



You're invited to send two student representatives to the 3rd Annual VicSRC Statewide Congress!

VicSRC Congress FAQs

What is Congress?

Congress is the annual and main decision-making event of the VicSRC. It sets the directions for the next 12 months and elects students to the new VicSRC Executive.

Do you have to be on your SRC?

No, but you must be linked to your SRC.

What year levels?

Students from any year level (7-12) can take part in the Congress, but Year 12 students cannot stand for election to the Executive.

What happens at Congress?

There are workshops around topics you bring to Congress, action-planning sessions, a chance to meet others and hear how their SRC works – and the formal parliamentary-style Congress that debates the motions you suggest.

Is it fun?

Of course! Why else would we have it? And we get important stuff done as well!

Can I go?

Yes. Two representatives from any secondary school in Victoria can attend. Registration forms have been sent to all schools. Get elected as one of your school's representatives.

When you register, we'll send you full information about the Congress including travel arrangements.

Every secondary college in Victoria – from all systems – is invited to send two student representatives to this year's VicSRC Congress:

VicSRC Congress: a Two-Day Camp!

When: Friday, 15 August - Saturday, 16 August

Where: Oasis Camp, Mt Evelyn

Cost: \$60 per person for VicSRC members;
\$80 per person for non-members
(covers accommodation, all meals, registration, materials)



You should be there!

Congress is the VicSRC's main decision-making event where directions are set, policy is made and action is planned for the next 12 months. Congress is a mixture of workshops, fun activities, reports from the previous Executive, learning opportunities, meeting other students and formal decision-making. Congress also elects student representatives to the VicSRC Executive – and they carry out the decisions made by Congress.

Is the VicSRC doing what you think it should be doing? What should be our focus in 2008-2009?

Will you be a part of that action?

An information sheet and registration form for Congress has recently been sent to all schools. If you have not received one, contact the VicSRC office urgently on: (03) 9267 3744. Registrations close 31 July.

Congress location is the Oasis Camp in Mt Evelyn (near Lilydale). This provides separate male and female accommodation in small ensuite dormitories. Full supervision of students at Congress will be provided.

We will send further information about practical details, including location and travel, to all schools that register.



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**Make sure you are represented!
Limited places - reserve now!
Register by Thursday 31 July**

Hundreds of students meet, speak, plan ...

VicSRC Regional Conferences 2008!

During Term 2, the VicSRC organised a series of Regional Student Conferences across Victoria. So far, 16 conferences have been held, with one more planned for Dimboola in late July.

These conferences have brought together around 900 students from 127 schools. The days have included SRCs sharing what they are doing, students learning from each other and being challenged about the roles of SRCs, information about how to tackle an issue (action planning) and some discussions on topics that students have identified as important.

Students have also learnt about the VicSRC and its role and have started to develop local links for future clusters that will enable sharing and common action to develop further.

A more extensive report on each event will be sent to all participating schools, but already there have been some positive responses. A group of students from Gippsland wrote to the VicSRC:

"Thank you for involving us in the Gippsland SRC Conference. You have brought our SRC team to a new level of excellence and we are very appreciative of what you have shown us."

There have also been positive responses from SRC support teachers:

"The overall response from my students was a very positive view of the day, and it has inspired them to commit fully to our newly formed SRC. I most enjoyed having the opportunity to connect with other SRC Advisors."

"I just want to say thank you for yesterday. I found it very helpful and came back with some new ideas, and some more enthusiasm for the role. Also, a whole lot of awe regarding Frankston's set up - WOW! The kids enjoyed it also, and hopefully there are some good things that will arise out of what they discussed."

"I met with some of the students today; they have given me glowing feedback about the day's activities and want to become more involved in VicSRC."

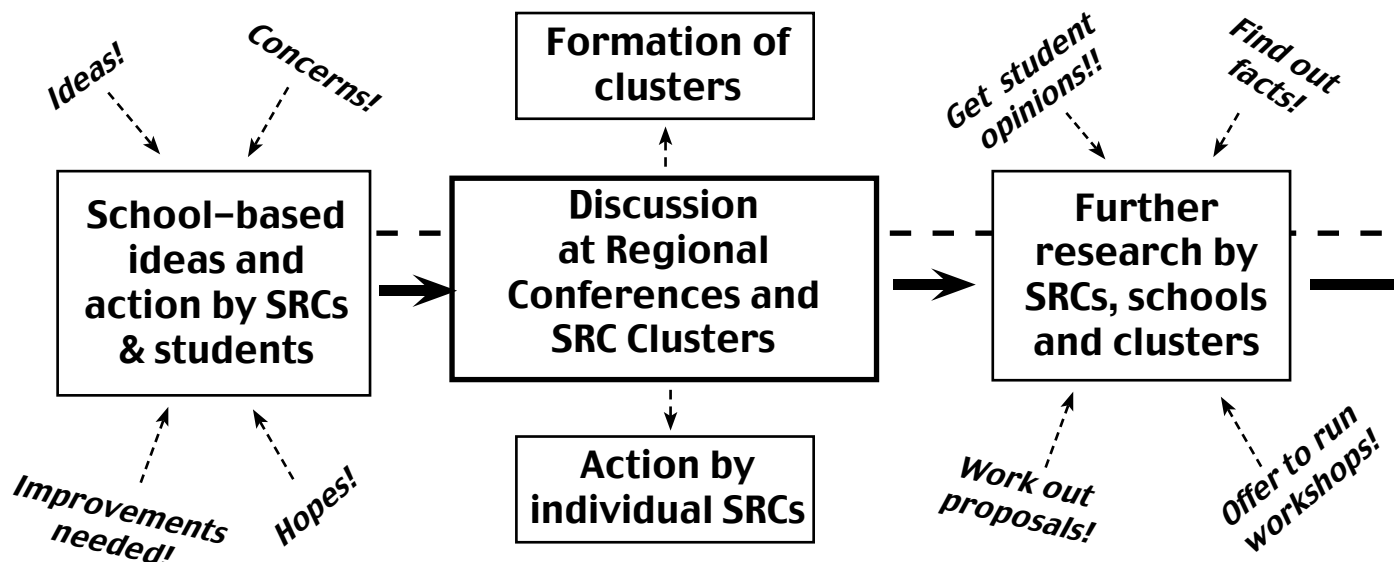
The VicSRC acknowledges the support of the host schools: Chaffey SC (Mildura), The Hamilton and Alexandra College (Hamilton), Traralgon College, Bairnsdale SC, Lyndale SC (North Dandenong), Elwood College, Penola Catholic College (Broadmeadows), Bendigo Senior SC and Eaglehawk SC, North Geelong SC, Macleod College, Benalla College, Wodonga Senior College and SFYS in Wodonga, Marian College (West Sunshine), Ballarat HS, Frankston HS, Brentwood SC (Glen Waverley) and Dimboola Memorial SC.

Thanks also to VicSRC Executive members (Sarah, Andrew, Georgia, Linh, Ash, Emma and Doug) who spoke at the days, and to those whose work contributed to the success of the days (including running teacher sessions): VicSRC supporters Lyndall Nulty and Ruthie Hambling, James Tonson (VicSRC Project Worker), David Mould (Second Strike), and Sally Morgan (Education Foundation and ruMAD?).

And thank you all for taking part! Without your input, the conferences would have been less informative.

Roger Holdsworth

Connecting issues from SRCs through Regional Conferences to State Congress:



Topics Raised at Regional Conferences!

Students suggested topics for discussion at the Regional Conferences and formed workshops around those with priority. A wide range of concerns were put forward. Examples included:

SRC-related:

- Organising and surviving as an SRC;
- Representing students better;
- Involving more students (especially younger students);
- More control over SRC accounts;
- Greater recognition for students;

- Better decision-making and communication;
- SRC camps and excursions;
- Working as a group;
- SRC structure.

School-related:

- Team building amongst students;
- Student input to curriculum, rules;
- Overhauling facilities (toilets, canteen etc);
- Bullying;
- Inter-school collaboration;
- School and campus mergers;

- Earlier introduction to VCE subjects;
- Uniforms and school image;
- Peer support and advice;
- Lunchtime activities;
- Improving relationships in the school;
- Student health and safety.

Community-related:

- Links with the community and primary schools;
- Environment (recycling, rubbish, solar energy, minimising waste).

Connecting Regional Conferences with the VicSRC Congress 2008!

These topics and issues form the basis for discussion and decisions at the VicSRC Congress.

When thinking about the action that flows from the discussions, much of the follow-up will happen in individual SRCs. However, there may be issues and actions that are best dealt with at a wider, state-wide level. For example, canteen prices for healthy foods was discussed at some conferences; SRCs might be able to negotiate with canteen managers in individual schools; however, the VicSRC might also be able to discuss the issue with a School Canteen Association – and, if this is appropriate, ask for a

statewide subsidy for all schools for healthy food. Or issues around environmental concerns, toilets, health and safety – all have possibilities for statewide action by students.

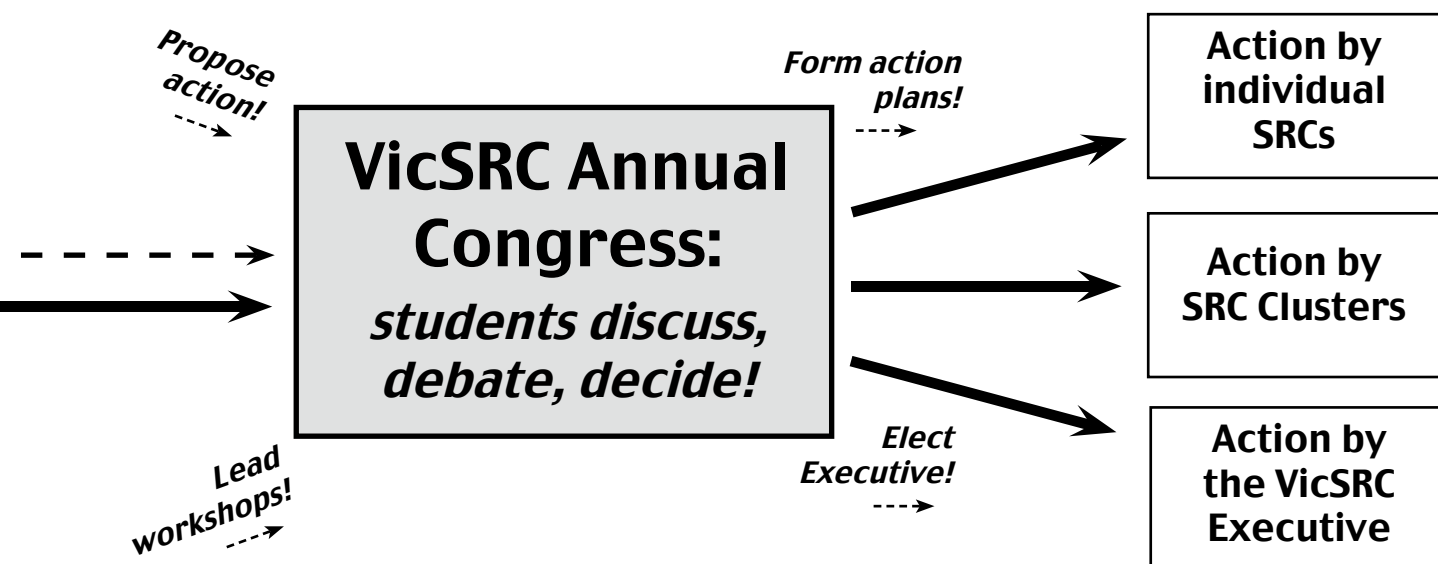


In these cases, SRCs should discuss possible action further and propose topics for discussion, debate and action at the VicSRC Congress in August. That means schools should do some further investigation and offer to run a workshop at Congress, as well as starting to prepare a motion for debate.

The Role of Clusters!

Local SRC clusters can also work together on plans for action. There have been recent cluster meetings in Greater Dandenong, Whittlesea and Banyule, with plans also in Bayside. Students in Bendigo were also planning to meet to seek student input to the Bendigo Education Plan. (Contact the VicSRC if you want to be put in touch with your local cluster.)

As well as taking action in your local area (eg the Greater Dandenong Cluster is planning a combined environment week between the schools, with challenges about reducing waste and saving energy), clusters can also be thinking about proposals to put to Congress.



VicSRC at the Education Blueprint Summit

Education Ministers Bronwyn Pike and Maxine Morand recently released a new *Blueprint for Education and Early Childhood Development* and held a summit of education stakeholders for public consultation. This time the VicSRC was actually invited to attend, which was a great opportunity to represent student voices at the highest level of educational planning. VicSRC Executive members Sarah Chadzynski, Andrew Lomax, Doug Flakemore, James Oldfield and Georgia Kennelly attended, along with Project Officer James Tonson.

Georgia writes:

"It was quite daunting arriving with so many adults there, but we soon worked up the courage to introduce ourselves, mingle and hand out quite a few brochures. I met many people from heaps of different organisations, and it was interesting to hear the different point of view.

"Over the course of two days, we listened to many speakers from different groups, all with different ideas on how we should educate kids, but all pretty optimistic. The most prominent thing I saw was more accountability for teachers. We saw lots of statistics showing us why teaching is really the most important factor.

"We also had two workshops, in which I did 'working with parents and communities in schools', and 'workforce reform in school reform'. In both, adults were pleased to see me, listened to what I had to say, and asked me questions. They seemed genuinely happy to hear a student's opinion. Minister Pike said she was really glad that we came, that she felt student participation was important to her, and looked forward to working with us. I think we really got across the message that this affects students the most and we should be consulted about these things because we are competent. Overall a great two days."

The VicSRC also heard from other participants in the Summit, that the Executive members provided 'a breath of fresh air and reality' into workshops, and facilitated discussions between all stakeholders.

Aims of the VicSRC

To strengthen SRCs

To be a representative body for Victorian secondary school students

To facilitate and co-ordinate action by secondary students at all levels

To be democratic and participatory

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

Meet Some Executive Members:

Stephanie McCall



Year 12, Whittlesea Secondary College. School Captain and Music Captain and involved with the music program, SRC, CFA, and community youth groups.

In the VicSRC, currently working on the 'liaison with other groups' portfolio.

"I joined the VicSRC Executive because I thought it would be a great way to stand up for the rights of students and be heard by the public and to make a difference.

"I enjoy music, spending time with friends and travelling."

You!

You're in Years 7 to 11 at a Victorian secondary school.

You have a passion for representing students and their interests; you're excited to be active in an important portfolio area.

"I joined the VicSRC Executive because I believe students can make a difference to education."

You're willing to attend Executive meetings, mainly in Melbourne, for the next 12 months, mainly on weekends or during school holidays.

You're standing for election to the VicSRC Executive at the VicSRC Congress in August 2008!

Put yourself here!

VicSRC Members

The VicSRC welcomes the following new members:

Elisabeth Murdoch College, Eaglehawk Secondary College, Bacchus Marsh Secondary College - Maddingley Campus, Wodonga Senior Secondary College, Catholic Regional College North Keilor, Toorak College, Rainbow Secondary College, Numurkah Secondary College, Balmoral High School and Irymple Secondary College.

Join the VicSRC

Simply because 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 receive copies of **Connect** magazine every two months (the last one was in June), plus discounts to all VicSRC events, discounts on training through **Second Strike** (VicSRC partner), membership to **YACVic** and **YouthLaw**, plus many other benefits ...

Check the VicSRC website for membership details and forms.

Visit the VicSRC Website:

www.yacvic.org.au/vicsrc