

# AUSTUNE RESILIENCE THROUGH SONG WRITING

Created by Hugh McDonald



Hugh has developed a unique program for school-aged children to introduce them to the song writing process. Songs are written collaboratively and recorded with professional equipment to produce an album of material.

Children learn a range of useful cross-disciplinary skills, including singing, musical arrangement, literary skills, recording technology and a basic understanding of electronic sound recording and reproduction.

Songs are written about their lives, including friendship, sport, favourite foods, teachers, cars, pets etc...everything from happiness to sadness and loneliness to feeling loved can be expressed in song thus serving as an ever positive outlet for participants.

The program also acts as a chat forum on complex issues confronted in life as well an avenue to exploring their country of origin which is encouraged to build a cultural connection via the music bringing the students closer to their heritage.

The end product is one of diversity as each class album becomes a melting pot of sounds and ideas. For instance, stories of the migrant experience to Australia involved musical instruments unique to their cultures, making these typically passive consumers of music into a bunch of real music creators.

The positive benefits of creative music production is statistically backed by evaluative studies and the program itself proves to be instructive, rewarding, empowering and one-of-a-kind experience for these students; from rural Victorian schools, such as Poowong Consolidated School in Gippsland to Cambridge Primary School in Hoppers Crossing, and schools in Melbourne, such as Genazzano FCJ College in Kew. An indigenous community in Western Australia was also fortunate enough to take part in the program.