

STUDENTS UNITE OVER COURSE CLOSURE

By Rachel Loveday

Music students at the University of Wollongong have united at campus to discuss how the music degree closure could affect their future.

As of next year, no more students will be taken in for Sound Composition and Music Production (SCMP), a major within the Bachelor of Creative Arts and the university's only music degree.

Students currently studying the degree had a meeting at the Wollongong campus on Tuesday September 7th 2010, to discuss the issues that were of major concern to them in regard to the course closure. The biggest issue amongst the students was the fear of fall in teaching quality as full-time tutors were given voluntary redundancies and will be replaced with casual tutors.

First year student, Mitch Catterall-who spoke for the majority of the meeting raised the issue of teaching quality with his classmates and had voiced his own concerns on the issue.

"A concern that we all have is the quality of tutoring staff and the biggest thing we can do is make some noise and hope that something will happen,"

"One thing people have said to me is that you could have amazing casual tutors and that's true, that could happen, but the chance and risk of that, in my opinion, I think that is too much of a risk to take." Mr Catterall said.

Another issue that was raised at the meeting was the uncertainty of being able to study the music degree if students choose to defer. Mr Catterall told his classmates that if they choose to defer and they can no longer study the music degree, that it is the university's obligation to place them in the closest relevant course, which would be the media arts degree.

The closure of the course also means that there is no tertiary music course available to study in the Illawarra and that aspiring musicians would have to relocate to other cities to study equivalent courses.

First year SCMP student Cameron Batkin believes that although he still has a future because he can finish his degree, he doesn't believe that he should have to change it.

"It's not that we don't have a future because the course is being cancelled, it's more, 'why should we change it?'" he said.

A Facebook group, "*Save UOW Music Courses-SCMP*" has been created with the latest news, developments and protest efforts.

