



ELIZABETH MACKNEY
REGISTERED MUSIC THERAPIST
BN MMUSTHY, RN RMT



20 JANUARY 2022

TO

ANTHONY EGGINS,
PARENTS, AND NDIA

**RE: ANTHONY EGGINS – PROGRAM REVIEW AND
OBJECTIVES UPDATE**

***As per the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission
Registration process Elizabeth Mackney is a Registered NDIS
Provider. This Registration is current until 2023 and the
Registration Id is: 4-3LLO-1571.***

Anthony and parents, thank you for the opportunity to continue working with you through my role as a Registered NDIS Provider of Therapeutic Supports to provide Anthony (12yrs) with a music therapy program that mainly targets building his capacity and independence in the key personal development areas of social communication, social learning, self-regulation, and self-management along while supporting him in carving out a place for himself in the local and national performing arts community and beyond (N.B. non-musical and musical goals) - all as he navigates the challenges of living with autism.

...confirmation from NDIA that: “music therapy is a therapeutic intervention recognised by the NDIS when delivered by Music Therapists registered with the Australian Music Therapy Association as part of a planned therapy program to enable a participant to meet their goals” (20 Nov 2018).



Summary of sessions, report/s and recordings:

Since Anthony's last music therapy NDIS review report, which was completed in January 2021, he has attended a total of 35 sessions. Twenty-eight of these were individual music therapy sessions (F2F = 23 & Telehealth = 5). Six were group music therapy sessions (F2F = 3 & Telehealth = 3) involving up to seven other participants, and supported by myself and community musician, Jo Young. One session was a joint music therapy and speech therapy session (i.e. speech pathologist – Jodie Boicos). During this program period Anthony has made, and/or been a part of, at least nine recordings (Songs by others = 2 & Original music by Anthony = 7 – including one combined with an original short film also made by Anthony called "Anthony In Space" – used the Puppet Pals film making app).

The two songs written by others (including myself) are publicly available. The rehearsal and recording of the first of these occurred during the first half of 2021 and shows Anthony in the national "Couch Choir" singing a harmony to "Throw Your Arms Around Me" alongside hundreds of others (mainly Australians, but also others from around the world) and Mark Seymour himself (google "Throw Your Arms Around Me Couch Choir with Mark Seymour" to view on Youtube). This recording was finalised on air during the SBS's "Australia's Biggest Singalong" hosted by Julia Zemiro and Miranda Tapsall on June 5, 2021. This represents a spectacular musical, social, national and international community outcome, and one that Anthony and the NDIS should hold their heads up high about.

The rehearsal and recording of the second song ("Loved Ones Make Us Who We Are" - an original song written by me) using Garage Band, iMovie and the Acapella App was completed in the second half of 2021, and was publicly released in recognition and celebration of "International Day Of People With Disability" on December 3, 2021. Anthony participated in this project along with approximately 40 other participants with and without disability from the local area. All the NDIS participants ($n = 30$) involved in the music video are the sole recipients of any income it makes. Up to this point in time each NDIS participant involved (including Anthony) has received \$44.80 each, meaning the music video has made more than \$1300.00 in total since its release. This is an excellent social, community and economic outcome for Anthony and his fellow musicians and friends i.e. a meaningful, productive, rewarding, inspiring and age appropriate means of earning pocket money for a boy about



to enter adolescence and with the world at his feet. His mother can provide a link to the recording on request.

The recordings of the improvisations/instrumental compositions (e.g. “Anthony’s Amin Improv” & “Study in F”) that Anthony created during sessions with me reveal his musical genius (well defined in his last NDIS review report dated January 2021 – he is a prodigy - this cannot be overstated) and his insatiable drive to explore, experiment with, and immerse himself in the various elements of music/music theory, different sounds, genres/styles, instruments, ways music can be used to enhance/convey feeling/emotion/atmosphere (e.g. with different apps - Garage Band and Puppet Pals), etc. His mother may choose to share any of these with you on request, and with Anthony’s consent. Anthony’s work in this way in both his individual sessions and group sessions has been prolific, and these recordings only represent a fraction of what he has produced in this program period.

Beyond all that has been described, one of the strongest outcomes over the past twelve months has been Anthony’s eagerness to share his spontaneous improvisations in the group context, and the confidence and joy he has derived from doing this. This has been completely new ground for Anthony and yet he proudly chose to play/perform at least two new improvisations based on musical motifs he had been experimenting with, either in individual sessions or at home, in each of the six group sessions when it was his turn to make a choice. Anthony’s face would consistently beam as his creative direction unfolded with each of these improvisations, and as he simultaneously observed his enraptured audience’s quiet, yet deeply respectful and attentive, gaze. Each performance was followed by applause and a shower of compliments from everyone in the room – supporting adults and participants alike. None of these improvisations from the group context were recorded. These are the types of experiences that help Anthony not only come to appreciate how rare his gifts are, but also how to share his gifts with others with humility, and in turn, how he can listen and respond respectfully when others are sharing their gifts, preferences, ideas, and the like in a group/social context (reciprocity). This is a critical area of ongoing focus in Anthony’s music therapy program if he is to reach his full potential both musically and otherwise (also mathematically gifted), so that the world may come to know and share in the wonder and extent of his very rare gifts.



And so, as this report reads one may mistakenly assume that Anthony's pathway over this program period has been charmed, but the truth is that 2021 has been a very challenging year for him emotionally. The utterly confounding nature of adolescence has reared its head in every corner of Anthony's life. It has been a very confusing struggle, and it is unlikely to end anytime soon. Thankfully, he is surrounded by a team of deeply insightful (particularly his parents) and highly trained people who recognise his gifts are his greatest defence against these challenges. Further, we have seen evidence in this program period, and the last, that Anthony himself turns to these gifts when he is seeking solace and relief (self-regulation and self-management). One of the more recent examples of this was when his mother contacted me on the day of a group session and said that Anthony wasn't having a good day and that he didn't want to attend the group. On this particular day the group session was to occur via telehealth. In our phone conversation I said to her that I would send the link for the session to Anthony anyway - just in case he changed his mind. To my great delight, even though his mother went to work that afternoon before the session (father supervising), Anthony independently found his way to the computer and the link and entered the group telemusictherapy session on time. This is the ultimate self-care outcome, and myself and all the other participants in the group immediately told Anthony how thrilled we were he had joined.

Music therapy is a safe and precious space for someone living with the complex needs that Anthony manages on a daily basis. It is a context in which he feels at ease and excels beyond all imagining. All should be done to ensure continued access to this targeted and specialised support of his non-musical and musical needs, goals and aspirations. Anthony's music therapy program outcomes are undeniably strong. He is a genius, an inspiration, and a role model. In just two short years a range of performing arts options have opened up to Anthony and he has responded to them beautifully. His case is an exemplar of all the NDIS promises to make a reality for people living with a disability. Anthony's regular individual sessions where he has had the opportunity to work on and through his areas of concern, resistance and vulnerabilities have been fundamental to these strong incremental social and economic outcomes. Anthony's case highlights the critical role and value of investing in long-term therapeutic relationships, as well as the value of frequency and repetition in effecting strong, rapid and sustainable outcomes. The career pathways for performing artists living with a disability in our society are, in comparison to their able-bodied peers, still unmade. It is our job to make them, demand them, and make them visible. This is a responsibility of everyone involved in Anthony's care – workers/therapists and NDIS delegates/planners alike i.e. to ensure the consistent



and sustained support of outcomes such as these, and trailblazers such as Anthony. This is the only way the social change the NDIS promises will become a reality. We are only at the beginning. This scheme is far from maturity and this is a marathon – not a sprint.

A summary of the broader evidence (including brain imaging research) and recommended music therapy techniques for working with people who are living with a range of disabilities and neuropsychological conditions, including autism, is well summarised in Michael Thaut and Volker Hoemberg's text, "The Handbook of Neurologic Music Therapy", for which they won the prestigious honour of second prize in the British Medical Association's book awards for 2015. Michael Thaut currently works as the Professor of Music, Neuroscience and Rehabilitation Services at the University of Toronto, Canada.

The integrated process of music therapy has supported, and has so much more potential to develop, Anthony's non-musical and musical abilities. When compared to other therapies this is where music therapy shines in terms of meeting the reasonable and necessary criteria of offering value for money to NDIS participants i.e. it offers a highly specialised context for working on musical and non-musical skills in a way that is integrated, motivating and meaningful to the participant while simultaneously forging and building innovative pathways within the community to support sustained social and potential economic participation. Most importantly, the dynamic, flexible and inclusive nature of the music therapy context and approach allows Anthony to start to construct a vision, and develop ambitions, for himself in this critical pre-adolescent phase of his life and as he progresses through adolescence into adulthood i.e. a basic human right and supports him beyond basic needs (an expressed intent of NDIS – defined in the online NDIS Worker Orientation module).

Funding and Frequency Recommendations for Anthony's ongoing music therapy program:

Based on the ongoing needs to be met, I recommend continuing Anthony's program of weekly individual music therapy sessions (one hour in length), and (COVID permitting) adding 16 group music therapy sessions (two hours in length) to be funded in his next 12 month NDIS plan. I recommend that the amount allocated be determined based on the current NDIS recommended rate for Therapeutic Supports for individual and group sessions respectively i.e. 193.99/hr and \$64.66/hr. Therefore, the total funding allocation for a 12 month period for the music therapy services



recommended here would need to be no less than \$12506.60. This includes the cost of a \$350.00 comprehensive report at the end of the next program period.

ANTHONY'S ONGOING MUSIC THERAPY PROGRAM PLAN

I have reviewed and updated, where relevant, the below objectives for Anthony's program based on the outcomes to date and his ongoing long-term need for intensive, specialised support to advance his capacity and independence in the areas of social communication, social learning, self-regulation, and self-management. These specific objectives outline how we will address, measure, monitor, observe and/or describe achieving the goal. This approach is based on the "SMART" method of reporting outcomes, which is well described in the scholarly literature for a range of therapies. My session notes and recordings will continue to document these outcomes as well as include the description of outcomes that surprise us – those we were unable to anticipate in our goal/objective writing. This information will guide us in refining and modifying Anthony's individualised objectives at review points.

Anthony's Key Need:

Close, long-term specialised support in the areas of social communication, social learning, self-regulation and self-management

Anthony's Overarching Goal:

For Anthony to practise, develop and advance his personal expression, social communication, social learning and self-regulation skills through experiences that are meaningful and rewarding to him

Objectives for Goal

(how achievement of the goal will be addressed/monitored/measured/described/observed):

- 1) Anthony will actively participate in the whole of the greeting and closing components of every session through musical/non-verbal/vocal/verbal engagement.
- 2) Anthony will identify and describe his preferences/thoughts/ideas/understandings through discussion



in a manner that is responsive to the context/play rules/social mores.

- 3) Anthony will actively engage in all of the shared musical experiences of each session.
- 4) Anthony and/or his family will describe experiences of the sessions reaching beyond the space, or Anthony will explore experiences/themes from other areas of his life in the music therapy space.

If you have any questions pertaining to the above please do not hesitate to contact me.

KIND REGARDS,
ELIZABETH MACKNEY
NEUROLOGIC MUSIC THERAPIST

For your information:

The following defines how the SMART goal/objectives are evaluated and described in session reports and summarised and updated at NDIS plan review points:

SESSION REPORT TERMS DEFINED:

OUTCOME: Quantitative measure based on 5 point Likert scale – defined below

CONTEXT DETAIL: Qualitative measure – describes how that outcome presented for the participant i.e. what it looked like in therapy, and any relevant considerations/concerns

LIKERT SCALE KEY:

- **ACHIEVING AND ADVANCING = Achieving beyond the measureable element of the objective**
- **ACHIEVING = Achieving equal to the measureable element of the objective**
- **ACHIEVING IN PART = Achieving one part, such as half, of the measureable element of the objective. The element achieved and the element not achieved would then be described in the CONTEXT DETAIL.**
- **WORKING TOWARDS = Not achieving the measureable element of the objective, but demonstrating signs that would lead to it. These signs would be described in the CONTEXT DETAIL.**



- **NOT ASSESSED/NOT APPLICABLE = e.g. Not relevant for this particular session/s.**