



Get your SRC up and running in 2010!



Welcome back to a new school year. This is the time now to get your SRC up and running so it can be really effective. Remember that how you start off will determine how well you will work for the rest of the year. But if you delay, lots of things will start without student voices being heard!

Here are some simple steps that can help you get off to a great start. There will be lots more of these ideas in the VicSRC Student Resource Kit due later this year.

And **you** have some great ideas too. Share these at a VicSRC Regional Conference in March-April-May!

Regional SRC Conferences 2010

Following the success of regional conferences in 2008 and 2009, the VicSRC is holding another series across Victoria in 2010. We will be running conferences in Term 2, in each region of the state – so make sure you are there to be inspired, innovated and motivated to strengthen your Student Council. Join us at a Regional Conference and get your opinions heard.

Conference dates that have been confirmed are on **page 2**. More conference locations will be confirmed shortly. If your school is interested in hosting a conference, please get in touch with the VicSRC urgently.

The conference program is mainly interactive, and has been designed with student participation as well as active learning outcomes in mind. These conferences are designed for SRC members and will enable students to identify issues of concern that they share - and develop plans around them; share information about what their SRC is doing and learn about other SRCs and their work; be challenged about making their SRC more effective; and link their interests to on-going action through the VicSRC - through local clusters and the Statewide SRC Congress later in the year.

Full details and registration forms will be sent to all schools later in Term 1.

Any further questions? Do not hesitate to contact us: 03 **9267 3744** during business hours, or email conferences@vicsrc.org.au

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SRC


Is your SRC ready?

Here's a checklist of some of the steps your SRC should be taking NOW so that you are organised to be active partners in your school:

 **Week 1:** The new SRC Executive (or the Executive from last year) meets to plan the SRC's start - elections and first meetings.


 **Week 2:** Hold elections for all SRC positions (if that wasn't done last year).




 **Week 3:** First SRC meeting: establish purposes of the SRC; plan **three major objectives** for the year; allocate responsibilities within the SRC (eg portfolios).

 **Week 4:** Organise an **SRC Planning Conference** (have an overnight camp if possible; at least have an extended meeting). In your SRC Conference, run some 'getting to know you' and team building activities, set goals for the year, develop your SRC action plan and calendar, work out **how** you'll work, develop any training needed.



 **Advertise meetings:** Make sure that everyone knows about the first SRC meeting: use the school bulletin, noticeboards, the school website, e-mail lists etc.

 **Activity:** Organise your first public SRC activity so that all students know about the SRC and its work; involve other students to help run this activity.

strengthening SRCs ...

Coming up in 2010...

Regional SRC Conferences

Thursday, March 18th
Bellarine SC (Drysdale Campus)

Thursday, April 15th
Caroline Chisholm Catholic College,
Braybrook

Tuesday April 20th
St Monica's College, Epping

Thursday April 22nd
Wodonga Senior Secondary College

Tuesday April 27th
Bentleigh Secondary College

Wednesday May 5th
Frankston High School

Thursday May 6th
Mt Clear College, Ballarat

A flyer and registration form with further details about Conferences will be sent to schools in term 1. The cost for VicSRC members is \$10 per student and \$15 per student for non members.

Congress 2010

The 5th Annual VicSRC Congress will be held on 5-6 August 2010 at the Oasis Camp, Mt Evelyn. **Congress** is an excellent opportunity for secondary school students from around Victoria to come together to discuss issues and concerns that are important to them. The **VicSRC Congress** is also a chance for you to meet fellow students who are passionate about making a difference in their schools and their communities, while also having a lot of fun!



SRC Resources in 2010

Lots of ideas and guidelines for SRCs in the VicSRC Resource Kit - coming during 2010. This Kit will be available firstly for VicSRC members.

Join NOW! See the Membership information on page 3.

Voting Age

The Australian Government has recently released the *Electoral Reform Green Paper: Strengthening Australia's Democracy*. They asked for submissions and, in accordance with a resolution from the 2009 VicSRC Congress that the VicSRC advocate for the voting age to be lowered to a voluntary 16 with 18 remaining compulsory, we obliged. Here is a snippet from our submission:

The excuse for many years has been that young people just don't understand the importance of voting, and if they did, they wouldn't vote properly. The VicSRC knows that this simply is not true.

An irony suggested is that most young people want to vote and, for those who don't, it's because they don't think they have enough life experience to make an informed decision. This attitude of valuing the vote and taking it seriously actually shows that young people have the maturity to vote.

*It needs to be accepted that, in a modern Australia, we cannot be truly democratic until we give young people who have the maturity and the information to vote and have a stake in their political future, the **right** to vote.*



What do you think? Do you want to be involved?

If you would like any more information on our policies regarding the voting age, or how you can get involved, please email: newsletter@vicsrc.org.au

Hi, I'm **Judy Chow**. I'm currently a Year 12 student at Mentone Girls' Grammar School. For the past few years, I have been enthusiastic member our school SRC and have also been elected as Deputy Head Girl for 2010. At the recent Congress, I was inspired by the previous executive to join the VicSRC. By organising Congress during my term on the executive, I hope that I too will inspire other students to become passionate about their SRCs. Besides the VicSRC, I love to travel and experience different cultures.



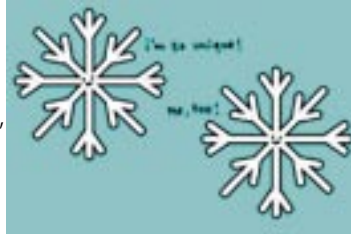
My name is **Cian McShane** and I am in Year 12 at Bellarine Secondary College. I joined the VicSRC because I wanted to make a difference in the education system and at my school. I am a Senior SRC member. My one true hobby would have to be playing music; I am lead vocals and bass guitar in my band.



Teachers' Dress Code

At the 2009 VicSRC Congress, a resolution was passed: that the VicSRC investigate students' opinions on a dress code in Victorian schools for teachers.

In the debate, it was argued that teachers should be setting an example to students and follow a certain standard in terms of their dress. For example, tracksuits would not be acceptable, except for sports teachers. Other students felt that most teachers already dress appropriately and that a dress code was unnecessary.



We would like to know what **you** think. Please discuss this in your SRC; perhaps even ask representatives to discuss this with their classes.

If you believe that teachers *should* have a dress code at school, email to: newsletter@vicsrc.org.au with 'Teacher's Dress Code' in the subject line and **YES** in the text.

If you believe that teachers *shouldn't* have a dress code at school, email to: newsletter@vicsrc.org.au with 'Teacher's Dress Code' in the subject line and **NO** in the text.

What do students in your school think about issues round the school? Have you asked them?



SRC representatives have various ways to find out students' views. You can always design and give a **survey** to all students; but you can also **talk** with others - either in class meetings or informally. Make sure you listen to lots of different views - not just those of your friends or people you know agree with you. Ask people for their **reasons** as well.

Then, when the SRC is asked: "What do students think about this?" you'll be in a good position to sum up what you have found out, have your arguments ready, and be able to represent students well – an informed voice!

New VicSRC Members

We welcome the following SRCs as new members of the VicSRC:

Wellington Secondary College
Tintern Grammar School
Bentleigh Secondary College
Sunbury Downs Secondary College
Myrtleford P-12 College
Keilor Downs College

By joining the VicSRC:

- 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.

Join the VicSRC

There are many practical benefits from being a VicSRC member. You get copies of *Connect* magazine every two months (the next copy will be mailed to schools in February), plus discounts to all VicSRC events, discounts on training through *Second Strike* (a 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!**

Membership forms are on the VicSRC website:

www.vicsrc.org.au

Hey, I'm **Ryan Gunn**, currently in year 11 at Lowanna College in Moe. I joined the VicSRC because I am very interested in getting people's voices heard that don't otherwise get heard, learning new skills, and working toward a greater school experience for all students. I have too many hobbies to list here, however one thing I love is the media and I am currently a Radio Presenter with Gippsland FM, which is a community station where I live.



Tiffany Chapman is my name and I'm a Year 9 student at Toorak College where I love being involved as a member of the SRC. Inside our school community I am involved in choir, indoor cricket, hockey, equestrian and heaps more! I am also an Australian Air Force Cadet. I wish to learn how to be a better student representative and to give students a voice. I am really loving being a part of the VicSRC!



What is the VicSRC doing?

VicSRC at the Blueprint One Year On Forum

On Friday the 27th of November, ten members of the VicSRC Executive attended the Department of Education's *Blueprint for Education and Early Childhood Development: One Year On* forum. The VicSRC was involved in the original consultation process for the Blueprint and was very happy to have been included in this important forum.

The VicSRC Executive delegates were involved in workshops on:

- integration and transitions;
- excellent school education;
- working with families, communities and business;
- opportunities for all Victorians; and
- a culture of strong leadership and professional learning.

While students had, strangely enough, not been a focus of the original Blueprint, the VicSRC's delegates made it very clear that it is essential for students to be active partners in their own education – in all these areas and more.

The Forum also provided a great opportunity for networking and exposure for the VicSRC. While it is receiving increased recognition from school administrations and education organisations, the VicSRC is still not as well known among classroom teachers, who formed a large number of Forum delegates.

The VicSRC looks forward to the next year of implementation for the Blueprint and hopes it will continue to be included in future consultations.

Michael Kurtanjek
VicSRC Executive



VicSRC Action

The VicSRC Executive members each take on work within their *Portfolios*. Some of these are about maintenance of the VicSRC (membership, finances etc), while others are about implementing the decisions made at the VicSRC Congress.

Here are some of the areas of action being undertaken by members of the VicSRC Executive at the moment:

Cyber-bullying: The Executive is collecting information about cyber-bullying and its consequences and is working towards production of a kit for SRCs. Members of the Executive have also spoken about cyber-bullying in various central and local forums (eg see the last issue of this newsletter).

Healthy foods and nutrition values in canteens: The Executive has also been collecting information in this area, working towards an approach to the Department around guidelines for information in canteens.

Health education: The Executive is working to compile a list of suitable people and groups for SRCs to recommend for drug and alcohol education within health education. This will be included on the VicSRC website.

Youth Allowance: The Executive is compiling information in order to carry out research on the Youth Allowance, as the basis for lobbying for changes. Contact has been made with tertiary education student groups to share ideas.

VicSRC website: The website has been updated with information from the 2009 Congress; further development of an on-line forum is planned.

SRC poster: A poster about the importance of Student Councils is currently being designed. Distribution of this poster to all schools is planned for Term 1. It will advertise the vital role of Student Councils within schools.

Teacher and student resources: A substantial kit of materials for SRCs and their support teachers is being prepared. This will include information on how to set up an effective SRC, how to conduct consultations with students, how an SRC can use technology, how to organise and run successful events and so on. This will be printed and made available to schools later this year.

Principal resources: A document for Principals about the importance of SRCs is being prepared by the Executive. It is intended that this will be launched in Term 1 and made available to all schools.

SRC awards: Awards for outstanding SRC achievements are being planned by the Executive. More news to come soon!

For more information:

Check the VicSRC website for membership details and forms:

www.vicsrc.org.au

This issue of the VicSRC Student Advocate was edited by Georgia Kennelly and Judy Chow.

Contact us:

The **VicSRC** is supported by the Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. It is auspiced by and 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