

Connect

Number 234: December 2018

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Why does Connect exist?

Connect has been published bimonthly since 1979!

It aims to:

- document student participation approaches and initiatives;
- support reflective practices;
- develop and share resources.

Connect:

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This Issue:

Another year passes ... and *Connect* is now 39 years old!



It is encouraging that there is increased recognition of the importance of **student voice, agency and participation** ... both locally and internationally. The VicSRC's student-led *Teach the Teacher* program has been internationally recognised, student-led action around climate change, gun control and safety has been in the news ... and **Derry Hannam** provides a brief note in this issue about democratic school developments in Europe (more in the next issue).

However, I am becoming increasingly concerned that there is a danger of these ideas being tokenised, or coopted for limited or contradictory ends. For example, 'student voice' is being seen as only concerned with the capability of students to speak up – and not with any recognition that they have important things to say ... unique perspectives that must be heard. There is little or no attention paid to how students' voices are listening to, how their participation in decision-making can make a difference. So these ideas can become another way of doing things **to** students ... and of then measuring and judging them ... some are competent to speak and act and participate; others not.

Several years ago, I invited contributions to *Connect* around the theme: **'How does your school hear students' voices?'** Several schools (both teachers and students) responded, but all focused their stories on how they supported students individually and collectively to speak up - and none actually addressed how the school **heard** what students were saying ... or how they **seriously listened** to them ... or how students' voices **made a difference** to what the school did. It still remains a pertinent challenge!

The current contact and work with Specialist Schools in Victoria puts this into stark relief, as these schools recognise and work to hear and listen to what students are saying – particularly students who may be non-verbal and who are often characterised as having no conception of themselves as learners or of goals they wish to pursue.

I would like to develop some sort of useful resource (a tool?) that encourages us to reflect on how we **hear** students' voices, how we **listen** to them, how we **respond**, and how we **act or change practices** (in *partnership* with them) to improve outcomes for **all** students. Watch this space ... but more interactively, if you are interested to think alongside me and to trial and develop such resources, please let me know.

In this issue, there are articles from both primary and secondary schools. Several of these emerge from the VicSRC's **Student Voice Awards** in October. They highlight different ways that students are able to make a difference to their school and community environments. And the resources being developed by *UP for Learning* in Vermont around partnerships between young people and adults appear to be very useful; they are offering to share these. Try them; adapt them – and let us know.

Next Issue ...

The first issue of *Connect* for 2019 will take us into our 40th year. It will be a 'welcome back to school' for Australian readers – with more inspiration about democratic and participatory approaches. **Are you able to spend some holiday time writing so you can tell others about what you've been doing in 2018 or planning for 2019?**

Roger Holdsworth

Next Issue: #235: February 2019
Deadline for material: end of January, 2019

Student Voice leads change in Respectful Relationships

St Charles Borromeo Primary School was successful in applying to be a lead school in the implementation of *Respectful Relationships* funded by the Victorian Government. The **Royal Commission into Family Violence** identified the critical role that schools have in creating a culture of respect to change the story of family violence for future generations.

Respectful Relationships supports schools to promote and model respect, positive attitudes and behaviours. It teaches our children how to build healthy relationships, resilience and confidence. *Respectful Relationships* education is a core component of the Victorian Curriculum from Foundation to Year 12.

We lead nine Catholic Primary schools in our community of practice.

Through St. Charles Borromeo's *Respectful Relationships* implementation and action plan, students have played a critical role.

Whilst having a conversation with a Grade 6 student about the use of our playground spaces, it was decided that using a team approach

would provide us with the information that was needed to look at how the playground could be shared equally between boys and girls.

A *Respectful Relationships Student Action Team (RR SAT)* was formed. The Grade 6 student suggested three other students to make up the **RR SAT**. He approached them and invited them to a meeting where they could discuss what the purpose of the **RR SAT** would be. These four students (two Grade 5s and two Grade 6s) have led change in our school culture around gender equality.

At the initial meeting, the four students brainstormed what they wanted to see changed and how best to collect data to find out what other

students were saying. They carried out a student survey and a playground audit. This information was then presented to the school *Respectful Relationships* team.

The playground audit was to look at how our outside spaces are being used and by whom: *Are they shared fairly by boys and girls and senior and junior students?*

Through the student surveys and focus group discussions, the **SAT** learnt that students would like the option to wear any of our uniform – not have a girls' and a boys' uniform. The **RR SAT** have changed our uniform policy. No longer is there a girls' uniform and a boys' uniform. Any student can choose to wear any item on the uniform list.

They also heard from many of the senior girls that they would like the option to play hoop time basketball. This sport has always been a boys' team only. This resulted in a girls' hoop time team being established. The girls in the team designed a uniform they were comfortable in wearing.



In the SAT's discussions with staff members, they learnt that the non-fiction books in the library were heavily weighted on male role models: sports people, scientists, authors etc. The SAT members researched new library resources and created an *Inspirational Women* display. Each class chose a book from the display to read during library time.

Our school *Respectful Relationships* team had created a gender equality policy for all members of our school community. The RR SAT worked on this policy to write a gender equality fact sheet for all students in a language that could be understood by the students. They then organised time in each classroom to share this fact sheet with the students through circle time. This allowed for rich discussion about what gender equality meant from them at our school: what it looks like, sounds like and feels like.

The RR SAT was invited by the Department of Education's Inner East *Respectful Relationships* Project Lead to work with four students from Parkmore Primary School to plan and facilitate the *Respectful Relationships* Primary School Student Voice Forum. They presented to 70 participants and worked with them through content on *Respectful Relationships* to create an action plan to take back to their schools.

This group of young people, through their passion, self-belief, commitment and respectful relationships, has changed the thinking and actions of all members of the St. Charles Borromeo community around the equality of genders.

Sue Cahill

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Mindsets for Student Voice

Students at **Parkmore Primary School** have a tradition of social action through fundraising, but are now looking to their own school community to make their voices heard.

Parkmore Primary School, in Melbourne's Forest Hill, is a small school with a strong community feel. Teachers value the flexibility that the school's size affords them – the school's pedagogical approach sees teachers working with students across the school, with a real focus on intervention at each student's point of learning. The school is proud in the way in which it prepares its students for life in a 21st century world, providing them with a rigorous academic foundation, but also consciously developing their social and emotional skills through a Positive Education approach that specifically develops personal character strengths, positive relationships and a growth mindset.

This concept of the growth mindset is not static – rather, it is taught explicitly in a variety of contexts to equip students with skills for social development, approaches to domain-specific learning, and, inspired by the work of Professor Leah Waters, as a protective measure against mental illness.

As a new principal at Parkmore Primary School, one of my first contact points was with our **Student Representative Council**. Together with SRC leaders and their families, I attended the **VicSRC Awards**, where Parkmore students were awarded a runners-up prize for **Best Primary School SRC**. I was interested to investigate what made our school SRC so successful, and so attended the next SRC meeting as a special guest to find out more.

The Parkmore SRC is completely student-run, with support from senior classroom teacher **Adrienne Baucke**. The students have their own agenda, and the two school captains chair the meeting. The chairs call out the items to the floor, and students respond. For some items, the opinions of all council members are sought in a round-robin style (with an option to pass), but other items are open to the floor for comment. This makes for a rather informal feel to the proceedings, but the relaxed culture of the meetings is deliberate to ensure



that all participants have a chance to express their opinion. The agenda of each meeting includes:

- A check-in with all members on a student-chosen topic.
- Distribution of tasks for the upcoming assembly. This is run entirely by the students, who ensure everyone has a go at the various roles throughout the term.
- A general discussion of upcoming events.
- The students then break into subcommittees, which are determined by upcoming activities.

The students value the structure of the subcommittees, as they see these as a forum for more shy members of the SRC to practise speaking up and sharing their ideas.

I asked the SRC to respond to the following questions:



What are the biggest things you have achieved?

Students reported that their biggest achievements were at many levels. While they identify traditional SRC community fundraising activities as being important to them (for example, raising money through a *'Big Morning Tea'* to support **The Cancer Council**), they have turned their attention also to the needs of their own school community. The students are aware that their actions can make a substantial difference to their learning environment, school facilities and programs. Some of their activities that they have identified as being significant included raising \$2000 through a *'Colour Run'* to buy modern furniture for their classrooms. They apply for school grants, for example, for a new bike shed.

It is when the Parkmore SRC describe their impact on school governance, operations and leadership that this discussion becomes really interesting. The students described their impact on the school as a culture, listing the following as big achievements:

- **Changing the School Uniform Policy.** Inspired by their learnings from the school's *Respectful Relationships* curriculum, they surveyed the student body to find out about how they felt about the school uniform. The students prepared a draft policy that set out changes, including non-gendered descriptions of uniform items and an improved hat choice. This policy was taken to School Council and was ratified; this is something of which the students were particularly proud.
- **Changing the structure of student leadership at the school.** The students had been exploring the concept of leadership, and decided on a model that allowed more opportunities for younger students to participate in positions of responsibility. Interestingly, the students also expressed a desire for students who had demonstrated good leadership to be eligible for roles in the future, recognising the need to have *'the right person for the right job.'* Again, this model was taken to School Council for approval.

What is the purpose of the SRC?

The students began their response to this question by viewing their activities through a lens of how they were benefitting other students at the school, with an emphasis on expressing the importance of how student voice brings new ideas and activities to the school, providing all students with a voice, and making school *'more fun for everyone.'*

Whereas the growth mindset is all about self, and approaching new situations with a willingness to challenge yourself, the benefit mindset is about taking the view that your actions benefit others.

One of the school captains then explained to me the benefit of the SRC to herself and the culture of the school. She described the *'benefit mindset'*, which is the flipside to a **growth mindset**. Whereas the **growth mindset** is all about self, and approaching new situations with a willingness to challenge yourself, the **benefit mindset** is about taking the view that your actions benefit others. In the **benefit mindset**, therefore, you are interested in finding out what

others think, and use that knowledge to improve the school with others in mind, not necessarily yourself as leader.

Reflections: Mind Sets for Growth

The world that our students are learning to navigate can be overwhelming for young minds. By seeking to challenge themselves through a **growth mindset** and facing difficulties with a positive stance, they develop their resilience and creative thinking skills.

When they take these skills and band together, the students deliberately practise a **benefit mindset**. They are able to consider how their voice and agency can affect not just themselves, but their own community and the world beyond.

The number and variety of projects that Parkmore Primary School's SRC engage in ensures the students develop these leadership skills, powered by their thinking and ideas, and dedicated to improving the lives, learning and experiences of others. As principal of Parkmore Primary School, I believe it is vital to continue to provide our students with the opportunity to develop their mindsets for growth, and to have genuine and meaningful forums in which to exercise their voice.

Isobel McLennan, Principal
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Accepting responsibilities; taking action

Introducing a **Student Representative Council** into our school this year has been both a success and a challenge.

Our school has, for a long time, aimed to give all Year 5/6 students opportunities to develop leadership skills and make a difference in our school community. For several years we operated a program known as **COIL (Challenging Opportunities for Inclusive Leadership)**. Each student worked with a team on responsibilities such as running assemblies, fundraising, managing sport equipment and producing the school magazine. Our students loved the opportunity for responsibility and we were impressed by their ability to rise to the challenge. For many, working in their **COIL** groups was a highlight of the week.

From a teaching perspective, it was a success, but it was also increasingly clear that we needed to adjust our practice to give our students more opportunity to have a voice and

improve things that matter to them. We made the decision to begin an SRC.

After consulting our local Secondary College, and attending a **VicSRC Student Voice Workshop**, we came up with a model that would allow us to provide our students opportunities for both accepting responsibilities and taking action.

Eight students were elected by the student body as SRC members. They then paired up to investigate, form a project and take action in one of four areas: **Student Activities, Internal Affairs, External Affairs, and Sustainability and the Environment**. Students not elected as SRC members formed part of the **Action Teams** and were rostered on to help with responsibilities that supported the **Action Teams**, for example raising funds to enact the projects.

Joshua Ball and Jessica Cox
Grade 5/6 teachers, Castlemaine Primary School
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What have you learned; what has changed?

We've learnt a lot about leadership, both from the teachers and the workshops we've attended.

We've learned how to communicate effectively, to be confident and how to relate to others. These skills have really helped us find out the issues that matter to our school and our community.

Sometimes students can be a bit hesitant to talk but if you can connect to them and you're friendly, they relax and feel like they can trust you. I think the students now know they have people

in the school they can talk to and have their voices heard. We want students at our school to feel empowered and to feel like they can have a say.

The work we've done hasn't just helped us connect with others. We've all become more confident with things like public speaking. We've also learned to overcome challenges. Some things about being on the SRC have been difficult, like fundraising, but you just have to work together to find a solution.

The SRC has also changed our school. With the old **COIL** system the school leaders had more day-to-day responsibilities around the school like helping out with assemblies and lunches, but the SRC has a more external focus.

A lot of the work we've done over the year has been about connecting with our community and that's had a positive impact on how the community sees our school and sees young people. We're showing everyone that we can make just as big a change as someone who's 20.

What could we do better or do more of, or learn from for next year?

There are improvements we could make to the relationship between the junior and senior parts of our school.

At the moment, the Grade 5s and 6s don't do much with the grade 1s and 2s. Getting to know each other better would build trust and help the junior students feel more confident to connect with the senior students and have their say.

We could also work on our relationship with the other schools in our community. We came up with ideas for a few inter-school activities over the year but didn't have a lot of success getting the other schools interested or involved. Next year, talking to the other schools sooner and working together on developing our ideas, would be a good idea.

We struggled a bit initially in the external group to figure out what to do but we all feel like we've really got it now and we've come up with some great ideas.



What have we achieved?

External Group

We've started working with quite a few local groups and businesses and we've organised a few successful fundraisers like the *Parma for a Farmer*, where we raised money for drought relief and *Pyjama Day* when we raised money for the **Asthma Foundation**.

We've also worked on sharing our school's story through our local paper's *Newshounds* program and developing a school magazine.

We're currently working on a fundraiser with **Castlemaine District Community Health** which will raise money for their homeless programs. This idea has come directly from the students and will make a difference to the lives of people in our community at a time of year when many families struggle.



Internal Affairs Group

Our **Internal Affairs group** found a need to support people being mistreated at school and community so they applied for a local Council grant to help fund working with professionals and made a poster called *"If you See Something, Say Something."* They also wrote encouraging comments on the school's sports equipment.



Student Activities

The **Student Activities group** had the goal of improving the school experience for students. The major project we worked on was a 'grants' program for the junior and middle part of our school. We gave each class a budget of \$200 that could be spent on something the students decided would either help them with their learning or make school more enjoyable for them. We reviewed the applications from each class, and in the end, we were able to provide some new board games to one class, a fish tank to another, and we paid for a mobile zoo to visit the junior classrooms.

Environment and Sustainability

The **Environment and Sustainability (ES) group** had a great idea to reduce the amount of rubbish that was finding its way into our schoolyard. They instructed each class to count how many wrappers they had each day. Each week at our school assembly, the **ES** group announced the class with the least wrappers and the class with the most. The class with the least wrappers received a trophy made out of reused wrappers, and they also got a certificate and 15 minutes of free time. The class with the most wrappers had to do 15 minutes of cleaning up the school yard.

This approach to getting rid of the wrappers in our school has been extremely effective, as the amount of wrappers has decreased significantly by more than half of the original amount. The **ES** group are ecstatic that their efforts have made such a difference in our school.





SRC Student Voice Awards

We were so proud to be awarded **First Runner Up** at the **Victorian Student Representative Council Student Voice Awards** in October.

The **Student Voice Awards** celebrate best practice in student voice, leadership and student-led action in Victoria.

We had to create a 1 to 2 minute video telling our story and how we've used student voice in our school and community. Out of hundreds of applicants from across the state, a panel of VicSRC Student Executives, staff, supporters and education sector representatives selected us to receive an award.

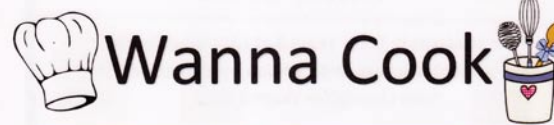
Two SRC representatives attended the awards night in Melbourne and the Hon James Merlino, Deputy Premier of Victoria and Victorian Minister for Education, presented the awards.

It was pretty amazing to see that, of all the schools that entered, they judged our entry so highly, especially as this is the first year we've had an SRC and the first time we've entered the Awards. It really showed us that the change we've made at our school is pretty huge.

Emma Chaffey and Jude Kenneally
Castlemaine Primary School SRC members



UPDATE: **Merriang Special Developmental School, Vic**



**Merriang Special Developmental School
 Later Years 3**

The students in Later Years 3 at **Merriang Special Developmental School** in Lalor, Victoria, recently launched their **Wanna Cook** recipe book. (See **Connect** 230, April 2018 for earlier details of this class.)

The students hope you enjoy the recipes they have chosen for **Wanna Cook**. All photographs were taken and sequenced by the students. We hope the step by step photographs help to develop students' independent living skills.

We use an electric frypan instead of a stove top as we found it is safer and easier for the students to control.

Recipes are given a star rating from one to three to indicate if they are simple or easy or a bit harder.

**Darcy, Christos, Daniel, Angel,
 Jay, Nawras and Tim**

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Wavelength: *a safe student-led space*

Wavelength is Braybrook College's first **LGBTQI+** group. The group is student-led and -run. This group is aimed at providing a safe environment for students to meet. Students meet weekly at lunchtime to discuss ideas and plan events. All students and staff are welcome, LGBTQI+ or ally. The numbers of students involved vary between five and twenty.

The group is promoted throughout the school via student-made posters and through the school's main platform, *Compass*.

The group this year had many highlights.

One such highlight was raising money on two separate occasions for two different charities. The idea arose from a weekly meeting of students who were discussing *IDAHO TB (International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia)*. The students agreed that they could hold a bake sale that would raise money for **Minus18**, a charity that champions for **Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer (LGBTIQ)** young people Australia-wide. The students planned for the event and divided up who would bake what items. The day was a success as all baked

products sold out quickly and a sufficient donation was made.

Another key event for the year was the celebration of *Wear It Purple Day*. This is an annual **LGBTIQA+** awareness day especially for young people, based in Australia. Supporters wear purple to celebrate diversity and young people from the **LGBTIQA+** community. On this day, students held a lolly and cake stall under a rainbow flag. Students and staff who supported the stall were also provided with stickers and ribbons to celebrate the day. The money raised on this occasion went to **Thorne Harbour Health**, an organisation that provides a range of services that include prevention education, treatment and care of **PLHIV** and counselling services in particular to the **LGBTQI+** community.

The efforts of the group culminated in being nominated for the **VicSRC's**

Department of Education and Training **Group Action Award**. The group was made finalists. The Awards night was held on October 18th at the **NAB Village, Docklands**. The group ultimately finished **runner-up** for the Award, which was a great reward for all their hard work that they have put in this year.

The future

The students have big plans for the future of **Wavelength**. Many ideas have been shared as to what the group could do next year and beyond. Students would like to be involved in decision-making and will work more closely with other groups at the school such as the **Student Representative Council (SRC)**.

Learnings

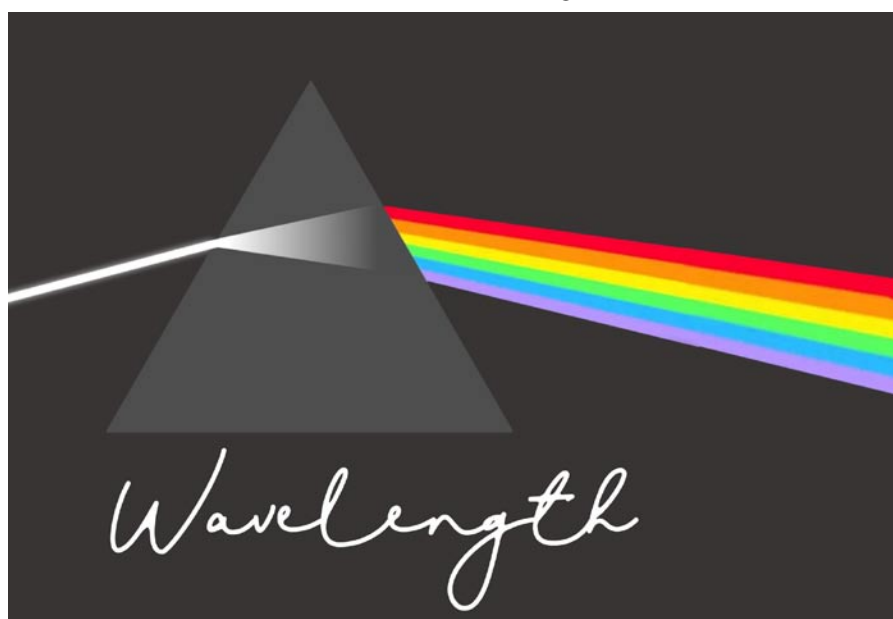
I think that students have learnt a lot this year from being involved in the group. Students have learnt how to plan for events and how to best succeed and make the most of these activities. Students have gained skills that they previously did not have and will be able to utilise these in the future. On a personal level, some students have found their place in the school and have learnt that it is OK to be who they are.

Students have found a safe environment in which they can be themselves without fear of prejudice and negativity.

As an educator, I am proud of the way the students have conducted themselves throughout the year. I am humbled by the hard-work and determination shown by the students as they have made the weekly meetings a time for sharing and connection. Going forward, it will be exciting to see what the group will do next and what the next challenge might be.

Tyrone Paris

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Michelle (year 11)

I'm one of the founders of *Wavelength*. It is an *LGBTIQ+ and Straight Alliance Club* for all genders and sexualities at Braybrook College.

Initially, when creating the club, we weren't sure what it was called, and we ended up calling it '*Wavelength*' because it was the idea that, no matter what your sexuality or your gender identity, you needed a place to belong, and because of that, all people would come together – and come to one *wavelength* – and believe that everyone needs a place where they feel safe and comfortable.

Recently, we had our first large event as a group: a bake sale for *Wear Purple Day*. We were able to hold a casual clothes day for the event, to raise awareness for people of LGBTIQ+ identifying.



Esther (Year 7)

I'm part of the *Wavelength* group. I really enjoy being part of the group because it helps you to be part of the community and feel comfortable and welcomed, because there are a bunch of other people who are like me.

I think that the *Wavelength* group has helped me impact on Braybrook in allowing it to be more accepting, and for younger students especially to become more accustomed to everything that's happened and to their identity.

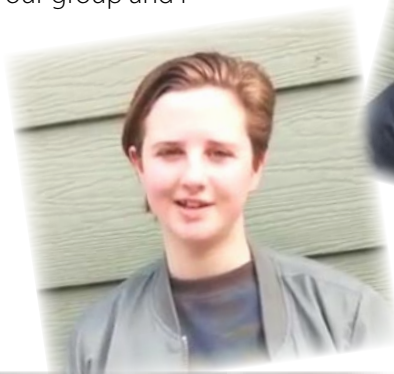


Mia (Year 8)

I'm part of the *Wavelength* community. I enjoy our group and I think it's a wonderful place.

Jade (Year 9)

I think that the *Wavelength* group is a really great place for any gender and any sexuality, to meet. I'd like the group to be much bigger and more recognised within the school community, so that everybody can join it and not be ashamed of who they are.



Our SRC: improved, stronger, better

While Nossal High School (in Berwick, in the south east of Melbourne) is a fairly new school, and our Student Representative Council (SRC) a relatively newly established body, we make up for our lack of tradition with student voice that is both strong and transparent.

After a last minute suggestion and a last minute nomination video, our SRC turned into finalists for the VicSRC's secondary schools SRC of the Year Award. It was an honour to be there on the night to hear our school's name announced as the winner.

Winning SRC of the Year not only gave us something to show for the work we'd done, but gave us an opportunity to inspire other schools in Victoria to work with other students to amplify our voices in the classroom. As our fellow peer and SRC chairperson,

Abhishek, said when we accepted our trophy: *"Irrespective of race or place, we all deserve the best education possible. We are stronger together."*

Reforming our processes

This year, we worked on reforming our voting systems to ensure a high quality of candidates and a more fair election process. Though we still have more to do, our current process allows for a more democratic selection of student representatives.

Together, we worked on an SRC Elections Handbook that has a list of prevalent issues within our school, including littering and student attitudes towards school. From that list, each candidate chose one or two topics and sent in an application detailing what they would do as an SRC member to fix that issue. After the applications had been sent in, we ran a trial SRC meeting with all prospective candidates, discussing some of the issues from the Handbook. The idea was to give candidates a taste of what the SRC is like, how a typical meeting runs, as well as to get them to start thinking like they would need to if elected.

After the trial meeting, each candidate presented a speech detailing why they would make a good SRC member; their



speech touched on one or two of the issues from the student Handbook. Once the speeches were made, each cohort had the opportunity to vote for the candidates via a single transferable voting system (or preferential voting). This meant that it was less of a popularity contest and more of a democratic selection process.

SRC structure

Our SRC is comprised of a **General Assembly** of 28 members who have fortnightly meetings. Within that group, there are 12 **Executives** who meet on a weekly basis. Our Council is also divided into three workgroups: *Philanthropy, Wellbeing* and *Communications*.

Our mission is to allow our peers' voices to be heard and make the changes that our cohorts want to see at our school. We will always strive towards more student agency. No matter how many changes we make, our school can always be improved.

We have set up an on-line suggestion box for students to write in with their concerns and ideas. Every time we get a submission, we do our best to give the students what they want.

As the advocates for student voice, Nossal's SRC is always striving to represent the student body in the formation of our school. The **School Captains**, who also sit on the SRC, are the major voices for the students on meetings of committees such as our **School Council** or with regular lunches with our Principal, Mr Page. If any members of the student body require their ideas and voices to be heard, they are often projected through the SRC to a suitable person, which is often Mr Butler, the Assistant Principal.

Sports Uniform Policy

Other than being involved with the highest positions of power at Nossal, we work hard to initiate school decisions within the SRC. Earlier this year, members of the Year 11 SRC structured a detailed proposal to **School Council** to overturn their past decision to abolish the existing sports uniform policy. That sports uniform policy allowed students to wear PE uniform to and from school, without the need to change at school, if they had an event throughout the day that required the necessary attire. However, students began to abuse this privilege and soon it was taken away from us. Yet times have changed and the students are willing to prove themselves worthy once again.

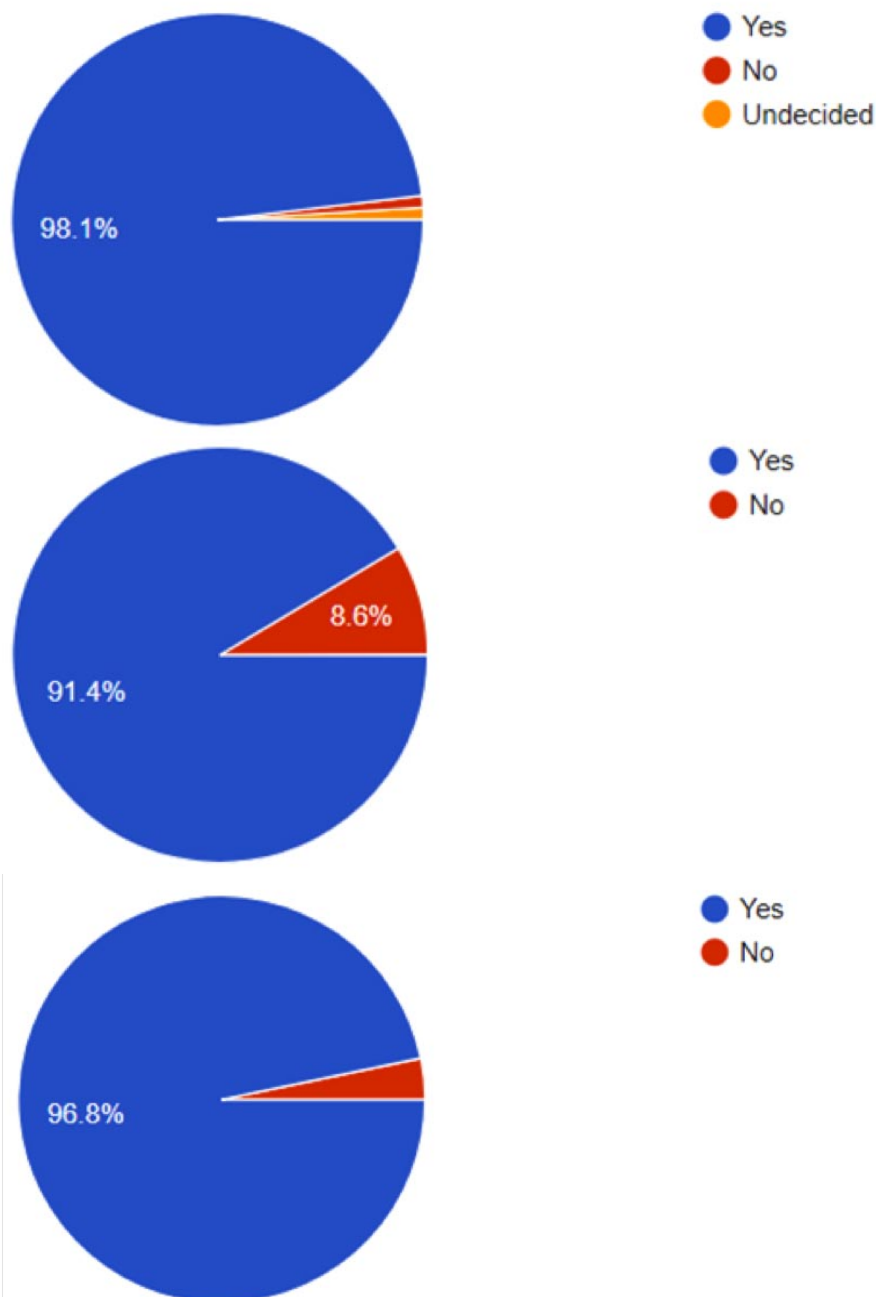
The Year 11s prepared their proposal for the **School Council** by conducting a survey of the entire school with encouraging results. Students were asked several questions including:

- whether they wanted to wear sports uniform for the whole day at school for sports activities such as inter-school sports training;
- whether being unable to wear sports uniform was preventing or discouraging them from participating in sporting activities at school, and
- whether they would be more willing to participate in sporting activities if they were able to wear sport uniform during school.

The information speaks for itself.

It was proposed for the school to undertake a two-week trial in changing the uniform policy back to allowing students to wear sports uniform when they had sports activities. Much time, effort and commitment were put towards this proposal from the whole SRC but mostly by the Year 11s who were in charge of challenging a school policy.

Despite this, the SRC was unsuccessful in swaying the decision brought down by the **School Council**. Other alternative solutions were put forward as an attempt to change their mind. We proposed stricter punishments that could be in place to keep the students in line and even said *'a reduction in the academic uniform worn may impact the academic reputation of Nossal - however,*





the sports uniform worn by students can reflect our multidisciplinary nature and demonstrates that Nossal is not just academically inclined!

What we have learnt

We have proven that we are more than just a group that organises sausage sizzles to raise money. We have shown that we are students seeking to change our school for the better for all students - present and future.

Although we have had our failures, the Nossal SRC has never given up on the students who elected us.

Diyana, a Year 10 SRC Executive Member, believes the SRC this year has learnt a lot about the importance of transparency and communication with our peers. She says that we've come to realise that the best way to represent the students is by giving them the

opportunity to say what they want to be done and what changes they would like to see. Moving forward, she thinks the SRC could spend some time on not only finding out what students truly want but simultaneously working to try and implement that change.

As the SRC's Secretary and Co-President, **Anna** says this year has been one where the SRC really strived to understand the empowering and uplifting nature of students' voices, and how we are able to use our student voice to enhance the quality of student life inside and outside of the classroom. She believes that, with further action, the SRC can help foster student agency in the classroom. By implementing the ideas of student voice as an integral part of our curriculum and pedagogy, the school will benefit.

Raj, a member of the Year 11 SRC, think this year's SRC is beginning to aim at becoming a more democratic system to accurately represent the students. He recalls that the SRC has spent a great deal of time deciding how to perfect the SRC elections and how candidates are chosen overall. Making an endeavour towards implementing this system into the SRC is something **Raj** believes will bring the school a step closer to helping to make leadership at Nossal a much more democratic process.

In light of our lessons from this year, we believe we can say that the SRC will rise from its ashes and be reborn improved, stronger and better.

Nalini Jacob-Roussety

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'Student Councils and Beyond'

On-Line! FREE!

We've almost run out of print copies of the first *Connect* publication: **Student Councils and Beyond** (from 2005).

And many of the ideas have subsequently been reflected in the **Represent!** kit from the VicSRC (see: www.vicsrc.org.au/resources/represent). So we have made all of **Student Councils and Beyond** (a compilation of articles and resources from many earlier issues of *Connect*) available on-line for **FREE**. It can be downloaded (as one document or in sections) as PDFs from the *Connect* website. Find it at:

www.asprinworld.com/connect

Having a voice and planning projects to improve the school environment

In order to foster a strong leadership and student voice culture within Portland Secondary College, students organised and ran a **Student Leadership Training Day**, aimed at all student leaders in Years 7 to 9. This training day was run by students for students and is an important way of giving students the opportunity to have a voice and plan projects that will improve the school environment.

We believe that improving the school is a high priority and, by giving students a voice through surveys and feedback forums, we are able to target projects that will have the biggest impact. For example, in 2016, we conducted a survey to find out what we could do to improve our yard facilities, and the feedback we received led directly to us applying for a funding grant to get shade sails installed and extra seating in the yard.

We believe it is important that all students have a say in their school experience and the **Student Representative Council (SRC)** looks to provide ways for student voice to be heard.

The SRC

The SRC aims to provide students at Portland Secondary College with extra opportunities and chances to contribute to their school environment and, along the way, develop skills in communication, project management and leadership. The SRC provides students with the chance to get involved in a range of activities and leadership teams:

- our Junior, Middle and Senior SRC;
- *Teach the Teacher*; and
- the Peer Mentor program.

Students have also attended the **VicSRC Congress** in Melbourne and **VicSRC Student Voice Workshops**.

Healthy Eating

In 2017 we began a *Healthy Eating Project*. This idea came from our Student Leadership Training Day, which was planned and run by a group of Year 9 SRC students. As part of the day, students went out at lunchtime and surveyed the school to find issues in the school we might be able work with and make some positive changes.

The School Canteen was one issue where students said that they would like to see some changes made. After talking with the Canteen staff, we identified that the current menu boards in the Canteen didn't inform students of the health value of the food they were buying.

We contacted a local health organisation, *SeaChange*, and started working with their nutritionist to get advice and a greater understanding of the healthy food options available in our Canteen. We then redesigned the menu boards with Green, Amber and Red dots next to each item in the canteen to show their health value and allow students and staff to be able to make a more informed choice. We then designed a range of healthy food posters to be hung in the Canteen, with each poster giving some fun facts about the food item. We used lots of colour to help brighten up the space.

We followed this up by developing a classroom lesson on *Sugar Awareness*, which we ran for classes across the school with the help of the VCAL students. This class was designed to make students more aware of the sugar content of some popular food and also taught them how to read nutritional labels to see how much sugar is in food they are buying.

We also formed a partnership with the local kindergarten, ran some healthy eating activities, and helped them get their kitchen garden established.

This has been a great project to be part of and it has received a lot of recognition within our community.



Recently we were announced as finalist in the *VicHealth Awards - Promoting Healthy Eating*.

Learnings about the operation of the SRC

This is what we have learnt through these activities:

1. *The SRC is not about one person; it's about developing a team that works with the whole school community.*

It is important to have a range of people in your team as they all bring different skills and experiences with them. Some people enjoy creating digital presentation and posters, whereas others feel comfortable in front of an audience. Take the time to identify people's strengths and give the opportunities to use them; a team is stronger and more productive when everyone is sharing the workload.

2. *The goals of the SRC are dependent on what the students want to change.*

As an SRC you are there to represent the whole school community, so it's important to be as inclusive as you can, and look at a range of ways to get student feedback before taking on a project.

3. *Be respectful of everyone's ideas and look to include everyone in the decision-making process.*

Meetings can quickly lose their focus with everyone having their own conversation, so set an agenda and try to keep to it.

One of our teachers summed up the impact of the SRC on the school:

"Our SRC gives real opportunities for student voice and action. So many of the Portland Secondary College SRC initiatives have focussed on school improvements (eg: shade sail, seating, kitchen garden)



and student health. Fund raising by keen, dedicated students has allowed for these wonderful environmental improvements."
(Claire Walsh)

For **more information**, contact:
Liam Doyle
doyle.william.j@edumail.vic.gov.au

**All about Student Action Teams, including
some hyper-linked mini-case studies, at:**

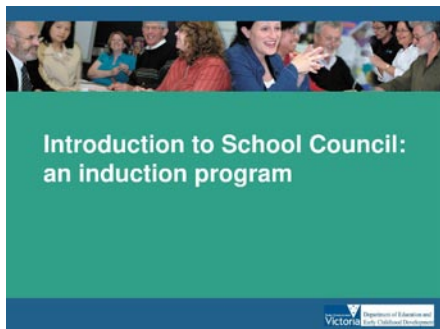
www.asprinworld.com/student_action_teams



This year has been ENORMOUS!!

The Victorian Student Representative Council (VicSRC) has ballooned from three staff members to a whopping nine here at the VicSRC office (which has moved...twice) and all of our work has grown right alongside us!

Here are our seven success stories from 2018 to head into December...



1. Student membership was added to all Government School Councils!

After a 2017 campaign across the state and a surprise announcement at the 2017 Recognition Awards, a *Ministerial Order* was signed in early 2018 creating a student category on School Councils in all Government schools!

What does this mean?? Students now have a voice in overseeing their school environment, expenditure and culture! School Councils play a big part in working with school leadership to establish the broad direction of the school as well as the practical details like school dress code, school maintenance and school budget. Having students in on these meetings means that the people affected by these decisions get a say in how they're made!

TEACH THE TEACHER



Creating positive communities through student-led conversation

2. Our Teach the Teacher program was picked for a global education spotlight!

The ever popular *Teach the Teacher* program was picked this year as one of the top education innovations in Victoria and globally!

By whom?? This year our pals at *EduChange* linked up with a grassroots education group from Finland called *HundrED*. Together they sought the best and brightest game-changing innovations in Victoria – and one of those is our very own *Teach the Teacher* program! Not only was the *TtT* program highlighted as one of the top ten innovations in the state, it also made the cut for the global highlight!



3. We grew our brand new Ambassadors program across the state!

Last year we ran a trial program to get ever more *#studentvoice* echoing through the VicSRC channels, and in 2018 it launched in full force, with more than **50 Ambassadors** signing up from around the state.

What have they been up to? Ambassadors meet once during each term and once during each school holiday. As a group, they work on the Congress priorities, share success stories and struggles in their schools and learn new ways to make change. They've also volunteered at VicSRC events, worked on planning and programming, attended workshops and spoken up for students at all levels!

4. Congress in the year of student voice!

Congress is always a huge deal at the VicSRC offices; the lead up starts buzzing as soon as we get into the office in January and by July we're about ready to pop!

Congress 2018 was bigger and bursting at the seams with student voice! Not only did we have an all-new app with maps, scheduling and a social wall, we had day delegates for the very first time! Across three days, 200 students came up with 12 positive solutions for change, six top priorities and a buoyancy that only comes from spending time with like-minded change makers!



5. Introducing the Student! Voice! Hub!

We don't make change alone! And to make it easier than ever this year we launched the **Student Voice Hub** to bring students around the state (maybe even the country ... maybe even the globe!) together to share resources, success and challenges!

But how?? The first of its kind the **Student Voice Hub** is an innovative on-line platform for student voice! It features forums for discussion and networking across space (and time!) where students can come together to solve student voice issues. It includes the *Blog*, a news source written and edited by students, for students. And it's all built around the *Resource Hub*, where students (and soon schools too) can access the collective wisdom of the schools that went before!



Vic Student
SRC MEMBERS

Vic Partner
SRC SCHOOLS

6. VicSRC has a shiny new membership model!

As we've grown, it's become even more important to increase the number of students and schools we're engaging with and so at the *Student Voice Awards* this year we announced our new *Student Membership* and *School Partnership* models!

What does this mean for me?? Well if you're a student it means you should sign up, right now – for free! – and get all the benefits of being a VicSRC member. These benefits include being part of the largest student voice organisation in Australia, membership of our fabulous *Student Voice Hub* and unique opportunities and access!

If you're a school it means you're not alone on your student voice journey! Joining as a *VicSRC Partner School* gives you the edge in making sure you're working with your students to make their educational experience the best it can possibly be!

7. Student voice is sweeping the globe!

Phew! We had no idea at the start of 2018 just how much student voice we'd see around the world this year! Here's a quick rundown on some of what happened.

- **Parkland teens** stood up for gun control legislation in the United States after a school shooting at the **Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School**. They organised marches around the world and actively campaigned for change. They have now formed *Never Again MSD* to fight for change.
- **Bangladeshi students** brought the capital to a halt after a speeding bus killed two students in July. Though the protests were met with a government crackdown, the students occupied roads and checkpoints, refusing any but emergency vehicles free passage.
- **Australian students**, inspired by Swedish student Greta Thunberg, launched a month-long series of protests imploring the Federal Government to take action against **climate change**. Despite condescending responses from some politicians, the students have persisted in raising their voices, staging mass walkouts on Friday 29th of November to occupy their State Parliament buildings and push for change.



Climate Change Student Strike

Started by three students from Castlemaine Secondary College earlier this year, and inspired by 15-year-old Swedish student Greta Thunberg, the *School Strike 4 Climate Action* is a national movement among school students who are, in their own words, *'are temporarily sacrificing our education in order to save our futures from climate wrecking projects like the Adani coal mine.'* It brought together students in capital cities and 20 regional centres such as Ballarat, Newcastle, Townsville and Cairns. A large protest was also held in Hobart on Thursday.

Though the strike has been going on in one form or another all month, November 30th marked the largest event with rallies, marches and walkouts all over the country.

Some VicSRC students and staff attended the Melbourne rally, which ran ten thousand strong, to capture the excitement, energy and environmental consciousness of students raising their voices and fighting for change.

Photos by Micah Maglaya.

Nell McColl



VicSRC Student Members and Partner Schools



Can I be a Student Member?

Are you a primary or secondary student studying in Victoria? If you answered **yes** then you certainly can!

How much will this cost me?

Nothing! It's absolutely 100% free!

I'm not a student, I'm a teacher!

Then you cannot be a member but your school can **partner** with us! Check out the FAQs opposite!

I'm a school student elsewhere/a university student/a random member of the public who is curious!

Awesome! Nice to meet you! Unfortunately this is a student organisation based specifically in Victoria! BUT! You can sign up for our *eNews* on our main page!

Okay, but what's in it for me?

- You'll be contributing to student voice in Victoria!
- You can win prizes! There's a giveaway each month for recently signed up members.
- We provide advice and referral for student voice at our info@vicsrc.org.au email address.
- You'll be eligible to enter the **2019 Student Voice Awards!** (#SVAwards2019)
- You'll get a sweet discount on tickets to the **Student Voice Awards** ceremony and other VicSRC events.
- You'll have access to **Congress 2019** tickets.
- You'll get our monthly **Member Bulletin** packed full of fun student voice content and opportunities!
- You'll get a subscription to global student voice magazine **Connect**.
- You'll get membership on the **Student Voice Hub** (<https://studentvoicehub.org.au/>) to discuss issues, solutions and participate in polls!
- You'll get the chance to be featured as a VicSRC member in our publications, writing and advocacy.
- You'll get the **Student Member VicSRC** digital badge for all your email signature, forum posting and blogging needs!

Sounds great! Where do I sign up?

You can sign up to be a **Student Member** at <https://bit.ly/2FDrg5m>

Wait! I still have questions.

No worries! We love questions! Just shoot an email through to info@vicsrc.org.au with '**student membership**' in the heading and we'll get back to you as soon as possible!

Can we be a VicSRC Partner School?

Are you a school in the state of Victoria teaching primary, secondary or some mix of students? If you answered **yes** then absolutely you can!

We used to be a VicSRC Member School! What happens to us now??

Don't panic! You have automatically been included in our **Partner School** initiative. Hopefully you have received an email letting you know what's going on.

As a bonus if you renewed your membership after **1st August 2018** your **School Partner** status will extend until **31st December 2019!**

I'm not a Partner School...but I want to be!

If you sign up before **31st December 2018** the cost will be **\$100 + GST**.

From **1st January 2019** School Partners will pay **\$150 + GST** for a full year of partnership.

We're so keen! But we're a small/economically disadvantaged school

No worries! Send an email through to info@vicsrc.org.au and we'll be very happy to discuss discount or cluster membership options!

What do these 'School Partners' get?

- You'll have VicSRC as your constant companion on the road to student voice super powers!
- You'll have the chance once a month to win a prize as part of our partnership draw!
- We provide advice and referral for student voice at our info@vicsrc.org.au email address.
- You'll be eligible to enter the **2019 Student Voice Awards!**
- You'll have partner discount codes for all **Student Voice Workshops** and **Student Voice Awards** tickets.
- You'll be able to book and access our **Teach the Teacher** program and **Congress** tickets.
- You'll receive our monthly **Partner Bulletin** featuring resource highlights and best practice student voice.
- You'll be subscribed to international student voice magazine **Connect**.
- You'll receive a school membership of the **Student Voice Hub** with **ten teacher accounts**, access to restricted resources, private forums and more!
- You'll be eligible to feature in VicSRC work including blogs, videos and spotlights.
- You'll get a sweet **VicSRC Partner School** logo for all your newsletter, website and email signature needs!

continued next page

I'm from a school elsewhere/a university/a random member of the public who is curious!

Awesome! Nice to meet you! Unfortunately this is a student and school organisation based specifically in Victoria!

Where do I sign up?

You can now become a **Partner School** at: <https://bit.ly/2TL848K>

Once you sign up (or in 2019 if you've renewed your membership this year) you'll receive an invoice to your nominated email address. This is an automated process and the invoices will come out yearly on this date to make maintaining your partnership easier.

At the start of the 2019 school year (and every year you're a partner hereafter) you'll receive a quick survey prompting you to update your details. This is to make sure we've got the best and most up to date contacts for all your student voice needs!

I still have questions.

No worries! We love questions! Just shoot an email through to info@vicsrc.org.au with 'school partnership' in the heading and we'll get back to you as soon as possible!

Inequality

It should be an expectation that, no matter a child's background or wealth, they should be receiving adequate education. However this expectation is just that: an expected result. It was recently revealed that Australia is one of the worst countries in the OECD for equity in education.

"...equity should ensure that differences in educational outcomes are not the result of differences in wealth, income, power or possessions"

Equity in education should comprise the objectives that all students should receive adequate education and that students from different social groups should achieve similar averages.

The **Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)** by the OECD found Australia is one of the lowest countries for equity. *"PISA measures 15-year-olds' ability to use their science, reading and maths knowledge and skills to meet real-life challenges."*

The results found that:

- Indigenous students are approximately 2.5 years behind non-indigenous students.
- low socioeconomic students are approximately three years behind high socioeconomic students.
- girls are approximately one year behind boys in reading ability.
- low performing states are 1.5 years behind high performing states.

Equity sounds simple and achievable right? So what does inequality really look like?

Through my experience as a student, I've had opportunities that others don't have and vice versa. However it's not just me. It's every student in Australia!

I had only discovered the differences between students' educational experiences at events like the **VicSRC Congress**. When

networking with different students from all across the state, it is rare to hear students say *"yeah my school does that too!"*

For example, my school was lucky enough to offer both VCE and VCAL, allowing students to pursue an education that is suitable for their goals or career pathway. However many students face the issue when their school only offers VCE, forcing them into a position where they may struggle or be forced to other schools in their last couple of years of school.

Additionally another dilemma that I myself have come across is being unable to pursue different subjects because of the capacity or situation of the school. Although the option to do the subject in the form of on-line classes is available to students, like me they may not have the technology to do so.

These examples are usually due to the geographic location of the school or student. But that's avoidable or minor, right? The contrast between rural and metro students' classes will be as different as apples and oranges.

To put it into perspective, one of our Executive students comes from a rural school and faces these issues on a day-to-day basis. Her rural town has a low socioeconomic background. She struggles to achieve well in school because school is not taken seriously by students. Only a very few students in her cohort will go on to doing Year 12 and completing the exams for an ATAR score. Additionally, basic resources like a libraries are limited

and, like other rural schools, they don't have a school counsellor.

In contrast, my school has an extensive selection of resources in our library, has a school counsellor and has classes full of students who want to achieve well, thus enabling us to work together as team and maximise our learning potential.

The differences between schools are much more than classes and students. It extends from opportunities available, resources, collaborations with other schools and extracurricular activities.

However the inequity isn't just rural; it can differ between neighbouring schools.

The difference between private and government schools can inhibit students' learning ability. An example of this is that, in the past state election the winning Labor Party promised free dental care and sanitary products in Government schools. But what about private schools? However there are other opportunities that aren't offered in Government schools that are offered in private schools.

But the question that has me baffled is: why should the school we attend determine the quality of our education? Why should my wealth or background affect it?

"No social, racial or geographic group of students is innately more intelligent or talented than others."

The large differences in school outcomes are between rich and poor, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, and remote and metro students.

The unfortunate truth is that although this shouldn't affect a student's ability to learn, it does.

This make evident that change must happen in order to make education fair for everyone.

Beth
VicSRC Executive

Meet some VicSRC Executive members

Aaran

Hi I'm **Aaran** and I'm a Year 10 student from Melbourne. I love meeting new people and listening to their stories and ideas. I believe student voice is crucial to the wellbeing and the way students learn, and hope to empower student voice so students are represented in the decisions their school makes.

I hope to represent students to the best I can and make schools and the lives of students better, even if it's just a small change.



Alyssa

Hey everyone! My name is **Alyssa** from Bendigo Senior Secondary College, currently in Year 11. My journey of student voice started when I was elected into my school's SRC and from then on, it has blossomed into a real passion for student voice in education and decision making. I believe in an education that is a two-way conversation, where teachers and students are working together to achieve the best outcome for students, simply because it is incredibly integral!

Aside from school, I play the guitar, piano and sing as well as swim and play badminton when I have spare time. In the future, I would like to become an Environmental Scientist, Recording Artist or Politician. So who knows? I could become the Environmental Minister that sings her speeches! I am really looking forward to working with these amazing people for my second year on the VicSRC Executive so that we can make **real change!** Our education deserves for it's biggest stakeholders to be heard!



Ashley

"A ship in a harbour is safe, but that's not why ships were built."

Hi everyone! I'm **Ashley**, a Year 10 student passionate about making a change. Ensuring that students' thoughts, ideas and passions are an integral part of every aspect of our education is definitely my number one priority. Some things about me: I love studying (believe it or not), reading books, public speaking and cross country!

Leadership is something I have always kept close to my heart. Leadership is charismatic and empowering, but also quiet and kind. Which is why I aim to be an Executive member who truly makes sure not a single voice is left unheard. I am so fortunate to be working with fourteen equally-passionate Executive members on the VicSRC and, together, we will aspire and achieve. Together, we have the power to transform our environment and, in doing so, empowering those around us.

Together, we will sail forward - confidently.



Bethany

Wassup! My name is **Beth** and I am currently a Year 11 student from the Yarra Ranges. I am enthusiastic and neighbourly person who's always been loud but for the right reasons. I'm absolutely ecstatic to be on the VicSRC Executive, and I look forward to amplifying all students' voices and changing the world to make students' lives better. Because no matter the situation or age, **all students matter.**

My passion is networking with people, as I believe everyone is a friend you just haven't meet. Making new friends and hearing their stories always inspires me to look at things with new eyes. It is people's stories make me realise there are always things to change in the forever changing world. It is for that reason why student voice is so important and why I look forward to being a successful Executive member. So you do you and you be you!



Student Voice Hub Editorial Team

Tina

Hi there! I'm glad to see that you're visiting the **Student Voice Hub** website. The name's **Tina**, and I'm currently a Year 11 student from Melbourne. I'm passionate about sharing stories, learning about the world, and using my experiences to make real, impactful change. Through this, I hope that it will contribute to a better world.



I'm super excited to see how your student experience will shape the **Student Voice Hub**, and the change that you make!

Nalini

I'm **Nalini**, a Year 10 student from metropolitan Melbourne. A debater, public speaker, SRC member and social justice activist, I'm a rare case: I actually enjoy school. However, whilst I love my school and everything it offers, I know that education accessibility is a problem for many students and that's something that needs to change.



One of my favourite areas of study is *Philosophy*, an area that I've undertaken for VCE. I love thinking critically, as well as opening my mind to the perspectives of others. (And, of course, questioning the existence of the table in front of me, which my teacher refers to as a cluster of atoms that I perceive to be a table, and, in reality, cannot be proven to exist.)

Some of my hobbies include making and editing videos as well as writing and graphic design. From these it's probably clear that I'm into communication; I think transparency is important among any body of people. And I'm excited to witness the power of student voice as a member of the **Editorial Team**.

Imarsha

My name is **Imarsha** and I am currently in Year 9 in the western suburbs of Melbourne. I am on the Student Voice Council at my school, taking action on issues such as *Gender Equality* and *Respectful Relationships*.



I am really passionate about improving student voice and I believe that students should have a say on their education, as they are the people who are experiencing everything in the first place. No matter how old you are, you have the opportunity to speak up, use your voice and create change!

I am so strong-minded about issues that need to be resolved and now, being a part of the **Editorial Team**, I can turn my love for writing into reality to express myself! My favourite subjects at school are Science and Food Tech, also I play tennis! My favourite thing to do on a weekend would probably be to watch movies, go shopping and to relax!



Where can students go to find the resources and connections that would enable them to amplify and make use of their voices in education?

A new digital platform for student voice in the modern age, the **Student Voice Hub** was launched earlier this year at the VicSRC 2018 Congress by the Victorian Minister for Education.

Conceived of, designed and populated by students, schools and community organisations, the **Student Voice Hub** is a primary point for collaboration and communication.

The Student Voice Hub is live!

Students and schools are able to sign up to access vital resources, discussion boards and a community blog packed full of news – *for* students, *by* students. Featuring student voice resources, student-driven news and discussion forums, the **Student Voice Hub** is an ever evolving centre for conversations, problem-solving and student voice!

Students can join for free right now and join the conversation!

Want to get involved?

You can:

- **Join as a student!**
Absolutely free! Take part in polls, discussions and more to make your voice as powerful as it can be!
- **Join as a school! (coming soon)**
Register teachers, download resources and connect with other teachers!
- **Write for us!**
Feeling fired up? Passionate about your pet project? Pitch your topic for the community blog and get your story out there!
- **Build best practice!**
Got a great story? Looking for the best way to set up your SRC? Check out our resources or contribute your own!

You can also follow the **Student Voice Hub** on social media at [twitter](#) | [facebook](#) | [instagram](#)!

<https://studentvoicehub.org.au/>

TEACH THE TEACHER



Creating positive communities
through student-led conversation

In 2017–2018, the VicSRC engaged 33 schools across the state in the *Teach the Teacher* program. The program is a student-led professional development initiative that ignited at the 2011 VicSRC Congress. Designed and run by students, *Teach the Teacher* provides a space to create positive change in school communities by engaging students and teachers in conversations.

There are three models for *Teach the Teacher*:

- **Ignite** is a bespoke program for schools with a low socio-economic status, diverse student population or alternative learning setting.
- **Empower** is designed for schools with an active student voice practice and student leadership structure.
- **Sustain** is a refresher course for schools that have previously participated in the program.

By creating this space, students and teachers have a safe facilitated discussion within a positive framework about matters affecting their lives at school. Students and teachers work together to discuss changes and develop solutions for whole school community engagement and improvement.

By giving students a greater say in their education, *Teach the Teacher* helps to develop, engage and clarify student voice to enhance teaching, learning, communication, trust and respect.

The *Teach the Teacher* program starts with conversations, but is not just all talk. It involves a commitment to listen to the voices of students, to take their concerns seriously, and to build student-teacher partnerships for school improvement.

In 2017–2018, the VicSRC's *Teach the Teacher* has taken bigger step towards change.

The program was chosen by **HundrED**, a Finland-based education aggregator that is bringing together and highlighting impactful and scalable education ideas, as one of the **ten spotlight innovations**. *Teach the Teacher* has also made an appearance at the *EduChange* conference. VicSRC's vision for *Teach the Teacher* is to make the program accessible and replicable interstate and internationally to spread student voice across the country and the globe.



<http://teachtheteacher.org.au/>

Are you a VicSRC Partner School?

Partnership discounts

Did you know that you can receive discounted event prices if you have a VicSRC Partnership?

If you are not a Partner School and would like to take advantage of discounted ticket prices to VicSRC events, simply select '*VicSRC Partnership (Annual School Partnership)*' at the start of your online registration. Or check about Partnership on-line at:

<http://www.vicsrc.org.au/student-opportunities/membership--partnership>



To sign up to the VicSRC online e-newsletter ... visit:
www.vicsrc.org.au/joinin/maillinglist

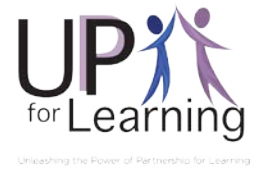


The VicSRC receives funding support from the **Victorian Department of Education and Training** and **Catholic Education Melbourne**.

It is auspiced by and based at the **Youth Affairs Council of Victoria (YACVic)**.

It 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: eo@vicsrc.org.au

Youth-Adult Partnership Roadmap to Agency



Agency is the ability to make intentional choices about, and take an active role in, the course of one's own life and on behalf of others' lives. It is what happens when youth and adults join together as partners in learning and decision making. This tool provides a means to understand, assess, and monitor youth-adult partnership and the sense of personal control and agency young people and adults have in the educational setting.

Setting the Stage

	Youth as recipients	Youth as consultants	Youth and adults as emerging partners	Youth and adults as full partners
What we believe about youth and adults as partners (mental models)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adults believe that youth do not have the life experience or wisdom to position them as decision makers and make most of the decisions. Adults believe quality education is done "to and for students." Youth generally believe this perspective and defer to adults. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adults believe that youth have a unique life perspective that can, and at some times should, inform adult decisions. They believe quality education is largely done to and for students, with some youth input. Youth are generally comfortable deferring final decisions to adults; they have doubts about their capacity or right to influence change. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adults believe that with time and support, youth can be capable agents of change and their perspectives are key to make the right decisions. Youth start to believe that they have a rightful role as partners in shaping their education and have the ability to assume this responsibility. Neither youth nor adults have a clear vision of what this looks or feels like. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adults and youth believe that youth input with full participation in decision-making is a basic human need and right. Both believe that partnership and shared responsibility are essential to quality education. Young people and adults can learn the skills they need to be trusted partners.
Power Dynamic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adults assume full power; youth assume a largely compliant and passive role. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adults largely hold the power. Occasional requests for youth input suggest minimal and unpredictable power for youth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adults begin to shift some power and control to make space for youth input and co-ownership. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth and adults share power and value equity as essential norms. All youth and adults are empowered to voice their thoughts or opinions without fear.

Partnership in Action

	Youth as recipients	Youth as consultants	Youth and adults as emerging partners	Youth and adults as full partners
Communication/ Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adults dominate communication as assumed experts based on what they feel is in the best interest of youth. Youth do not expect, nor do they necessarily have the skills, to take an active role in communication or collaboration. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adults seek youth input to take into consideration. Youth begin to perceive that their input has some value. Youth are learning how to express their opinions about their learning and school environment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trust, mutual respect, and safety are emerging as youth-adult communication and collaboration become more balanced. Youth begin to contribute more openly and honestly; adults begin to share the "air time" listen authentically, and collaborate. New norms are being established. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mutual respect and trust ensure a fully authentic youth-adult partnership through a collaborative process. Communications flows freely between youth and adults; all feel valued, comfortable, and competent in their new roles as partners. If the group strays from partnership norms, either youth or adults flag the issue and re-establish norms.
Decision-making & Shared Responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adults hold full decision-making responsibility and see this as their role. Youth are recipients of adult decisions and have no expectation of contributing to decisions. Youth perceive "shared responsibility" as compliance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth input as consultants or data sources may or may not be considered in ultimate adult decisions; the impact of youth input is often unknown. Ultimate responsibility for decisions remains adult-centered, with a recognition of youth input as useful. Youth are willing to offer input, but do not believe it reflects increased responsibility in their education. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth and adults begin to share decision-making and responsibility; both parties are learning to embrace the other's contributions. Adults and youth are developing new skills to ensure the success of this change. The group lapses into adult-dominated or youth-dominated dynamics from time to time, but is able to self-correct. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decisions reflect a variety of opinions across the generations; all voices are equally heard and valued. Comfort with accepted norms of partnership allows for many decision-making options depending on the task or context (e.g. adults as consultants, youth-only and adult-only at times). Both deeply believe that sharing responsibility and valuing all voices are essential to successful decision-making.

Note: Some other models have described early steps in the development of youth-adult partnership with terms such as "Tokenism," "Manipulation," "Delegation" or use of youth as "Window Dressing." It is important to be aware of the potential danger in such approaches to youth-adult relationship, as they are the opposite of partnership.

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON STUDENT VOICE Deepening Relationships Between Youth Research & Practice

MAY 28–30, 2019 | UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA



This international seminar, Student Voice: Deepening Relationship between Youth Research and Practice, will convene experts from education, research and policy realms from around the world to consider the pressing questions of the inclusion of student voice and the development of the youth-adult research paradigm.

Location: University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA, USA.

Hosted by the University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Education.

CONTACT: Dana Mitra at dana@psu.edu

Who is invited?

- **STUDENTS** taking a leadership role on state, national, or international levels to further the role of youth in learning and school decision-making.
- Field-based **PRACTITIONERS** with a mission to elevate youth voice and partnership in learning and school redesign efforts.
- Youth voice/youth-adult partnership **RESEARCHERS**.
- **EDUCATIONAL LEADERS** committed to integrating student voice into the teacher education process.
- **POLICY ADVOCATES & FUNDERS** with a mission to elevate youth-adult partnership in school redesign efforts on a large scale.

Democratic Schools for All

The Council of Europe (CoE) recently held a conference to launch its 'Free to Speak; Safe to Learn - Democratic Schools for All' project at the Wergeland Centre in Oslo.

This project is an offshoot of the long-running *Education for Democratic Citizenship/Human Rights Education (EDC/HRE)* for which I used to work when a UK school inspector some years ago. On behalf of EUDEC Council I have been negotiating with the CoE that the conference would be greatly enhanced if some of the very democratic schools from EUDEC's network were to be invited. They listened and the Netzwerk Schule, Berlin has been invited to join ten state schools from across Europe.

This will be the first time that a EUDEC network democratic school has participated with a Europe-wide gathering of progressively inclined state schools to discuss how democracy and human rights can be better developed as day-to-day practice in schools. There will be an official post-conference report in due course.

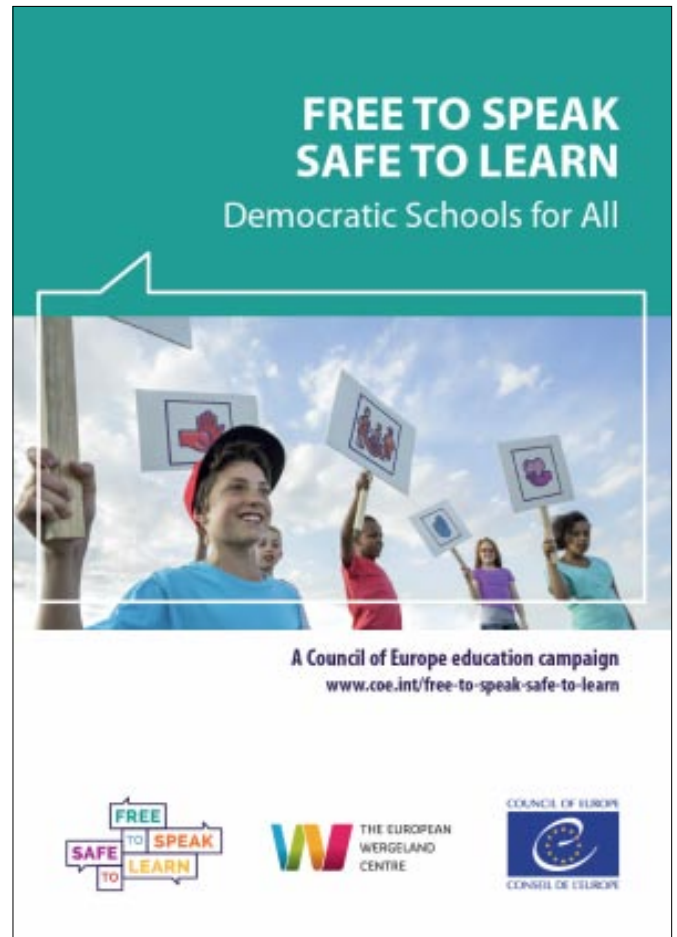
More details at: <https://bit.ly/2QfQyut>

Attending schools

The schools selected to participate in the campaign launch conference in Oslo, from 14 to 16 November, were:

- Kushrimi i Lirisë, Albania
- Osnovna Skola Gradac, Croatia
- Collège Charles Péguy, France
- Netzwerk-Schule, Germany (EUDEC member)
- High School of Makrygialos Pieria, Greece
- 23rd Primary School of Kalamaria, Greece
- Bremeore Educated Together Secondary School, Ireland
- Grammar School Slobodan Skeroviv, Montenegro
- Lorin Salagean Technical College, Romania
- Stanimir Veljokovic Zele, Serbia
- Chernivtsi Secondary School, Ukraine

Derry Hannam
UK



Making children's and students' voices heard

"In democratic societies, children and young people have the right to be heard and not to feel afraid to express themselves.

"Schools have a key role in upholding this principle. At the same time, students need to be aware of both their rights and responsibilities.

"Learning about human rights and democracy is a fundamental first step for becoming an informed and responsible citizen.

"Students also need to participate in activities such as debating and community work. Skills, knowledge and critical understanding must be coupled with the attitudes and values that form part of a democratic culture. All this should be promoted through a whole-school approach."

Resources at:
<https://bit.ly/2DFiUI0>





Do you know a talented young filmmaker?

Mocktail Submissions are now open!

Each year JMC Academy holds an exciting film and animation event: **The Martini Film Awards**. This event screens the best of JMC Academy's student and recent alumni work and includes a category known as the **Mocktail Awards**.

This is where High School students are also invited to submit their best short fiction, short documentary, short animation, television commercial or music video clip, to be reviewed by industry professionals. Shortlisted films will be shown and the winner will be announced at the prestigious **Martini Film Awards** to be held in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane in May/June 2019.

We invite your students to submit their short films and go into the running to win awesome prizes for themselves and their school!

To find out more, discover the prizes and view the eligibility criteria please go to: <https://bit.ly/2DQlyuu>

Submissions close **Sunday 3rd March 2019!**

We look forward to receiving your students' submissions!

For more information about *The Mocktail* or *The Martini Film Awards*, please contact us on hello@jmc.edu.au or phone Sydney (02) 8241 8899, Melbourne (03) 9624 2929, Brisbane (07) 3360 4500.

WISA 2019 Conferences: CPR (Connect, Protect, Respect)

Breathing life back into school communities through best practice student engagement

These one-day conferences of Wellbeing in Schools Australia (WISA) will bring together leading academics, practitioners, student leaders, school leadership, school wellbeing staff, and school parents/carers from around Australia. Together they will tackle the challenges, share – and celebrate good practices where students contribute meaningfully to rich engagement and create primary and secondary schools where all students can thrive.

The aim of these conferences is to support schools in empowering students to have an authentic role in ensuring all students remain meaningfully engaged and thrive.

Workshops will be divided to cater separately for school staff, students and parents/carers. Shared sessions will also be provided. Workshops will be based on the themes of **Connect, Protect and Respect**. More details of workshops will be provided in 2019.

Schools are invited to send teams of four to five people: two adults and two to three students. Student representatives should aim at diversity and inclusion; adult representatives might include school staff and broader community eg. staff member, school leader, school governance member, parent/carer representative, or broader community or agency member.

Save the dates in 2019:

3 May 2019: Melbourne

22 May 2019: Canberra

24 May 2019: Sydney

16 August 2019: Perth

6 September 2019: Brisbane



For more details, see Wellbeing in Schools Australia at:

<https://www.wisawellbeing.com.au/>

or contact **Linsey Hart**, WISA National Conference Manager:

Linsey@wisawellbeing.com.au

The **Australian Student Wellbeing Framework** has just been released by the Australian Government. It promotes student wellbeing, safety, positive relationships and learning communities. One of the five key themes is **student voice** and the **recognition of student participation** in matters that affect them.

More details, including availability:
<https://bit.ly/2FNM6zj>

This Place I Call Home

I would like to share with you the Queensland Family and Child Commission's (QFCC) *This Place I Call Home: The views of children and young people on growing up in Queensland* report.

This year the QFCC heard from more than 7000 children and young people aged 4 to 18 years through our *Growing up in Queensland* project. They shared with us their thoughts, views and opinions on three main lines of inquiry:

- how they experience life in their community, including their relationships with friends and family, safety, support and the places they spend time;
- their career aspirations and the supports and barriers that might affect them;
- the big issues that worry them and their ideas for solutions.

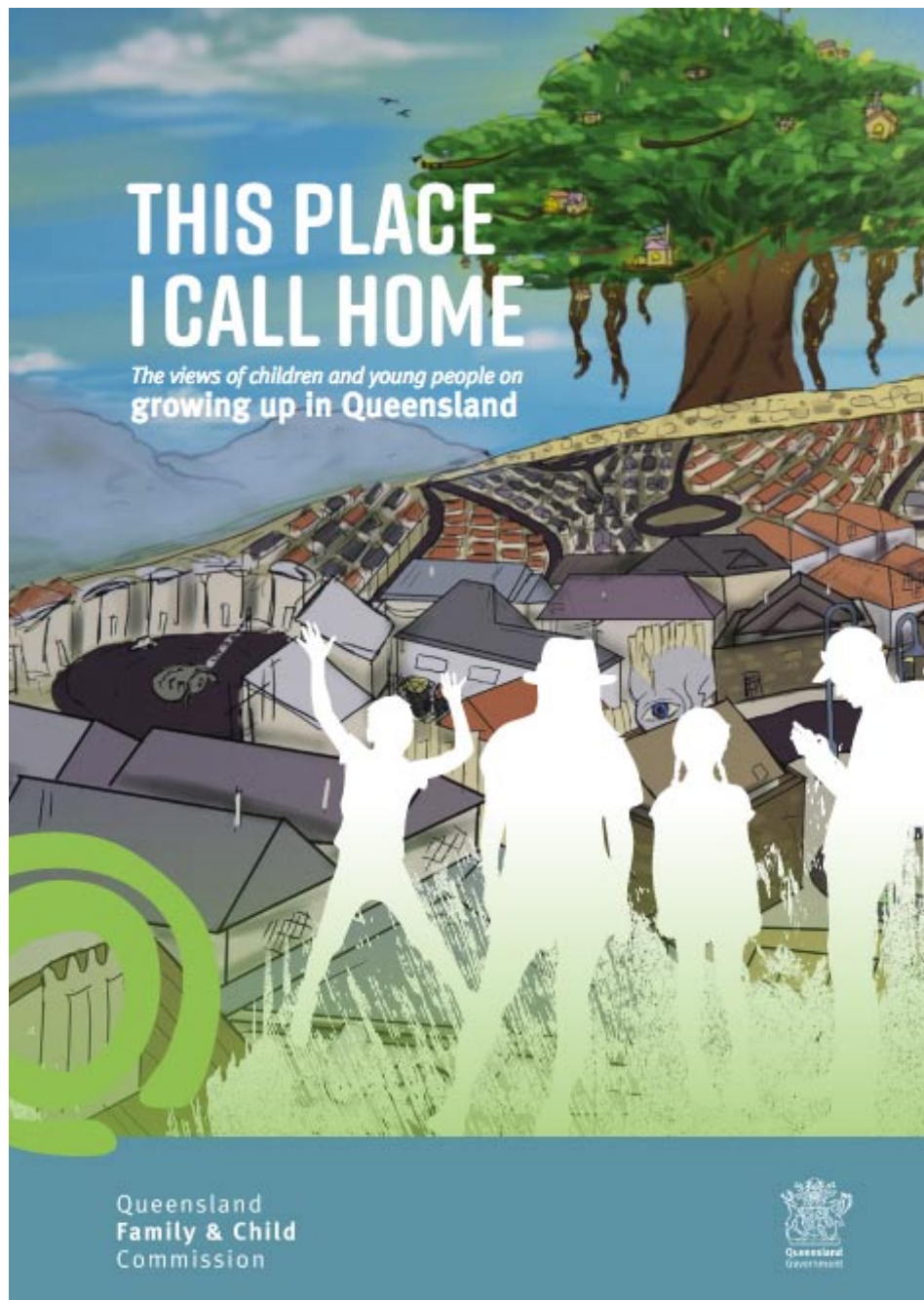
While the report contains a lot of information, overall we heard two key messages from the children and young people who participated in the *Growing up in Queensland* project:

- They are passionate about having the opportunity to participate in conversations about issues impacting on their lives. They want adults to respect their opinions and include them when they are making decisions.
- They value face-to-face connections with people. They want to have conversations with the adults in their lives to help them make decisions about their future and deal with the things they worry about.

Listening to the voices of children and young people gives parents, schools, governments, community service providers and leaders the opportunity to understand what they need. Their ideas and views provide robust evidence to inform decision making, public policy, service design and economic investment.

The QFCC's website contains the final report, a snapshot version and video from our launch. I encourage you to take a look and share amongst your networks: www.qfcc.qld.gov.au

Cheryl Vardon
Chief Executive & Principal Commissioner
Queensland Family & Child Commission
Cheryl.Vardon@qfcc.qld.gov.au



www.qfcc.qld.gov.au

Let Them Speak!

How Student Voice Can Transform Your School

We are looking for guest bloggers in www.letthemSpeak.net

If you have stories of success where student voice leads to a positive outcome and you would like to share your story,

please reach out! We would love to send you a free book in return for your time!

More details at: <https://bit.ly/2DUfJx8>

Rebecca Coda
New York

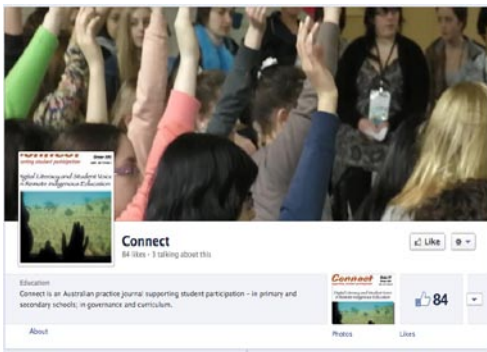
Amplify: A student voice practice guide

As *Connect* announced in the June issue, a practice guide for schools about student voice, agency and leadership called 'Amplify' has been produced by the Victorian Department of Education and Training (DET).

Copies have been distributed to schools, and print copies are now out of stock, pending a reprint. However, *Amplify* is still available on-line as a *Word* document or a *PDF* from <https://bit.ly/2y4JGrX>.

Amplify represents an opportunity to reflect on the current status of student voice, agency and leadership

in classrooms, and to identify improvement opportunities and implementation ideas. It brings to the fore the central role that student voice, agency and leadership have in improving student outcomes.



Connect on facebook

Connect has a presence on *facebook*. Find us at:

<http://ow.ly/L6UvW>

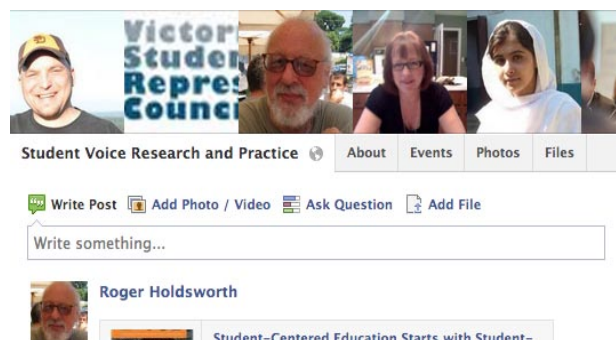
We've been posting some news and links there since June 2013, to complement and extend what you see in the on-line version of *Connect*. It would be great if you could go there and 'like' us, and also watch there for news of each *Connect's* availability on-line - for FREE.



Student Voice Research and Practice facebook group

www.facebook.com/groups/studentvoicepage/

This open *facebook* group was initially established by Professor Dana Mitra, and is now supported by the work of academics, practitioners and students throughout the world. It provides a valuable community of people working and interested in the area of 'Student Voice' - in Australia, USA, UK, Italy and elsewhere – as well as access to useful resources and examples, and up-to-date information about initiatives. You can easily log on and join the group at the above address.



Connect Publications: Order Form



Tax Invoice: ABN: 98 174 663 341

To: **Connect**, 12 Brooke Street, Northcote VIC 3070 Australia
 e-mail: r.holdsworth@unimelb.edu.au

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... copies	<i>Reaching High (without DVD)</i>	\$20	\$15*	\$
... copies	<i>Switched On to Learning</i> (maximum of 10 copies per order)	\$ 6	\$ 5*	\$
... copies	<i>Democracy Starts Here</i>	\$ 6	\$ 5*	\$

Publications available from Connect:		<i>normal price</i>	<i>Connect subscriber price</i>	
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... copies	<i>Students and Work</i> (maximum of 10 copies per order)	\$ 6	\$ 5*	\$
... copies	<i>SRC Pamphlets Set</i> (2 sets available) §	\$ 6	\$ 5*	\$

(§ check availability before ordering; * discounted rate for subscribers to **Connect**)

B: Total for publications: \$.....

NOTE: all amounts include postage/packaging within Australia (GST not applicable - input taxed)

(Postage: *Outside Australia* add \$5 per copy of publications \$.....)

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Clearinghouse

Contribute to *Connect*

Anyone may submit an original article to be considered for publication in *Connect* provided he or she owns the copyright to the work being submitted or is authorised by the copyright owner or owners to submit the article. Authors are the initial owners of the copyrights to their works, but by successfully submitting the article to *Connect*, transfer such ownership of the *published* article to *Connect* on the understanding that any royalties or other income from that article will be used to maintain publication of *Connect*.



ASPRINworld: the *Connect* website!

www.asprinworld.com/connect

Connect has a website at *ASPRINworld*. The *Connect* section of the website is slowly growing, with information about subscribing, index of recent back issue contents (hyperlinked to PDFs) and summaries of and order information for *Student Councils and Beyond*, *Student Action Teams*, *Reaching High* and *Switched On to Learning*.

**Connect is also archived
and available electronically:**

research.acer.edu.au/connect

All issues of *Connect* are archived through the ACER Research Repository: *ACEReSearch*. *Connect* issues from #1 to the current issue are available for **free** download, and recent issues can be searched by key terms. See the *ASPRINworld* site for index details of recent issues, then link to and download the whole issue you are interested in.

www.informit.com.au

In addition, current and recent issues of *Connect* are now available on-line to libraries and others who subscribe to RMIT's *Informit* site – a site that contains databases of many Australian publications. You can access whole issues of *Connect* as well as individual articles. Costs apply, either by a library subscription to *Informit*'s databases, or through individual payments per view for articles.



Articles from *Connect* are also discoverable through *EBSCOhost* research databases.

www.asprinworld.com/connect

&

research.acer.edu.au/connect

Local and International Publications Received

Connect receives many publications directly or indirectly relevant to youth and student participation. We can't lend or sell these, but if you want to look at or use them, contact us and we'll work something out.

Australian:

VicSRC e-News (VicSRC, Melbourne, Vic) November 2018

International:

Co-operative Education for a New Age (Tom Woodin & Michael Fielding, University College, London, UK) *Forum* Vol 55 Number 2, 2013

Why and how schools might live democracy' as an inclusive human order' (Michael Fielding, UCL Institute of Education, University College London, UK) Invited contribution to *John Dewey's Democracy and Education: A British tribute* (ed) Steve Higgins and Frank Coffield, UCL IOE Press, 2016: 114-130



Donate to support *Connect*

Connect now has no income except donations and sales of literature (previous page). By supporting *Connect* with donations, you keep us going. Even though we are now solely on-line, there are still costs associated with publication. To make a donation to the work of *Connect*, use the form in this issue or contact us for bank account details in order to make an electronic transfer of funds.

Free subscription
and materials
Catalogue:
see page 32

Connect On-Line!

39 years ...
1979 to 2018 ...
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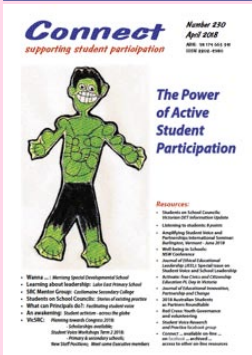
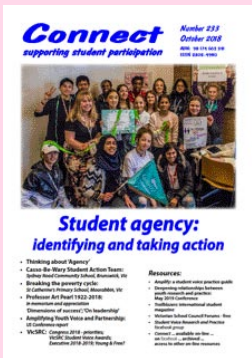
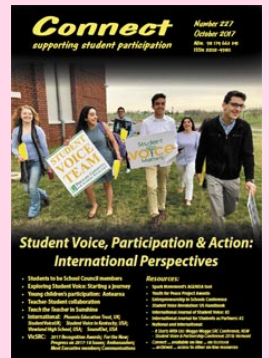
All issues of *Connect* from 1979 to the present (that's now 39 years!) are freely available on-line! Thanks to the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), all the issues of *Connect* have been scanned or up-loaded into the ACER's Research Repository: *ACEReSearch*.

You can find these issues of *Connect* at:

<http://research.acer.edu.au/connect>

The left-hand menu provides a pull-down menu for you to select the issue number > **browse**; the front cover of the issue is displayed, and you can simply click on the link in the main body of the page to download a PDF of the issue. Recent issues are also **searchable** by key words.

Connect has a commitment to the sharing of ideas, stories, approaches and resources about active student participation. We are totally supported by donations - see page 33!



Let us know

There may be some gaps or improvements necessary. As you use this resource, let us know what you find. (If an issue of *Connect* seems to be missing, check the issues either side, as **double issues** show up only as one issue number.) If you have any ideas for improving this resource, please let us know.

Most importantly, please **USE** this resource.

All copies of *Connect* are available on-line ... for free!

<http://research.acer.edu.au/connect>