



2008 State Congress: Energy & Commitment!

The 3rd Annual VicSRC Statewide Congress was held over two days in mid-August. It involved over 70 student delegates from schools across Victoria. The delegates voted this a highly successful Congress, with much intense debate, valuable discussion, essential networking and many resolutions decided upon. The Congress elected an enthusiastic group of students as the new VicSRC Executive and set them a clear direction for 2008-9. *Meg Atley, a new member of the VicSRC Executive, reports on the event:*

On Friday, 15 August, I attended the Congress of the VicSRC. This was a camp specifically for Student Representative Councils in secondary schools around Victoria. The program over the two days included activities such as:

- information on the VicSRC;
- guided thinking exercises;
- information about the Congress process;
- workshops on school and community issues (defined by SRCs);
- a practice of the Congress session; and
- the main decision-making Congress.

The **guided thinking** exercise was really relaxing and valuable. It let me open my mind up to re-imagining education in the near future – thinking what can be done by students to improve the community and environment in secondary schools.

There were then several workshops in place. One involved us in thinking about ways students could lead in **decreasing bullying**. My tactics were:

- anti-bullying wristbands, slogans, posters and stickers;
- an anti-bullying policy;
- counselling for bullies and victims;
- implementing an anti-bullying campaign;

- a bullying awareness day; and
- a state-wide diversity day.

Another workshop I participated in was on the **recognition of SRC members**. SRCs in secondary schools should be recognised as important assets of the local community, considering we are the voice in general, of young people in society about our school's concerns and problems.

The formal **Congress** sitting is a long process. It consists firstly of considering proposals made by parts of the VicSRC (from students in their schools), then developing a motion that is moved by a member of the Congress. Any amendments to the motion are considered, disagreements heard and, finally, a vote leads to a decision by the

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National Educational Goals for Young Australians

The Federal Ministerial Council for Education, Employment and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) is developing a new **Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians**. The VicSRC is taking the opportunity to provide student input to the draft document.

The VicSRC welcomes this Draft and endorses its comments about the changed reality for young people's learning. We strongly support the acknowledgement of young people as active and informed citizens, and believe this should be reflected in the partnerships of stakeholders – students should be seen as partners in decision-making in education, on par with parents and other community members. Similarly, in the goals that talk of developing school leadership, the VicSRC asserts the important contribution that all students can make to leadership within educational communities.

The VicSRC has met with members of the drafting group to express these points, and has expanded upon its views on the National Goals and on the

foundations for curriculum, in a formal response to the draft document.

It is important that all students are included in these goals and in discussion around them - in all states of Australia and in all schools. Find a copy of the discussion paper in your school or at:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/consultation/nationalgoals.htm>

and talk about it within your school community.

The VicSRC welcomes the paper's commitment to **"to new levels of engagement with parents, communities, businesses and, most importantly, students"** and urges that all measures taken at local, state and federal levels ensure that students are actively engaged as full partners.

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VicSRC about whether the motion is accepted or denied.

Successful motions become resolutions of the VicSRC and it is the responsibility of the Student Executive that governs the VicSRC to implement them. I was fortunate to be elected at Congress as one of the new executive members of this thriving group. I am excited to be part of the Executive and to now start planning to implement all the great decisions that we made.

Overall, the Congress was a very enjoyable and educational experience. I met a lot of helpful people there, and I hope I've also learnt enough to improve my school!

Meg Atley



Resolutions Passed by the VicSRC Congress 2008

The following resolutions were passed by the VicSRC Congress in August. Similar resolutions have been grouped here, and the VicSRC Executive is currently considering and prioritising action on these. Information about outcomes will be included in future issues of this newsletter.

Recognition for the role of SRCs

- The VicSRC should lobby for each School Council to provide a budget for its respective SRC.
- The VicSRC should negotiate with the Education Department and with school administrations to incorporate a minimum required support from teaching staff at SRC or student run events.
- The VicSRC should lobby the Government to fund a specialised training program for Student Representative Councils of Victoria to help Victorian SRCs to be effectively student run.
- The VicSRC should lobby Government that at least two students be on School Councils.
- The VicSRC should lobby schools to make sure that the SRC is consulted about all new rules, before they come into place.
- The VicSRC should lobby for all Victorian schools to have a Uniform Committee including at least one student representative, if such a committee is necessary.

Environment

- The VicSRC should lobby the government to enforce compulsory water saving programs in all schools.
- The VicSRC should lobby the Government that paper used in Victorian schools contain at least 30% recycled content.

Rural Affairs

- The VicSRC help to create a student exchange program between students from rural and metropolitan schools – 'Student Sea Change' – by forming a partnership with the government, and circulating an information pack between school SRCs.
- The VicSRC create a statement of principle about rural disadvantage for young people. This statement should be sent to relevant institutions and employers with the suggestion for them to take this into consideration in their actions.



Voting in progress at the VicSRC formal Congress session

It wasn't all hard work! Hard partying too - and some great dance floor moves... involving more voting apparently!

SRC Support

- The VicSRC should create a 'How To' Guide in book/(let) format to assist Victorian Student Representative Councils to organise and run successful events.
- The VicSRC produce an information pack to assist SRCs in becoming recognised as the voice of young people in the school's community.



Clusters

- The VicSRC will assist the development of regional clusters for those schools/ groups that wish to participate.

Healthy Food

- The VicSRC should lobby the Government to provide easy to read nutrition charts at all school canteens eg 150g meat pie = 1400m jog; 150g salad roll = 200m jog etc

Curriculum

- The VicSRC propose to the Department of Education additional courses on disaster management and first aid – such as flood, fires, storms etc.
- The VicSRC should lobby for compulsory education about Indigenous History, issues and poverty in Australian/Victorian school.

Overseas Aid

- The VicSRC supports the promised 0.7% of the Australian GDP donated to effective aid.

Mobile Phones

- The VicSRC should approach the State Government to tell schools that mobile phones cannot be kept from students outside school times.

Congress

- The VicSRC should enforce a rule in regards to quorum at Congress; a quorum exists where at least two-thirds of the original registrants are present and where at least two rural and two metropolitan schools are represented.

Full reports on Congress will be sent to participating schools and to VicSRC members. Other schools wanting a copy should contact the VicSRC Office.

VicSRC Congress:

Valuing Student Action

The VicSRC Congress 2008 was held at the Oasis Campsite in Mt Evelyn. This was the first time the VicSRC had run a two-day event, including a Saturday, and it attracted a very committed bunch of over 70 students. Both delegates and student organisers took seriously their responsibility to make the most of the Congress and the opportunity to make student voices heard. Students nominated the topics to be discussed during workshops on both days and used these to develop proposals which were then debated parliamentary style in the formal Congress.

The issues were many and varied and demonstrated the range of values held firmly by many students. Resolutions about global poverty, disaster management and support for rural schools demonstrated students' sense of compassion for those less fortunate than themselves. On the other hand, a range of motions about the support and recognition needed for SRCs, represented students calling for a fair go for themselves and their peers and seeking greater freedom within the school environment. Delegates didn't necessarily agree on everything but conducted the debates with integrity and respect for each other's viewpoints. They then elected a new Student Executive charged with implementing the Congress Resolutions.

The two day nature of the event, made possible by the grant from the Values Education Program, really enabled the students to get to know each other better, think deeply about the issues that concern them and develop a fuller sense of ownership of their organisation. These all contributed to the overall success of the Congress and the development of a strong agenda for the next 12 months.

James Tonson
VicSRC Project Officer



Australian Government
Department of Education, Employment
and Workplace Relations



Top: Debating a motion at the Congress

Above: Handing over responsibility to the new Executive

Right: The Congress organising and support crew



Welcome the new VicSRC Executive!

The following students were elected at the 2008 VicSRC Congress as the incoming Executive for 2008-9:

Ashlee Frye, Year 10, *Eaglehawk Secondary College*
Caitlyn Thorne, Year 11, *Pakenham Secondary College*
Casey Loraine, Year 8, *Macleod College*
David Chadzynski, Year 8, *Macleod College*
Doug Flakemore, Year 11, *Frankston High School*
Emma Lewis, Year 10, *Eaglehawk Secondary College*
Georgia Kennelly, Year 10, *University High School*
Holly Burr, Year 11, *Wodonga Senior Secondary College*
Jeffery Sun, Year 11, *Wodonga Senior Secondary College*
Jenesse Cruz, Year 9, *Caroline Chisholm Catholic College*
Meg Atley, Year 10, *Hampton Park Secondary College*
Michael Kurtanjek, Year 10, *University High School*
Monique Hemman, Year 11, *Templestowe College*
Nathan McMinn, Year 11, *Salesian College Rupertswood*
Ryan Lim, Year 9, *Taylors Lakes Secondary College*
Stacey Dight, Year 11, *Epping Secondary College*
Taylor Gundry, Year 11, *Belmont High School*

VicSRC Clusters

Two new SRC clusters have recently met for the first time, bringing together student representatives in a local area to share experiences, support each other, develop training and take joint action. The new VicSRC Executive is continuing to support this cluster work as an important priority.

Western Metropolitan Region: Four schools recently met and agreed to form a cluster: the *Western Metropolitan Secondary Student Leader Alliance*. The next meeting is at Caroline Chisholm Catholic College in Braybrook on Monday 20th October. Information has been sent to schools in the region.

Bayside: Four schools have also met here and agreed to form a cluster with a focus on local networking and sharing ideas. For information about the next meeting, contact Fiona Waugh on 0417 517 237.

Frankston: The Frankston Cluster meets monthly for schools on the Mornington Peninsula. They recently organised an inter-school *Peninsula Idol*, and are now investigating and organising an inter-school student exchange.

Greater Dandenong: This cluster is planning an Environment Week for term 4 with students reducing their consumption and environmental footprint to be awarded superhero powers.

Whittlesea: This cluster continues to meet regularly in the north of Melbourne, sharing information between schools and about community initiatives.

Let the VicSRC know of your Cluster news!

Your cartoon here ...

The VicSRC is currently looking for a witty (preferably), humorous, original, on-going cartoon slot to replace the section of writing you see before you, which is bland and honestly boring (much like its writer). If you feel you fit this description and are interested to draw the current landscape for student affairs in Victoria contact us:

0433 075 112 or via email: vicsrc@yacvic.org.au

Doug Flakemore

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:

Jenesse Cruz

I am in Year 9 at Caroline Chisholm Catholic College. My school's SRC is different to other schools' because we are based around year level social justice issues.

For this we need to make our school aware of an issue that our students are passionate about. We don't always have to raise money for this issue but get people thinking about it.

I joined the VicSRC to network with other schools and to benefit all the schools around Victoria. I am passionate about education and student rights and being on the VicSRC will help me affect these things. I am an identical twin so I could swap and change on you.



Michael Kurtanjek

I'm in Year 10 at the University High School (affectionately known as Uni High) and have been on my school's SRC since Year 7. I have had several different positions over the years, including Buildings and Grounds Officer, Curriculum Officer, and Treasurer, in addition to my role as Class Representative.

I joined the VicSRC executive at this year's Congress, and have since been allocated the Congress portfolio and the back-up position for Liaison with Other Groups. My interests outside the VicSRC include musical theatre and Scouting, which come together in the Melbourne Gang Show, for which I was accepted onto the Production Team as a Trainee this year.



VicSRC Members

The VicSRC welcomes the following new members:

Baimbridge College; Bellarine Secondary College - Drysdale Campus; Benalla College - Faithfull Campus; Peter Lalor Secondary College; Doncaster Secondary College; Hampton Park Secondary College; Girton Grammar School

Join the VicSRC

If 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 (the last one was in August, next one soon in October), 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!

Check the VicSRC website for membership details and forms:

www.yacvic.org.au/vicsrc