathedral wishes to avoid a situation where inaccurate information causes serious damage to the church, anxiety amongst the music program participants and interferes with a peaceful place of pray for all.

The Dean of the Cathedral seeks to work collaboratively to achieve an exciting vision for the Music Program that has been shared, which will further enrich the St Marys Cathedral community and beyond.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. How long has the Music Program at St Mary's been established?

The Cathedral's Music Program has a rich heritage of music spanning over 150 years, enriching the liturgical and cultural life of the Cathedral and wider Perth community.

FACTUAL TRUTH:

The music program, in its various forms, has been running for more than 180 years.

As the Dean and the person responsible for the alleged Review, it is incumbent upon him to know the basic fact of how old the Program he is trying to change and supposedly steer into the future.

2. What was the objective of the Music Program Review?

- The objective of the review was to **refresh** the **Music Program's Vision** to **future proof** the program and meet the aspirations of the Cathedral.
- The review was not a review of the current program, it was solely aimed at the future of the program to meet the aspirations of the Cathedral.

FACTUAL TRUTH:

Firstly, the proposed Vision for the music program had already been in progress under Jacinta's direction. The only thing blocking the realisation of this vision was the Dean's denial of support for the Music Department for a long period of time. An example of this was his refusal to hire a new music secretary for 6 months despite repeated requests from the Music Department.

Secondly, how was it possible to determine that the program needed to be 'future-proofed' without reviewing the current state of the program? This simply is nonsensical and illogical.

Furthermore, only a week before saying that the review was 'not a review of the current program,' the Dean wrote in the parish bulletin that the current state of the program was 'not adequate' to achieve this Vision. Again, he is contradicting himself. Because, if it were true that the purported Review was not-



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-a review of the program under Jacinta, then how was it able to determine that the Program was 'not adequate?'

The Dean needs to get his story straight; otherwise, all these contradictions just lend credence to our substantial claim that this was, in reality, a sham of a review.

When we investigate the different versions of the time frame that the Review had supposedly taken place, this greatly explains why we have lost trust in the Dean's words and his accompanying decisions towards the so-called Review.

3. Was anyone consulted during the Music Program Review process?

Yes, a variety of stakeholders were consulted during the process on a number of occasions, including Jacinta Jakovcevic (current Director of Music) and other experts in the field over a two (2) month process.

FACTUAL TRUTH:

Most of the Review was conducted more than two years ago. We can verify that the outcome of that review clearly recommended that Jacinta be retained and that she be supported financially and administration-wise.

On the other hand, the dubious review that was conducted this year was solely undertaken by the Dean himself who is in no way a musician, and a business consultant who has a music qualification of an AMEB Grade Five piano level. This is clearly unacceptable for a high-level review of a niche program that promotes sacred music in a cathedral setting.

To say that the so-called Review was poorly conceived and designed is an understatement, but to do it in flagrant disregard of the inputs from the relevant stakeholders – us, the musicians, and the parents of young choristers – is tantamount to a grave injustice, not only to Jacinta and the musicians but also to the whole Program.

4. Why wasn't everyone consulted and have the opportunity to participate in developing the future vision of the music program?

- Unfortunately, it is not possible to include everyone in the process to develop the Future Vision of the Music Program.

FACTUAL TRUTH:

This may be true, but no effort whatsoever was taken for this process to be made transparent and inclusive. The fact remains that not a single member of the Choir – be it a musician, organist, instrumentalist or parent, somebody who actually has the experience and insight of being part of the Program - was informed or consulted. In addition, the people who were supposed to oversee the Review and who thereafter concluded the 'inadequacy' of the Program under Jacinta had not even-



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- attended any of the rehearsals to see how training entails and how the myriad of relationships that have been established for many years underpins the success of the Program.

Therefore, to go in as an absolute outsider with nary an idea of how the Program works on the pretence of 'futureproofing' the Program, is an exercise of self-destruction. Again, it further affirms our claim that the alleged Review is a complete sham.

5. Who is the responsible for the Music Program?

Reverend Dr Sean Fernandez, Dean of St Marys Cathedral.

CLARIFICATION:

Yes, the Dean is the administrator of the operations in the Cathedral Parish. However, any good manager must know his own personal strengths and weaknesses. The Dean is in no way a musician. His forte is not music. He does not have a background in music, much more so, a highly technical knowledge of sacred music in a cathedral setting.

He should know when to relegate such responsibilities to the true expert – Jacinta. After 24 years of being part of the Program and leading it, Jacinta is the foremost authority on the Cathedral Music Program. Not the Dean. Not the consultant whose sole claim to a musical background is having a Grade Five piano level. Not even the outside experts the Dean consulted with years ago and who had recognised Jacinta's capacity and capability to lead the Program.

6. Have the changes been communicated to stakeholders?

- Yes, communication of the future plan for the Music Program, the vision and the changes afoot have been transparently and openly shared with music program participants, including staff, lay clerks, musicians, parents of student choristers, participating schools and parishioners.
- Additionally, Fr Fernandez has met with a number of stakeholders over the past two (2) weeks and continues to be available to anyone who wishes to discuss the changes and the future.

FACTUAL TRUTH:

The only time that the musicians and parents were informed of the purported Review and the resulting effect of Jacinta's redundancy was on October 29. This was the first time we ever heard of the Review and Jacinta's redundancy. It goes without saying that we were all in shock and we still are in disbelief over Jacinta's impeachment after 24 years of loyal, excellent service to the Program.

Yes, an email that can be described as ambiguous at best was sent to many but not all musicians. The email relayed substantial changes to the Program, but it did not provide any basis by which these changes were arrived at. There was also a mention of the KPIs. However, in our initial meetings with the Dean, when we asked what those KPIs were and the concrete plans that were made for the purported 'vision,' the Dean failed to produce any documents addressing those concerns.



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This was simply not acceptable to many stakeholders who wished to see concrete proposals and ideas and to understand why a highly successful program was unceremoniously upended, and a devoted, long-serving leader was made redundant. What is more appalling is that Jacinta was not even acknowledged nor thanked for her 24 years of service.

While the Dean mentioned in his email that he was open to meeting with musicians, parents and anyone who wished to discuss the changes, he had declared to each one who sought a meeting with him that he would not change his decision, nor would he accommodate any modifications to the plans he was going to implement.

To this day, he has continued to brush off all concerns from the stakeholders. In addition, he has not even bothered to check on the welfare of the children and families who have experienced a drastic, traumatic change in their leader's status.

The only time he has adjusted his approach is when he acknowledged the bad phrasing of his bulletin notice and reworded it following pressure from the musical experts that conducted the initial review, as they didn't appreciate their report being used to justify Jacinta's redundancy when there clearly was no such recommendation.

7. What is the vision for the Music Program going forward?

- A Music Program that is considered a centre of excellence built on a best-in-class education program.
- A Music Program that is connected, supported, sponsored, and recognised by the music community as pre-emanate liturgical choir programs in Western Australia and in the Top Quartile of Australia.
- A music program that works closely and collaboratively with local schools to compliment and support their programs.
- A music program that is frequently invited to perform and collaborate with other best in class music programs and institutions both nationally and internationally.
- A music venue that is frequently sought out and utilised by local and non Perth based liturgical musicians.
- A music program that is inclusive, nurtures and retains male and female choristers with a broad repertoire befitting their abilities.

FACTUAL TRUTH:

- It already is and has produced many world-class musicians, despite many challenges.
- It is highly connected with the community and sponsors and is highly regarded around Australia. An example of this was the 2024 visit of Timothy Davey (Director of Music, St Francis Xavier Cathedral, Adelaide) and Astrid Sengkey (Assistant Director of Music) to the department. With funds from the Archdiocese of Adelaide, they travelled to Perth and spent five days observing the Program, meeting with Jacinta, learning how to run a successful music program, and finally taking these experiences back to Adelaide with them, enriching their own ministry.



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- The number of schools collaborating with the music program is the highest number ever. Each student takes the skills learned from Jacinta back to their school. A prominent example of this is the annual Orchestral Mass.

Since its start in 2015, this annual project has become one of the highlights of Perth's music calendar. It is a celebration of young talent and involves extensive engagement with the wider community on many levels drawing many (Catholic and non-Catholic alike) to the Cathedral.

This year, it gathered around 120 participants (students and their teachers) from schools and tertiary educational institutes across Perth, forming a symphony orchestra and massed choir around the Cathedral Choir at the Cathedral's 11 AM Solemn Sung Mass on Sunday 21st July.

In 2024, the Program, under Jacinta's management, achieved participation from 25 schools - the highest number to date.

- Collaborating with other best-in-class international music programs is already taking place. The latest collaboration was between Johann Vexo, former choir organist at Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris, France.
- As evidenced above and by many other concerts, the Cathedral had been used frequently by local and non-Perth-based liturgical musicians. WASO has a yearly concert at the Cathedral, as well as The Sixteen, one of the world's most renowned choral ensembles particularly specialising in music of the Renaissance, which had a very successful concert a few years ago. Many other musicians also sought out the Cathedral as a venue (WAAPA, UWA). This is complementary to the Cathedral's own series of concerts, none of which the Dean has ever attended nor supported, either by regular proactive advertisement in the parish bulletin or at masses.
- Inclusivity is already firmly in place under Jacinta's leadership. Except for the Cathedral Choir itself, which is a safe and nurturing place just for boys to thrive and grow into their voices and which upholds the great tradition of the boys' choirs in cathedrals, all other parts of the music program include female musicians. In fact, majority of the Vocal Ensemble, Camerata and the orchestral pool are female members. The repertoire has never been broader, more Catholic or more interesting than under Jacinta's direction.

8. To achieve its vision, the Music Program has identified seven (7) pillars;

- Education.
- Community Engagement & Reputation.
- Liturgical Experience.
- Collaborations.
- Venue of Choice.
- National Benchmark.
- Proudly Sponsored & Supported by the community.



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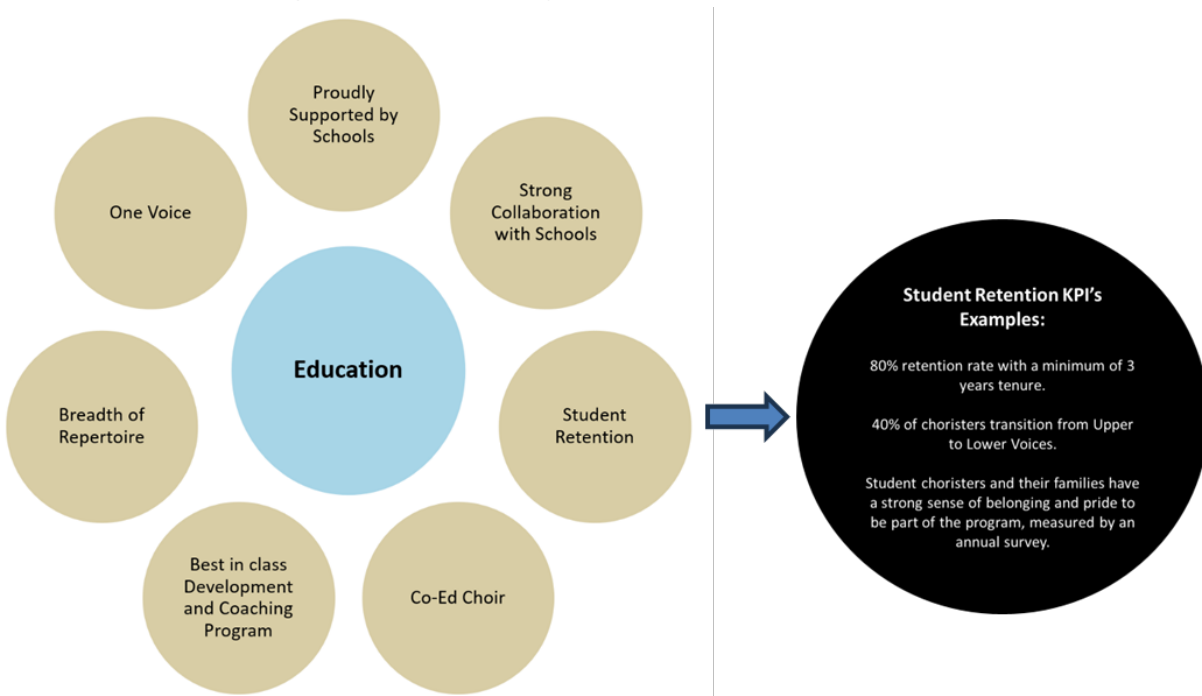
FACTUAL TRUTH:

Each pillar had already been met by the music program led by Jacinta to an extremely high standard as detailed above (also, please see our Annual Report).

9. Can you share any further information about the refreshed Music Program Vision?

- The refreshed Music Program Vision has Seven (7) Strategic Pillars.
- Each Strategic Pillar have Focus Areas and associated Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) to measure success.
- The **Education Strategic Pillar** is exemplified below:

Education Strategic Pillar Example



FACTUAL TRUTH:

These pillars would have been more credible had Jacinta and the relevant stakeholders been informed of them even before any decisions on the restructuring and the supposed 'Vision' of the Program had been implemented. It would have been better had they been made available upon request during the initial meetings with the Dean.

Most importantly, the Program under Jacinta's leadership has always met all the requirements set out by the Dean. Thus, any specification of the supposed Vision is ornamental at best. What Jacinta needed all along was the Dean's steady and wholehearted support towards the musicians and the Program.



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10. What are the organisational changes to achieve the Music Program's refreshed Vision?

- The current lead position of the Director of Music will be made redundant, effective 2 December 2024.
- A new position of **Master of Music (Master of Liturgical Music)** is currently available and being advertised to achieve the vision of the Music Program in a full-time capacity; and
- A new position of **Principal Organist**, will be established and act as Deputy Master of Music in a part-time capacity; AND
- **Vocal Coaches** will be hired to support student choristers who will receive private 1-on-1 vocal tuition between choir rehearsals.

FACTUAL TRUTH:

What happened to our Catholic traditions when the Director of Music is now named Master of Music? It has taken on the mould of Protestantism, similar to that of the Church of England.

11. What has Fr Fernandez advised the musicians and parents who have enquired?

- Fr Fernandez has acknowledged the wonderful contribution that the current Director of Music, Jacinta Jakovcevic has made to Cathedral music over many years
- Fr Fernandez has provided reassurance that the Music Program will not only continue but it will be further enhanced as a result of the refreshed Vision.
- The future program will invite female choristers to join the program for the first time.
- The new program will be developed into a co-ed program, with both male and female student choristers encouraged to participate.
- Fr Fernandez has advised that there are a few numbers being added to support the vision:
 - Master of Music; and
 - Principal Organist; and
 - Vocal Coaches

FACTUAL TRUTH:

- The Dean had not acknowledged Jacinta's 24 years of service, not until he was called out by many for ignoring her. In addition, he has made Jacinta feel very unsupported for a number of years on different levels, such as his non-approval of an administration assistant and his non-support of the promotion of the Program's concerts and other activities.
- On providing reassurance, he has only done so with empty words. He had not given any updates nor any assurances as to how the Program was to be run in the interim following Jacinta's redundancy. He had purposefully led the musicians and parents in the dark. The music department was thrown into chaos because he refused to work something out with the musicians. Because of this, the masses from the 2nd Sunday of Advent through to Christmas Day were inhabited by some ill-informed musicians and sadly looked and sounded very Protestant and did not fully align with our Catholic traditions and the liturgical music guidelines of what is normally sung and played at St. Mary's Cathedral.



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- On the notion of championing a coed choir – this is unnecessary as there had already been two other choirs wherein female choristers could join. St Mary's is one of the last Cathedral choirs of boys and men in the country, and it is important to uphold that tradition and support the

development of boys as singers. This is rarely done outside exclusively male environments. This plan has also been implemented without proper consultation with relevant stakeholders and is akin to telling Trinity or Aquinas Colleges that they must start accepting female students, completely undermining their roles in education.

- It is interesting how the Dean has promoted the tri-level structure of the leadership roles under the re-structured Program, given how he has always refused to increase the Program budget and had even delayed the hiring of a new assistant for Jacinta for 6 months. Now that Jacinta has been effectively taken out of the picture, he can immediately provide the massive amounts of money needed for a new position and the hiring of vocal coaches. One cannot help but question whether there really has been a genuine redundancy in this case. A spending spree is antithetical to an organisation calling for the redundancy of an indispensable and highly qualified employee.

12. True & False Statements

Statement	True or False
This decision was made without proper transparency or stakeholder involvement, overlooking core Church principles of accountability and consultation. FACTUAL TRUTH: There was no transparency to this review and due process was not followed. Jacinta was not afforded a reasonable opportunity to respond to the alleged Review. Thus, any decision that was thereafter made was decidedly spurious and baseless. Moreover, the restructuring was all done in secret and no representatives from the musicians and parents were consulted.	False Correct Answer: True
The past performance of Music Program was reviewed during this process FACTUAL TRUTH: How is it possible to steer a program into the future while not reviewing the current program? This is an absolute paradox. Either that or the Review was drawing conclusions from non-existent facts.	False Correct Answer: True
The proposed restructure threatens to dismantle a highly successful, community-supported program, severing critical relationships with schools, local musicians, and even international networks. Help us save a legacy of excellence and community engagement. FACTUAL TRUTH: The restructuring has already disrupted the Program completely. By removing Jacinta, the Dean has already destroyed ties to many local musicians and sponsors and is now facing a boycott by many large reputable WA music groups.	False Correct Answer: True



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The current director, Jacinta Jakovcevic, has tirelessly built a music program that enriches both the Cathedral and wider community. FACTUAL TRUTH: Indeed, she has tirelessly built a music program that enriches both the Cathedral and wider community. But what does she get in return? She was made to feel unsupported and unappreciated. This, after 24 years of unwavering service to the Program.	True Correct Answer: True
Jacinta Jakovcevic is welcome to apply for any of the new positions advertised. FACTUAL TRUTH: All evidence and past experiences with the Dean point to her not being selected despite being the best candidate. In fact, the Dean should have acknowledged Jacinta's contribution and vocation for the Program and assured her of his continued support. The crucial question here is whether there has been a genuine redundancy where the employer no longer needs the employee in any capacity whatsoever due to the employer's change in its operations, such as automation, contracting out of the job or dissolution of the enterprise. None of that has happened here. In fact, somebody else is doing the exact same job that Jacinta had been doing before. Therefore, why is there even a need for her to apply for a position that she had occupied and has been willing and able to carry out?	True Correct Answer: (Technically) True
The Positions are being advertised in Australia, United Kingdom and United States FACTUAL TRUTH: There should not have been any advertisement of the position as it is the same position Jacinta holds. It is the same role with the description reworded.	True Correct Answer: True
The choir will be built to support a Co-Ed (Girls and Boys) program going forward. FACTUAL TRUTH: As has been reiterated above, the program is already co-ed. It is important to maintain the boys' choir tradition and support boys in their musical education. There are already other choirs at the Cathedral that are populated by female majority and are designed to complement and enhance the Cathedral Choir. These female-inclusive choirs came to fruition under the directives of Jacinta's, who recognised the importance of women in sacred music-making. Most importantly, Jacinta wanted to ensure that everyone has access to world class religious music education.	True Correct Answer: False
A review of the required organisation structure, resources and budget to deliver the vision and aspirations of the Cathedral going forward was part of the process. FACTUAL TRUTH:	True Correct Answer:



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This purported Review was done more than 2 years ago. When the Dean did not get his desired outcome of finding the program inadequate and being able to get rid of Jacinta, he sat on it. In the meantime, any support given to Jacinta had been sparse and very hard to obtain. He then employed a Review that, for all intents and purposes, has been a sham. The Review direly lacked transparency, accountability and proper consultation with relevant stakeholders. Moreover, the results of the initial review were not passed onto Jacinta How could she improve the choir if she did not even know there were “issues” as deemed by the Dean?	(Technically) True
To achieve St Mary's Music Program's Vision the current organisation design and structure was reviewed. FACTUAL TRUTH: Again, the Dean contradicts himself. He says twice already that the current program was not reviewed.	True Correct Answer: False
The Review determined that the current organisation design and structure wasn't adequate to achieve the Music Programs Vision. FACTUAL TRUTH: To achieve the 'Vision,' the only thing stopping this was the Dean and his refusal to support the music department. Again, given that the Dean has maintained that the Review was not a review of the current Program under Jacinta, how can he make a decision then on whether the Program is inadequate without having to review its current state of affairs? Also, it has been proven many times from the multiple proofs that we have laid out that the Program under Jacinta's leadership was not inadequate. To say that it was 'inadequate' would be tantamount to going against the many testimonies of experienced musicians from around Australia and the world of how superbly and professionally Jacinta had been leading the Program for many, many years, and would have happily continued to do so if not for the unjust dismissal by the Dean.	True Correct Answer: False

13. What support does St Mary's need?

In the journey together, please keep everyone involved in your prayers. Please offer your kindness to one another as change can be difficult.

Your support during this period and your assistance in welcoming the Master of Music, Principal Organist, and Vocal Coaches upon their appointments would be greatly appreciated.

Fr Fernandez is available meet with you to discuss any questions or concerns you may have. You can email him directly at dean.cathedral@perthcatholic.org.au.



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FACTUAL TRUTH:

Before talking about support and kindness, the Dean has to take accountability for all the pain, uncertainty and injustice that he has caused Jacinta. He and the Archdiocese need to ask themselves,

“Have we checked on Jacinta’s welfare? Have we done what the Lord God has asked of us as pastors of the Church?”

Then he needs to reflect on these questions, “Have I truly heeded the call of Safeguarding within the Church? Over and above the glistening signages, have I really taken care of the overall wellbeing and welfare of the affected children?”

If he can answer ‘yes’ to all questions, then he can truly say that he has heeded own his call for ‘Ephphatha’ – to loosen his tongue to speak and to open his ears to hear. Otherwise, it is all empty, insincere talk.