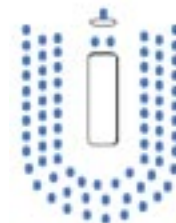




Congress 5 sets VicSRC clear tasks for 2010-2011!



The Annual VicSRC Congress this year was christened 'Congress 5' as 2010 was the 5th year that the VicSRC has held a statewide Congress. We're very proud of this fact and even prouder that Congress 5 was the biggest and best congress yet – with 91 students in attendance from 41 schools across Victoria!

Students gathered at the Oasis Campsite in Mt Evelyn on Friday August 6th to begin learning more about what SRCs can accomplish within their schools and local communities, and addressing the task of providing direction for the incoming VicSRC Student Executive. Congress also provided a fun opportunity for students from all over Victoria to meet, and the colour group competition was as hot as ever, with many occasions throughout the weekend for teams to score points and bond with their fellow group members!

A new initiative at the 2010 Congress was the 'SRC fair' on the opening Friday morning, with stalls provided by VicSRC supporters: **Connect** Magazine, RuMaD, the Youth Affairs Council of Victoria, Second Strike, VISTA, State Schools Relief and Parents Victoria. The

atmosphere in the room was electric with energy and ideas as students completed interesting tasks at each stall and shared information with stall holders.

Workshops

The workshop topics this year addressed both SRC issues (such as increasing diversity in SRCs, building stronger SRC leadership and SRCs in school decision making), and more general school-based issues (such as bullying, student engagement and responses to climate change).

Lively debates ensued during Congress sessions on Friday and Saturday with a series of thoughtful and sometimes challenging proposals put forward by students suggesting what the VicSRC might put into action in the coming year. Check out pages 4-5 in this

newsletter to see the **resolutions** passed at Congress.

The job of implementing these resolutions will go to the newly elected VicSRC Executive for 2010-11. **Meet this new Executive on page 8 of this newsletter.**

Huge thanks go to the 2009-10 VicSRC Student Executive and our crew members and volunteers who put in much time and energy to make Congress 5 such a successful event. In particular, thanks to **Judy Chow**, our Congress 5 Coordinator, who worked consistently over the past year to develop our Congress program, work out logistics and ensure that things went smoothly during the event.

Thanks also to the **Department of Education and Early Childhood Development** who funded Congress 5 and continues to be a great supporter of the VicSRC!

A **Congress Report** will be sent out to participating schools and will also be available on the VicSRC website from mid October.



www.vicsrc.org.au

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Impressions of VicSRC Congress 5 ...

On the 5th of August 2010, members of the outgoing VicSRC Executive met up at Flinders Street station and departed for the Oasis campsite, prepared for the next two days to be tough, challenging, productive and, most of all, exciting!

Once we had arrived at the campsite it was straight into the work, preparing congress 'passports', show bags and name-tags. Alongside the Executive were also many crew and a few Congress members who had come up early, giving us a hand to get the work done.

Even after a late night on Thursday, our spirits could not be dampened! As people started arriving for registration early, the atmosphere started to grow and only grew as more and more people started flooding in. Congress members headed downstairs to the gymnasium to find stalls set up by different organisations that they could find out about and participate in activities around that stall. Some of the organisations included Parents Victoria, **Connect**, Second Strike, YACVic, the State Schools Relief, VISTA, RUMAD and of course the VicSRC. We then got into our colour groups and got to know each other a bit better.

Before we knew it, we were right into workshop topics in areas such as SRC training, student involvement, SRC recognition, leadership, funding, planning events and primary school links. After working on proposed motions, we had a lunch break and then set off straight into our first sitting of Congress. There were many great motions passed that will be very exciting for the new Executive to work on. Some of the motions asked the Executive

to create an online forum for SRCs to communicate and share ideas, to work towards having more 'leadership workshops' available for students, to create a video that will promote student involvement and to make a 'how to' kit for event planning - and getting approval for such events.

As always, great fun was had on Friday night with the whole Congress participating in colour group activities. With limbo, trivia, singing and cheering all on the table, a great competitive spirit was flying around the room, with colours soaring high; teamwork and enthusiasm were definitely two things that were not lacking at all! After the fun and games of colour group competitions we could choose between a disco, campfire or guitar hero to entertain ourselves.

On Saturday morning we were off to a bright start, with spirits high and people ready to get stuck into their next workshop topic: bullying, canteen, vandalism, climate change, wellbeing, drugs and alcohol, and environment. Once again, the formal Congress was most exciting with some fantastic resolutions being passed: providing case studies of how to deal with bullying; making schools more aware of the government subsidies for being environmentally friendly; and having more power/being able to give constructive criticism to our teachers.

Overall Congress 5 was absolutely fantastic and very productive.

Tiffany Chapman

Toorak College & VicSRC Executive

Members of the retiring VicSRC Executive



Here are some comments from student participants on the VicSRC Congress 5:

"The workshops were really interesting and the ideas created were quite inventive. Everything was overwhelming at first but then I started talking to people from other schools and started feeling a little bit more confident, and by the end I was the most confident I've been. My first Congress sitting was different, in the best of ways; all of the motions raised good question and debates between opposing sides. It was a really well structured event and everything went off without a hitch. The Executive members made it a really amazing Congress. I must say that it was one of the most fun experiences I've had."

Samantha Chapman

*Year 7, Casey Grammar School
(first time Congress participant)*

"Congress 5 was an extraordinary, eye opening experience.

Along with 90 other students from across Victoria, I was offered the opportunity to voice my opinions, as well as discuss important issues that affect us all as students on a daily basis. I was honoured to represent my school as well as the VicSRC Executive.

We all participated in a formal Congress where motions and important issues were debated and amended. Ultimately all the successful motions that were passed will become our portfolios for the following VicSRC year.

The event was full of stimulating workshops, interactive activities, a nail-biting election and delicious treats as well as a competitive colour group competition (which my team, the Purple People Eaters, won!).

Congress 5 was such an amazing opportunity. I met so many other passionate and ambitious students who I know will achieve greatness for their school SRCs. I highly recommend that if you were given the chance to attend the VicSRC Congress, you should jump at the opportunity and make the most of it."

Elizabeth Kalas

Year 11, Taylors Lakes Secondary College



"The VicSRC Congress 5 cannot be described in simple adjectives alone. It was practically a hurricane. A whirlwind of ideas, ingenuity and creativity virtually plummeted into my brain as 90 young leaders from across Victoria blew up a storm in heated Congress debates and small team (but big brained) activities.

The Congress was a huge awakening for me. As a Year 12 student, my time as SRC President at my own school is quickly drawing to a close – in a matter of weeks. And I realised as I watched the middle and junior years students debate and facilitate discussion, that the need for an overall body such as the VicSRC is integral, and the call for student voices to be heard is still roaring louder than ever.

Funnily enough, it is not only high school students that feel as if their voices are being lost within a tunnel of bureaucracy and school regulations, as primary school students are feeling the plug too! In a small group discussion we recognised that, in order to create successful and mature leaders in high school, we must encourage opportunities for leadership and independence throughout primary school. And although the discussion only developed into the (excuse the pun) infant stages, I urge all high schools to consider such a proposition with their local primary schools or main feeder schools, as the qualities of leadership skills are desired in all walks of life.

I shuffled into the Congress, as a 'mediocre' SRC President – and I believe that I actually sauntered out of Congress, quite possibly a 'not-so-special' SRC President, but a President with a plethora of fresh ideas – and someone who felt as if they were inspired again."

Lou Mapleston

Year 12, Mentone Girls' Secondary College



Resolutions agreed to by the 2010 VicSRC Congress

*The following resolutions were debated and agreed to by the 2010 Congress.
They have been grouped here by common themes.*

SRC Support

- That the VicSRC create an on-line forum of SRCs on the VicSRC website to facilitate the exchange of ideas and examples of leadership and training.
- That the VicSRC lobby the state government to subsidise and introduce mandatory leadership workshops and programs (focused on year 9s) for all Victorian High Schools for at least one day a year.
- That the VicSRC write to the government and encourage them to allocate a yearly fund to their SRC and allow the SRCs to use this fund at their discretion.

SRCs in School Decision Making

- That the VicSRC encourage School Councils to discuss and get approval from SRCs in the decision-making process.
- That the VicSRC survey School Councils and Principals as to why they will not approve events, then turn this information into a resource that gives schools ideas on how to overcome these disapprovals and have these events approved. Also, case studies of successful events and how they were approved would be included in the kit.
- That the VicSRC encourage all SRCs to develop a decision making 'power' map of the school to be posted and be made accessible to all students.
- That the VicSRC should work with the DEECD in reforming the current student satisfaction survey include a mandatory student opinion section.
- That the VicSRC encourage schools to introduce a survey of students about a particular teacher or subject at the request of a student.





SRC Promotion

- That the VicSRC should create a video that will be used in schools to promote student involvement in their SRC.
- That the VicSRC encourage schools to allow SRCs to fundraise for themselves (as a council) and other school projects on school grounds.

Bullying

- That the VicSRC support anti-bullying campaigns in schools (physical, verbal and cyber bullying) by advertising through VicSRC resources and media and by providing examples of case studies in schools that have been successful.
- That the VicSRC encourage regional clusters to work together to exchange effective policies and strategies on anti-bullying.

Healthy Food

- That the VicSRC conduct a survey of all Victorian High Schools regarding which healthier canteen options are successful at their schools, then use this information to create a list on the VicSRC website of healthy and cost effective food suppliers to be made available to all schools.

Environment

- That the VicSRC emphasise the availability and benefits of government incentives or subsidies to help schools become more environmentally friendly; we propose that this is done by sending letters detailing specific actions that can be taken to Principals and teachers as well as writing an article in the VicSRC Newsletter.

Sexual Diversity

- That the VicSRC encourage schools to raise support and awareness for sexual diversity in schools.

Drugs and Alcohol

- That the VicSRC research the possibility of developing a partnership with drug, alcohol and gambling associations or community groups to deliver interactive workshops and guest speakers who have first hand experiences; the intention being that students are awakened to the traumatic encounters due to the misuse of alcohol and illicit drugs.

Graffiti, Vandalism and Littering

- That the VicSRC should distribute to schools case studies of schools that have been successful in cracking down on graffiti, vandalism and littering.

strengthening SRCs ...

VicSRC Awards

On Saturday 7th August, the **SRC Recognition Awards** were presented at Mt Evelyn to eight schools whose SRCs exhibited strength, democracy and effective operation.

The awards were established at the 2009 VicSRC Congress, and were intended to encourage schools to provide greater support for their SRCs by offering some kind of incentive and method of recognition. The VicSRC believes that it's important for successful SRCs and projects to be recognised, allowing student representatives to make an even greater contribution to their schools and their communities. It also gives SRCs something to work towards, inspiring bigger and better projects and a greater sense of fulfilment.

The awards were offered in three categories, for SRCs that showed different qualities. These were **Enterprise**: for SRCs that, through use of an effective structure and strategic planning, had completed a successful school project; **Integration**: for SRCs that had established strong links with school decision-making bodies; and **Informed Representation**: for SRCs that were truly democratic and fully representative of students.

The VicSRC would like to congratulate the following schools...

Second Strike Award for Enterprise:

Winner: Bendigo Senior Secondary College
Runner-Up: Braybrook College
Finalist: Mentone Girls' Secondary College

Connect Award for Integration:

Winner: The University High School
Runner-Up: Bendigo Senior Secondary College
Finalist: Caroline Chisholm Catholic College

VASSP Award for Informed Representation:

Winner: Nossal High School
Runner-Up: Galvin Park Secondary College
Finalist: Ivanhoe Grammar School Plenty Campus

Each school received a plaque from the VicSRC. The three winning schools also received one year's free membership to the VicSRC, and a free SRC Training Day, courtesy of Second Strike.



David Mould presents **Second Strike Award for SRC Enterprise** to **Bendigo Senior Secondary College**



Kate Walsh (VicSRC Coordinator) presents **VASSP Award for SRC Informed Representation** to **Nossal High School School Captains** and **Wayne Haworth, Director of Wellbeing and Student Leadership**

The VicSRC would like to extend its thanks to the Awards sponsors: Connect Magazine, Second Strike and the Victorian Association of State Secondary Principals. It would also like to thank the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development for their support and promotion of the Awards project.

It has been a pleasure to coordinate the SRC Recognition Awards and to see the great work of SRCs in Victoria that are making a difference to their schools and communities.

I would encourage all schools with a strong SRC to apply for next year's round of SRC Recognition Awards.

Michael Kurtanjek

*SRC Recognition Awards Coordinator
VicSRC Student Executive 09/10*



VicSRC Regional Conferences 2010

VicSRC Regional Student Conferences that have recently been organised for students in South Gippsland, the LaTrobe Valley and Bendigo provided representatives with the skills and insight to make a positive difference in their schools and wider communities.

Energetic and passionate representatives exchanged ideas and personal experiences of being involved in the SRC and discussed opportunity for improvements. Erin Young, the VicSRC Conference Facilitator, explained in a practical 'hands on' way how to deliver a forum and explored creative ways to present information back to target audiences.

Students actively participated in a mock Congress that provided an opportunity to openly discuss issues that included binge drinking, vandalism, teacher-student respect, the environment and cyber bullying.

Lowanna College students shared their innovative fundraising ideas for breast cancer that included holding a 'Pink Singing Competition', selling pink-iced muffins and blending raspberry-infused smoothies.

Bendigo students shared their concern for littering, which had resulted in the school's decision to purchase underground bins. The students believe that the new bins will decrease littering.

Discussion of initiating cluster groups in all three regions in 2011 was raised by students and the VicSRC will endeavour to support teachers and students to make these clusters a reality.

As we go to press, Regional Conferences are to be held in **Warrnambool** and **Heywood** in the final two weeks of Term 3. Our **Bairnsdale** conference had to be postponed during Term 3; however, we hope to try again in early term 4. Stay tuned for more details Bairnsdale.

The VicSRC also hope to run Student Conferences in metropolitan and regional areas once again in 2011. If you are interested in **hosting** a conference at your school, please get in touch with the VicSRC!

A big thank you to all schools who have hosted and attended conferences in 2010. The VicSRC will have held **15 conferences** across the state by the end of this year; this would not have been possible without local involvement, support and enthusiasm. **We hope to see you again in 2011!**

Erin Young

VicSRC Conference Facilitator 2010



Join the VicSRC

There are many practical benefits from being a VicSRC member. You get copies of *Connect* magazine every two months (a copy was recently mailed to member schools in June), 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.

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.

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

Membership forms are on the VicSRC website:

www.vicsrc.org.au

New VicSRC members:

We welcome the following Student Councils that have recently become members of the VicSRC:

- Antonine College, Brunswick
- Bayswater Secondary College
- Footscray City College
- Kyabram P-12 College
- Mentone Girls Grammar School
- Nossal High School, Berwick
- Sophia Mundi Steiner School
- Traralgon Secondary College

VicSRC Executive 2010-2011



New VicSRC Executive Elected

Students at Congress 5 elected the new VicSRC Student Executive for 2010-2011:

- Kosheni Arulsothy, Melbourne Girl's College (Year 11)
Samantha Chapman, Casey Grammar School (Year 7)
Tiffany Chapman, Toorak College (Year 9)
Jenesse Cruz, Caroline Chisholm Catholic College (Year 11)
Tim Eric, Frankston High School (Year 10)
Catherine Gilford, Mentone Girls Grammar School (Year 11)
Marlee-Alice Gorman, Princes Hill Secondary College (Year 8)
Elizabeth Kalas, Taylors Lakes Secondary College (Year 11)
Chloe Lazzaro, Princes Hill Secondary College (Year 10)
Robert Liang, Blackburn High School (Year 11)
Ellie Patterson, Melbourne Girl's College (Year 9)
Kimi Pellosis, Frankston High School (Year 11)
Kate Preston, Bellarine Secondary College (Year 10)
Shaf Shariff, Narre Warren South P-12 College (Year 10)
Megan Shellie, Mentone Girls Grammar School (Year 11)

NB: Trent Knight, Year 8 from Narre Warren Secondary College and pictured in the group above, was elected to the VicSRC Executive, but has subsequently been unable to take up this position. Shaf Shariff (inset) is from the same school, and was the next candidate who would have been elected; she has replaced him on the Executive.

Coming soon from the VicSRC

The new super VicSRC website!

A VicSRC poster for all schools – supporting Student Councils

A competition about your creative use of this poster

The SRC Support Kit - for SRCs and teachers



Watch this space:

VicSRC Competition coming soon!

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development has donated a netbook computer and a Flip video camera to the VicSRC as prizes for an upcoming competition - so watch this space!

For more information:

Check the VicSRC website for membership details and forms:

www.vicsrc.org.au

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

