



## Students Act on Bushfire Relief

Student Councils and individual students around Victoria have been active in responding to the recent Victorian bushfire natural disaster. They have done this through raising money, donating and sorting goods, working on the bushfire front with the CFA, and continuing to make our communities safer.

Those Student Councils that have been organised and ready to go, have been able to play a leading role in their schools in responding. For example:

- **Templestowe College** is collecting money and other donations; one of the teachers is holding a clothes drive; the SRC is organising a casual dress day to raise funds;
- The **University High SRC** (pictured here) organised a cake stall that raised over \$2000 and a donation tin is going around to classrooms;
- **Wodonga Senior and Pakenham Secondary Colleges** – amongst many others – had Casual Days with all funds going to the Red Cross bushfire appeal.

We have already heard of VicSRC members who have been active in CFA and other fire-fighting teams. Our hearts go out to all affected by this disaster, and we are committed to ensuring that students play important roles in rebuilding communities and in trying to prevent similar disasters from recurring.



### Disaster Response: Student Action at a State Level

Students have already shown that they are concerned about the bigger picture – of how to prevent such tragedies, and of students' readiness to respond.

The VicSRC Congress in 2008 passed the following resolution:

*That the VicSRC propose to the Department of Education additional courses on disaster management and first aid – such as flood, fires, storms etc.*

We will be taking this to the Department for action, but we need to know from SRCs:

- What is already happening with such courses? Who gets to do them? What do you think of them?
- What sorts of courses would be useful? Who could provide them?

The VicSRC believes that these approaches may help enable and equip students to take an effective and active role in such situations – both for individual and family protection, and also as important members of their communities.



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*What is your SRC doing? Tell the VicSRC, so we can tell others! We can add your information to our web pages so we can share ideas.*

# Student Councils: Leap Into Action in 2009!

It is important that Student Councils get off to a good start in this new year. That means getting organised to plan action: working out ways to respond to needs, and ways that the SRC can take initiatives.

Tragic events like the bushfires require students to be organised so that they can respond quickly. There are other issues that you might need to take action on, that students are concerned about in your school.

Here are some ideas about how your Student Council can leap into action and take the initiative.

1. If you don't have your SRC appointed, do it now! Maybe it would have been best to have people elected at the end of last year, but if not, get them elected as soon as possible. If elections are delayed, have volunteers form a temporary SRC.
2. Meet. Set definite days for SRC meetings: in classtime, at lunchtime, after school - whatever suits you best. Give one or two representatives the role of calling and publicising meetings - and of reminding people.
3. Ask for an extended time - a half day, a day, a camp - for the SRC to get away and PLAN.
4. Work out what you want to achieve for the year - and then develop action plans to make it happen. What are students asking you to do? What are the important challenges in the school?
5. Work out an SRC calendar, with meeting dates, conferences, deadlines etc on it (see page 3 of this newsletter for some events and dates).
6. Work out a structure so you can respond to events (like bushfire appeals) - including knowing who has the power to quickly organise something - and so you can take initiatives. For example, you could organise into some teams and working groups.

## Idea File:

### **SRC and SMAD:**

#### **Keeping Fundraising Separate from SRC Action**

SRCs are on about more than just fund-raising, but sometimes the two get confused and fundraising takes over as the main activity of the whole SRC.

The University HS SRC has separated the two. They've set up the **Students Making a Difference** group, which raises money for charity etc. That leaves the SRC free to work on issues that concern students around the school and to represent all students on a variety of issues.

## New VicSRC Web Domain

*It's simpler, easier to remember and more direct!*

The VicSRC has a new web domain. You can now find us at:

**[www.vicsrc.org.au](http://www.vicsrc.org.au)**

## **VicSRC Represents Victorian Secondary Students**

### *Launch of the National Goals for Young Australians at the Biennial Ministers' Forum on Education*

In December last year I went to the Biennial Ministers' Forum on Education where the National Goals for Young Australians were launched. Not only was I representing the VicSRC Executive, but all secondary students in Australia as I was the only student in a room of 350 adults!

I spoke on a panel in front of everyone, which was pretty scary, but great to see students represented at such an important event. In speaking, I stressed that students must be treated as active partners in decision-making in schools and in working for and



achieving the National Goals for Young Australians. (*The VicSRC Submission to the Enquiry on the National Goals is available on the VicSRC website: [www.vicsrc.org.au](http://www.vicsrc.org.au)*)

All the Education Ministers from around Australia were there, including Julia Gillard as the National Education Minister. There were also Education Representatives from New Zealand, Hong Kong, Canada and the UK.

It was an amazing experience, and a real step forward to have students publicly acknowledged as partners in education.

*Georgia Kennelly*

# Plan to be Part of Victorian SRC Action in 2009

The Victorian Student Representative Council (VicSRC) – the student-run umbrella body of SRCs in Victorian secondary schools – invites you to be part of an exciting program of events in 2009. Local SRC clusters, as well as local and statewide conferences will enable representatives from SRCs across the state to share information, to plan joint initiatives and to make sure student voices are heard at all levels of education.

But if you are to be part of that process, you will need to **start planning now**. Make sure that these events are on your SRC calendar for the year, and that your school and SRC is represented.



*Plan to make sure your voice is heard in 2009 – by making your ideas and views known to your representatives – the VicSRC.*

## Plan to be involved:

### Sub-Regional SRC Conferences

The VicSRC will again be organising a series of SRC conferences and training days throughout Victoria in Term 2. One of these conferences will be in your area. These conferences will enable students to *share information about what is happening on their SRCs, learn about what SRCs can do, and get training in being more effective representatives*. Information about all these events will be sent to schools later in Term 1.

*Plan now to be there!*

#### **Are you interested to help organise or host an SRC Conference?**

If your school would like to host and/or organise one of these conferences, working with local groups and the VicSRC, contact us to discuss what is required. Phone the VicSRC on: **03 9267 3744** or e-mail: **vicsrc@yacvic.org.au**

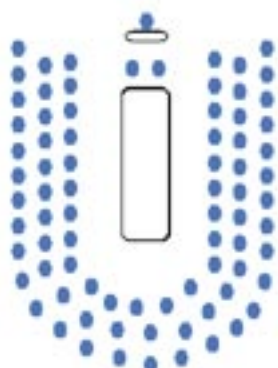
### VicSRC State Congress

The VicSRC will again host a **statewide Congress** of representatives from SRCs at the end of July – on **Friday July 31st and Saturday August 1st**. The Oasis Campsite at Mt Evelyn has again been booked for this.

Two representatives from all Victorian secondary school Student Councils are invited to attend. This is the main decision-making body of the VicSRC; it sets out the work of the VicSRC for the next 12 months and elects a state Executive of students to organise this work.

*Plan for your involvement.*

Put these dates in your SRC diary and make sure you are represented.



### Local SRC Clusters

The VicSRC is supporting the development and operation of effective clusters of Student Councils right across Victoria. These are local networks of student representatives, who meet regularly to share activities, to develop ideas and to support each other.

If there is a Cluster in your area, the VicSRC can put you in touch with it. Contact the VicSRC for information and *plan to be an active member*. If there's **not** a cluster in your area, are you interested to help form one?

*Plan to call a first meeting of representatives* - the VicSRC can help you do this.

*This issue of the VicSRC Student Advocate was edited by Ashlee Frye and Georgina Kennelly.*

## VicSRC at JumpStart

Way back in term 4 of last year, VicSRC took part in a training day called **JumpStart**, run by Second Strike. The program aimed to get SRCs thinking about this year before it got here. We were able to present about the VicSRC, and join in on activities, as well as make our own decisions about the roles and functions of an SRC.

About 20 different secondary schools took part in discussions on topics such as fundraising, structure, goal setting and programming. All in all, it was a successful day for all the schools and they went away having somewhere to start from once school went back in 2009.

**Caitie Thorne**

## VicSRC Members

The VicSRC welcomes the following new members:

*Brimbank College, Geelong Grammar School, Ivanhoe Girls' Grammar School, Lowanna College, Marist - Sion College, Moonee Ponds Central School, Salesian College Rupertswood*

### Join the VicSRC

If you receive this newsletter, it doesn't mean you're a member of the VicSRC! It is sent to all secondary colleges in Victoria, four times a year. VicSRC members also receive copies of *Connect* magazine every two months (one was just recently mailed to the SRC - in February), plus discounts to all VicSRC events, discounts on training through *Second Strike* (VicSRC partner), membership to *YACVic* and *YouthLaw*, plus many other benefits ... If in doubt, phone the VicSRC office and check your membership status.

**Not a member? Become one NOW!**

You should join the VicSRC because ...

- ***we all benefit from working together - we can help each other;***
- ***we can speak more confidently to the Government on behalf of secondary students;***
- ***there are great economic and practical benefits for your SRC: subscription to *Connect* magazine; discounts on SRC training from *Second Strike*; priority and discount registration for VicSRC Congress and Regional Conferences; free membership to *YACVic* and *YouthLaw*; free professional association membership for your SRC teacher/adviser; discounts to the *Form One Lane* professional development seminars.***

Check the VicSRC website for membership details and forms:

**[www.vicsrc.org.au](http://www.vicsrc.org.au)**

## Meet Some Executive Members:

### Holly Burr

I am in Year 12 at Wodonga Senior Secondary College. I am School Captain and a member of my school's SLC and School Council. Our SLC is currently developing and creating a plan for future SLCs in our school.

This is my first term in the VicSRC. I first heard about the VicSRC when I attended a Regional Conference, then attended the State Congress.

The portfolio that I am leading in the VicSRC is ***Rural Affairs***. VicSRC has been a great opportunity for me and I have had many memorable experiences with this fantastic and enthusiastic group of people.

At our VicSRC Training Camp, I baby-sat a white monkey named Camel for two days. We showered together.



### Taylor Gundry

Hi, my name is Taylor Gundry and I'm in Year 12 at Belmont High, in Geelong. I am co-president of my SRC and aim to focus on the little achievable things that can be done around the school.

This is my first session on the Executive and it's been great. I am trying to organise a Regional Cluster meeting for the Geelong/Surf Coast area to help strengthen local SRCs.



### Meg Atley

I am in Year 11 at Hampton Park Secondary College. My SRC is currently developing a charity program for one of our students who has a rare case of Ovarian Cancer. Recently we have developed a specific SRC website for our school with information about our programs at school.

The VicSRC interested me to further develop my skills in being a confident leader for my school. One of my achievements in the past year was receiving the Melbourne Theatre Company Youth Scholarship program.



### Contact us:

The **VicSRC** is based at the **Youth Affairs Council of Victoria (YACVic)** and can be reached there on 03 **9267 3744** or, for the cost of a local call from outside Melbourne on **1300 727 176** or by email: **[vicsrc@yacvic.org.au](mailto:vicsrc@yacvic.org.au)**