



VicSRC Victorian Student
Representative Council

ANNUAL REPORT

2021-22

Acknowledgement of Country

VicSRC acknowledges that our work takes place on Aboriginal lands never ceded, and that our office sits on the Wurundjeri lands of the Kulin Nation. We recognise and pay respects to all Aboriginal peoples as the custodians of this beautiful country on which we learn, play and grow. Always was, always will be, Aboriginal lands.



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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2021-22



Evonne



Aakriti



Joseph



Linh

Charlotte

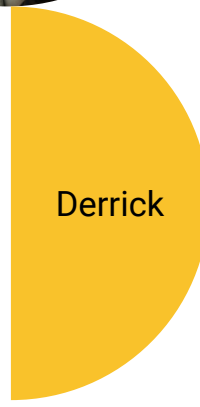
Gitaanjali



Thanh



Sienna



Derrick



Mila

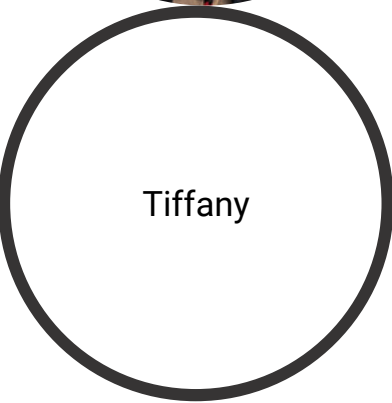
Jasmine



Will



Maddi



Tiffany



EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT



Will & Joseph
Executive Committee members 2021-22

This year has been a fruitful one for the VicSRC. Coming out of two years of COVID-19 lockdowns we took advantage of the new status quo to drive our advocacy online even as face-to-face meetings became possible again. Through our twelve month term we worked hard on the Advocacy Platform, formulated from the priorities of Congress 2021, letting it serve as a compass that guided us in amplifying the voices of Victorian students.

We worked in a series of subcommittees to maximise our advocacy impact, each playing a crucial part in our mission to enhance student-teacher relationships, improve P-10 assessment and reform consent education – our three primary advocacy goals under the umbrella of student mental health and wellbeing.

The advocacy subcommittee led the way on our advocacy goals and planning the structure of our asks, while the engagements subcommittee has fostered new and ongoing relationships with Victorian politicians, high-level DET staff and other important stakeholders in the community sector. It is through these connections that we promote our work and the priorities of students to decision-makers at the highest levels in Victoria's education system.

The communications subcommittee have led the way and seen involvement with the media, including Executive Committee appearances on Channel 9's Weekend Today, in The Age, Probono News and at the Age Schools Summit. The decision-making subcommittee has primarily worked with VicSRC's Board to set and amend organisational goals, ensuring the strategic direction adopted by VicSRC remains consistent with and relevant to students' priorities. They also worked with the Board members to optimise Executive Committee input in an ongoing capacity.

In the past year our Executive Committee has worked tirelessly to enhance the voices of all Victorian students. Huge thanks to Chairs Aakriti and Jasmine for running out monthly meetings and our Secretary Joseph for coordinating.

Finally, we would like to extend our gratitude and appreciation to all Board and staff members in recognition of their tireless efforts. Ultimately, as we close this term and recognise the work we've put in over the past twelve months we collectively take heart in the ways we've been able to amplify the voices of Victorian students and the knowledge that the new Executive Committee will continue to do so.



BOARD CHAIR REPORT



It's been another busy and fruitful year for VicSRC, full of strong, student-led advocacy, impactful programs and successful events. This work has been underpinned by wide engagement across Victoria's diverse student community. Most importantly, everything VicSRC's done this year – and there's been a lot! – has reflected an unwavering focus on our ultimate goal: empowering all student voices to be valued in every aspect of education.

VicSRC exists for students, to advance students' priorities as determined by students. That starts with our own organisation. The members of the 2021-22 Student Executive Advisory Committee have been fully committed to their role in leading VicSRC's work and representing the student community as fearless advocates, advisers and decision-makers. They've also modelled leadership in how they've worked as a team, supporting each other while pursuing shared goals. It's been a privilege to work with them and see the positive change they've driven and led during the year.

Under VicSRC's unique, student-led governance arrangements, the Board's role is to support the Executive's leadership. We do this by advising on the important things that enable VicSRC to carry out its mission of standing for and with students. These include longer-term strategy, planning, financial management, risk and legal compliance. Strengthening these fundamentals has been a continuing priority for the Board this year.

Together, we've also made big strides in strengthening and clarifying how the Executive-Board partnership works in practice. The Board and Executive are continuously refining this partnership, taking our cue from the Executive's views while recognising the Board's responsibility to suggest and implement ideas that make the most of students' time and expertise.

In the year gone by, we farewelled three Board members in Natalie Garcia de Heer, Chloe Papas and Edison Ponari, who each made great contributions in their time with VicSRC. The Board's current members – Brad Bowden, Tom Frick, Grace McCoy, Eve Mayes and Giselle Pinto – bring a collaborative and mission-focused approach to their roles.



BOARD CHAIR REPORT

The notion of partnership extends to VicSRC's brilliant staff team, led with energy, wisdom and a sense of humour by VicSRC's CEO Nina Laitala. VicSRC's staff – some themselves former Executives – are the organisation's engine and change-makers in their own right through their tireless work to elevate student voice.

We're also grateful for the support of our external partners – the Department of Education and Training, the Australian Education Union, the Victorian Electoral Commission, the many schools across Victoria who've engaged with VicSRC in the past twelve months, and more.

Student wellbeing has rightly been in the spotlight this year for education policy-makers, schools and the general public. The pandemic's effects continue to be felt particularly by students, yet too often their voices and experiences aren't heard or taken seriously. Student voice may never have been more important than now, nor the expertise and experience of students more valuable, in shaping our education system.

If you're reading this, chances are that you believe students should be valued and respected as the experts in their own education that they are. VicSRC certainly does, and ensuring that student voice is front and centre in all decision-making that affects students is a challenge we're up for. I hope you're inspired by this snapshot of what VicSRC achieved in 2021-22, and looking forward – as we are – to the many exciting possibilities of the year ahead.

Howard Choo
VicSRC Board Chair





CEO REPORT

The second half of 2021 brought some tough months for Victorian students as the state faced more remote learning and extended lockdowns. Mental health remained a key issue as stress and fatigue from the previous year was exacerbated by uncertainty about the future and lack of appropriate supports combined with an increasing feeling of disempowerment among students.

VicSRC's advocacy impact was felt deeply during this time. I was so impressed by the courage the Executive Committee showed by sharing their own stories of mental illness and hardship with key education decision makers to highlight and amplify the gravity of students' situations and the need for urgent action. Their stories told the reality of students' lived experience and helped convince the government to make changes that helped students' mental health.

Mental health in schools remained a priority throughout the first half of 2022. VicSRC continued to advocate strongly for student participation in decision making to all education stakeholders to ensure students' experiences around mental health was front and centre.

VicSRC has been deeply engaged in the work around the mental health in schools and senior secondary education reforms, providing ongoing advice and feedback to DET about student perspectives and needs as the roll out continues.

I would like to pay my heartfelt thanks to the fabulous staff team during this time Benita, Hayley, Nell, David, Ian, Emily, Keisha, Laura and Tristan. Congratulations on another year of meaningful work.

Thank you to the 2021-2022 Student Executive Advisory Committee – your hard work, tenacity, and energy made our work so much more enjoyable.

Thanks also to the members of the Board of Trustees Howard, Natalie, Tom, Edison, Chloe, Eve, Grace and Giselle. You've done an amazing job supporting VicSRC and being mentors and advisors to the 2021-2022 Student Executive Advisory Committee.

Thank you to the Victorian student community! Your feedback, ideas and support are crucial to the work we do to make education better for everyone.

Nina Laitala
VicSRC CEO



134

meetings with
education stakeholders

3

meetings with
Minister for Ed

1,943

posts on social
media

10

media
appearances

173

engagements
with schools

1,125

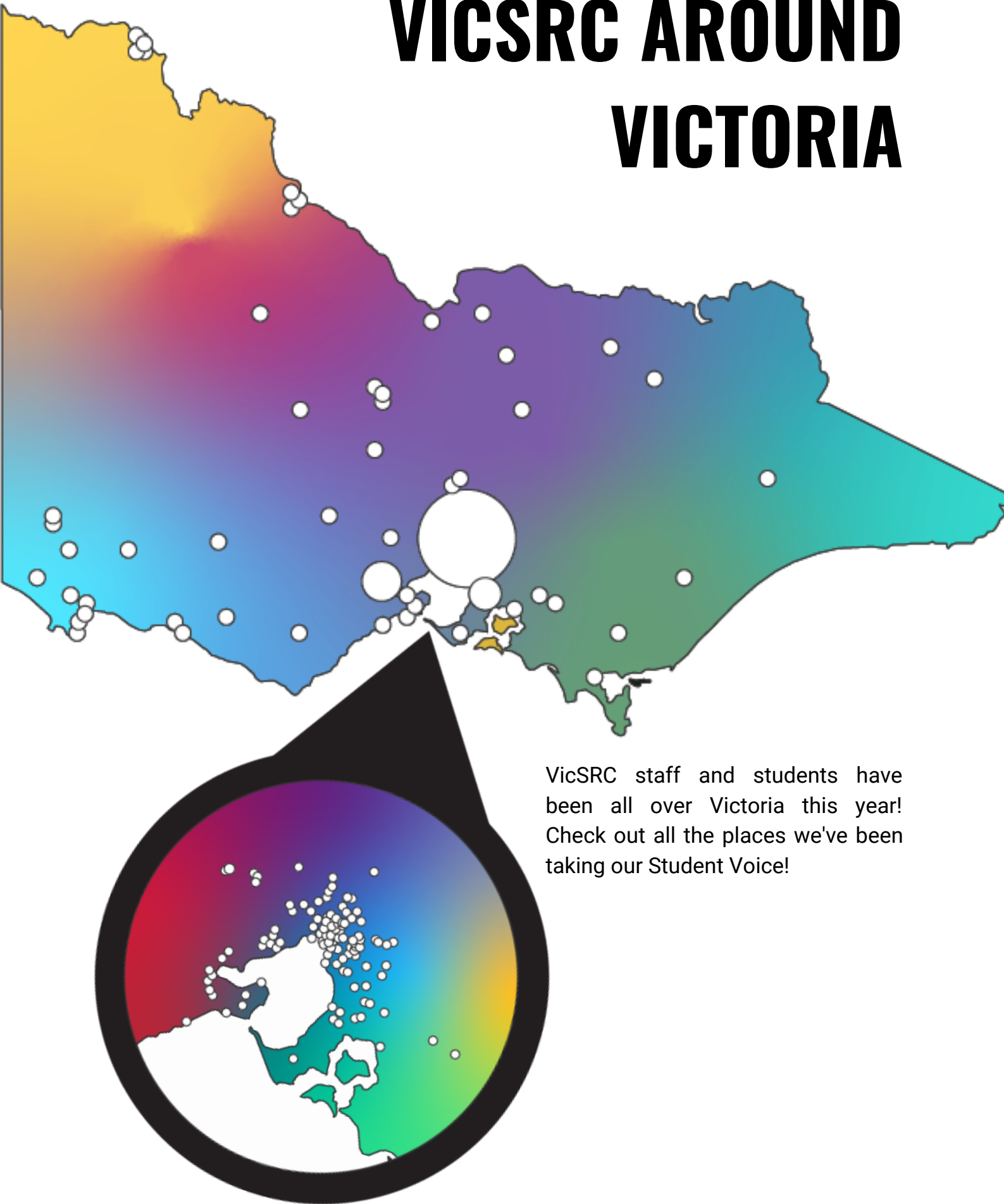
students we've
worked with

1,601

students in our
Student
Community

VICSRC AT A GLANCE

VICSRC AROUND VICTORIA



VicSRC staff and students have been all over Victoria this year! Check out all the places we've been taking our Student Voice!



Tiffany & Derrick
Executive Committee members 2021-22

ADVOCACY UPDATE

VicSRC has been busy this past year attending engagements with key decision makers across the education sector sharing our advocacy asks, student-led solutions and as always promoting student voice and agency.



Department of Education and Training

VicSRC Executive Committee members have met regularly with staff at DET, including quarterly meetings with the Deputy Secretaries. These provided a great forum to discuss our top three advocacy priorities: delivering informative, engaging and relatable consent education; different ways to measure student academic improvement in P-10 assessment; and how to improve student-teacher relationships and make classroom learning feel like a partnership.

We also took these opportunities to discuss issues affecting students and schools across the state including how schools were responding to COVID-19, vaping, and student mental health and wellbeing across all aspects of school life.

Education State Guiding Coalition

The Education State Guiding Coalition workshop is an opportunity for education stakeholders from all around Victoria to come together and discuss changes and improvements that could be made to schooling. We had discussions on a breadth of issues including student wellbeing, remote learning, how success in schooling can be measured, vocational education and P-10 assessment. These conversations brought a variety of perspectives and we were pleased to be contributing the student perspective on what has and has not worked in the Victorian schooling system.

Education State Forum

The Education State Forum was another opportunity for education stakeholders to come together, this time to discuss workforce, wellbeing and pathways: new perspectives on education, including key issues like staffing shortages due to COVID-19, implementation of FISO 2.0 and how school culture can be changed to embrace pathways other than VCE.

It was a productive day of discussions and we were glad to bring student perspectives, provide insight into the impacts of certain issues on students and contribute to potential solutions. Stakeholders placed great value on the presence of students in these conversations and were keen to hear our opinions and experience.



REMOTE LEARNING ADVOCACY

During 2021, students in Victoria were in and out of lockdowns and remote learning for most of the year, including an extended remote learning period during Term 3.

Students grew increasingly concerned that their voices were not being heard during this time, particularly those completing senior secondary education. VicSRC ensured these concerns were heard and taken seriously by meeting regularly with the Minister for Education as well as the DET Deputy Secretaries and the CEO of VCAA.

When students felt further action was required VicSRC also launched a petition (gaining over 5000 signatures), released a new survey and hosted a forum to hear from as many students as possible before making specific recommendations to the government. Several of these recommendations informed the return to school plan in Term 4, including all year levels returning to school with staggered days rather than a full time return by year level and strong messaging to schools about prioritising mental health and wellbeing.

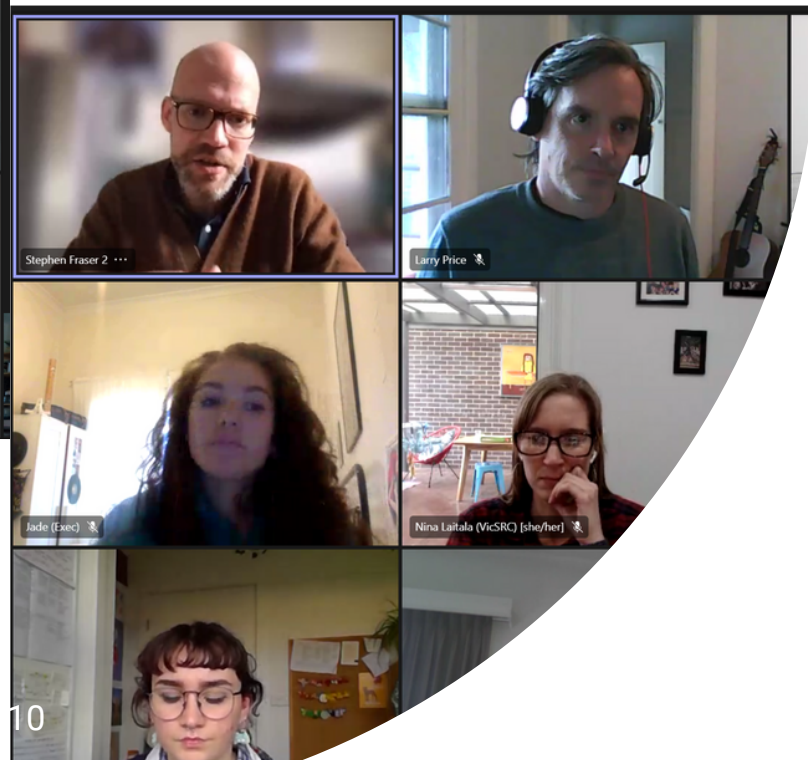
Recommendation pressure

Victorian Student Representative Council's Statement
Recommendations for Victorian education for the remainder of
September 2021

"This has been the most disruptive period for Victorian students"

"The impact on children and young people in 2021 is extreme /
At this moment schools are closed, learning is
support networks (our friends, extended
families). We hear messages from
... learn and that ..."

2 statewide mental
health days, ensuring
the well-being of all
students and school
staff and allowing time
for self care
cc: classys!





PROGRAMS & EVENTS

Every year VicSRC runs programs for schools, like Teach the Teacher, and students, like Ambassadors, plus exciting events that guide our advocacy, make change at all levels of education, and celebrate and amplify student voice in Victoria!

CONGRESS 2021

Congress this year looked a little different than usual. Not only was the event virtual (sadly), but this year, Congress had a theme!

After surveying over 100 Victorian students on their top issues in education, VicSRC found that the overwhelming response from students was that mental health and wellbeing was their top priority. Consequently, the theme for Congress 2021 was mental health and wellbeing in education.

Although it was hard not seeing everyone in person, the #CongressVibes were coming in strong through screens. Even an earthquake the morning of couldn't stop us from making change!

At Congress itself we tackled the eight issues identified in the survey, which you can see listed below. We began with high level discussions and then proceeded to unpack the issue. After identifying sub-issues and causes, investigating links to student mental health and wellbeing and doing some blue-sky thinking, we brainstormed some actions to solve the problem.

Following Congress, some members of the VicSRC Student Executive Advisory Committee and the Student Community formed came together for a series of action planning sessions, the working group was able to further develop the bold and creative ideas from Congress, refining them into tangible and concrete actions for both schools and the education sector at large.

The past two years have undeniably had significant impacts on students in Victoria, but we should also acknowledge that there have been opportunities. One of the major takeaways from these last two years is the power of student voice and agency. As the major stakeholder in education and educational experiences, students need to be listened to and actively consulted in decisions that affect us. We need to have the support and the platform to voice our concerns, opinions, and ideas. And one of the key ways VicSRC empowers students to do so is through Congress and the Advocacy Platform (available on our website).

Aakriti

Executive Committee members 2021-22



CONGRESS 2021

188

students involved

"It is really important to get student and youth ideas and opinions, since we are the ones who are actually getting anything out of education!"



TEACH THE TEACHER

Designed by students, the Teach the Teacher program is a whole school student-led framework to encourage and enable student voice, agency and participation delivered by VicSRC. An internationally recognised, education innovation, Teach the Teacher aims to create an inclusive school culture where everyone's voices are equally heard. Teach the Teacher supports students to drive change at school by leading collaborative conversations with teachers, school leadership and staff.

Teach the Teacher is a yearlong program which includes multiple workshops, resources and regular support from VicSRC to embed student voice practices in your school leading to long term cultural change.



TEACH THE TEACHER

Case study: Whittlesea Secondary College

Topic	Respect in the classroom
Goal	To be able to get mutual respect between teachers and students
The team	Two supporting teachers, members from the SRC, members from the SALT leadership team and Keisha from VicSRC.
Timeline	Middle of term 2 to the start of term 4.
What happened?	<p>We started with coming up with some ideas as to what our topic was and how we were going to do our consultation. We used a survey to gauge feedback from students and used that data to create our professional development (PD) session. We took the teachers through our data, had some opportunities for them to ask questions, and gave them some strategies that we had come up with to help improve respect between teachers and students in the classroom. After the PD we reflected on how it went, what we could improve, how the teachers took on the advice and how we felt doing the PD.</p> <p>The next steps we have planned are to create a plan for the next couple of years on how to continue Teach the Teacher at our school so that we can continue to address new challenges with our teachers.</p>
Challenges	We felt quite nervous about the process but in the end, it was really fun. When we did our survey only 40 students responded so we didn't get as much data as we wanted.
Advice for other students	Don't be nervous about the process because it is a fun experience. Try and be as open with the other students as possible about the process as we probably didn't share enough with our peers about it to get them interested.



Whittlesea
SECONDARY COLLEGE

AMBASSADORS

Over the past year the VicSRC Ambassadors have worked together in their Action Teams to inspire their schools and communities to listen to the voices of their students.

The Ambassadors have been focused on the priorities of Congress 2021. With mental health and wellbeing as the focus the Ambassadors were able to drive positive change within their schools, to better the wellbeing of their peers.

Across their year together the Ambassadors attended meetings both in person and online where they talked about the issues and solutions within their communities and schools. They discussed how to make their bathrooms at school more inclusive, as well as culturally diverse weeks to celebrate everyone in their communities, how different durations of class periods impacts their mental health and learning, different assessment styles that can reduce the stress put on themselves and their peers and how a positive relationship with their teachers can improve their learning and mental health.

Ambassador Liaisons Maddi and Sienna, on behalf of the Executive Advisory Committee want to say congratulations for everything the Ambassadors have accomplished in their term.



STUDENT VOICE AWARDS

The VicSRC Student Voice Awards are an annual celebration of best practice student voice, amplifying the important contribution of students to Victorian education and acting as a catalyst for change within Victorian schools. The Awards are a great opportunity for schools across Victoria to show the work they've been doing within their schools in relation to student advocacy and engagement.

We were very excited by all the amazing entries in the two categories for the 2021 awards, Student Voice School of the Year and Student-Led Project of the Year, both judged by a panel of students.

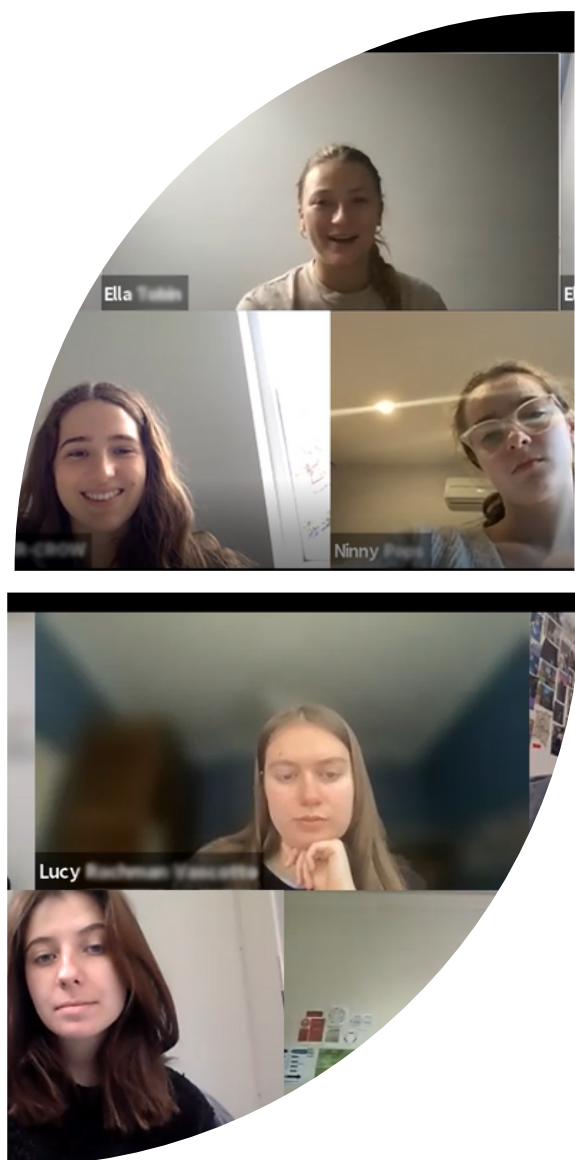
The awards were announced at the VicSRC Student Voice Extravaganza, celebrating student voice in Victoria throughout the year.

The Student-Led Project of the Year was Start the Conversation from Northcote High School, who won for their student action group, who hosted student forums and whole-school discussions on sexual education and consent.

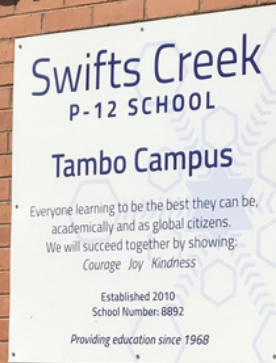
The Student Voice School of the Year was Albert Park College, where students have the opportunity to advocate and provide feedback to staff and principals. Albert Park is also on track to be the first Government school with a pathway to reconciliation.

Shout out to our other finalists including the Cyber Action Team at Lalor East Primary School, Teaching and Learning Team at Eltham High School, Tecoma Primary School and Tarneit Senior Secondary College.

For the full case studies on each of the finalists including a video of the students explaining their work, check out the VicSRC Resource Hub!



SWIFT'S CREEK HIGH SCHOOL



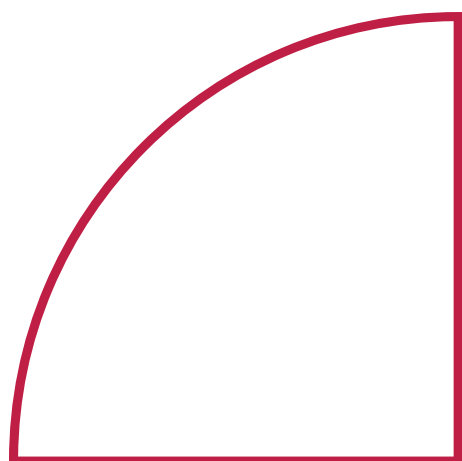
SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT & PROJECTS

Beyond official programs and events VicSRC also engages with schools and education stakeholders in all kinds of ways. Including regional roadtrips to ensure that schools outside metro Melbourne aren't left out of the student voice conversation and consultations to make sure that students are part of building an education system that works for them.

REGIONAL ROAD TRIPS & SCHOOL VISITS

Throughout the first half of 2022 VicSRC prioritised visiting regional areas after two years of lockdowns and restrictions prevented travel beyond Melbourne. Staff members travelled to Gippsland in March, Swan Hill and Mildura in May, and Bendigo in June., visiting 13 schools and meeting with over 160 students to talk about VicSRC and student voice, agency and leadership. These road trips also allowed for the development of relationships with regional DET offices and other youth-focused organisations working in regional and rural Victoria.

Staff members also visited VicSRC's Partner Schools in metropolitan Melbourne, speaking with over 60 students from Koo Wee Rup to Point Cook.



STUDENTS ON SCHOOL COUNCIL



VicSRC continues to promote the student member initiative for school councils at government secondary schools. VicSRC shared key information for students about school council and student membership during the school council election period.

Staff members continue to meet regularly with representatives from DET to provide advice about the initiative and share student experiences. VicSRC looks forward to being part of an extensive evaluation of student membership, which unfortunately has been postponed several times due to COVID-19 related restrictions.

ONLINE LEARNING

VicSRC Online Learning was launched in 2020 for Virtual Congress, with our first external course Intro to Student Voice launched in April 2021.

In 2022, we launched our first two paid courses – Student Representative Team Toolkits: one for secondary schools and one for primary schools.

These Toolkits are designed to support Student Representative Teams throughout their entire term, with activities and ideas for team building, issue investigation, action planning and evaluation.

Toolkit activities are designed for students to be able to facilitate them themselves.

340

enrolments



21

schools & orgs using
toolkits

VALs

As part of the senior secondary reform work happening across Victoria, VicSRC was contracted by DET to create 15 written profiles showcasing young people undertaking a form of vocational learning. VicSRC employed a young person for a three-month period to complete this work.

Interviews were conducted with 19 students, and 15 profiles completed which highlighted the breadth of vocational learning, including the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL), a School-Based Apprenticeship or Traineeship (SBAT) and Vocational Education and Training (VET) subjects. These profiles are being used by DET to showcase successful examples of vocational learning during the transition to the fully integrated senior secondary certificate.



PARLIAMENT VICTORIA

VicSRC continued a successful partnership with the Parliament of Victoria, where VicSRC supports two school students to be part of Parliament's Education Advisory Panel (EAP). The EAP provides feedback, advice and insights about parliamentary education programs. They meet once per term.

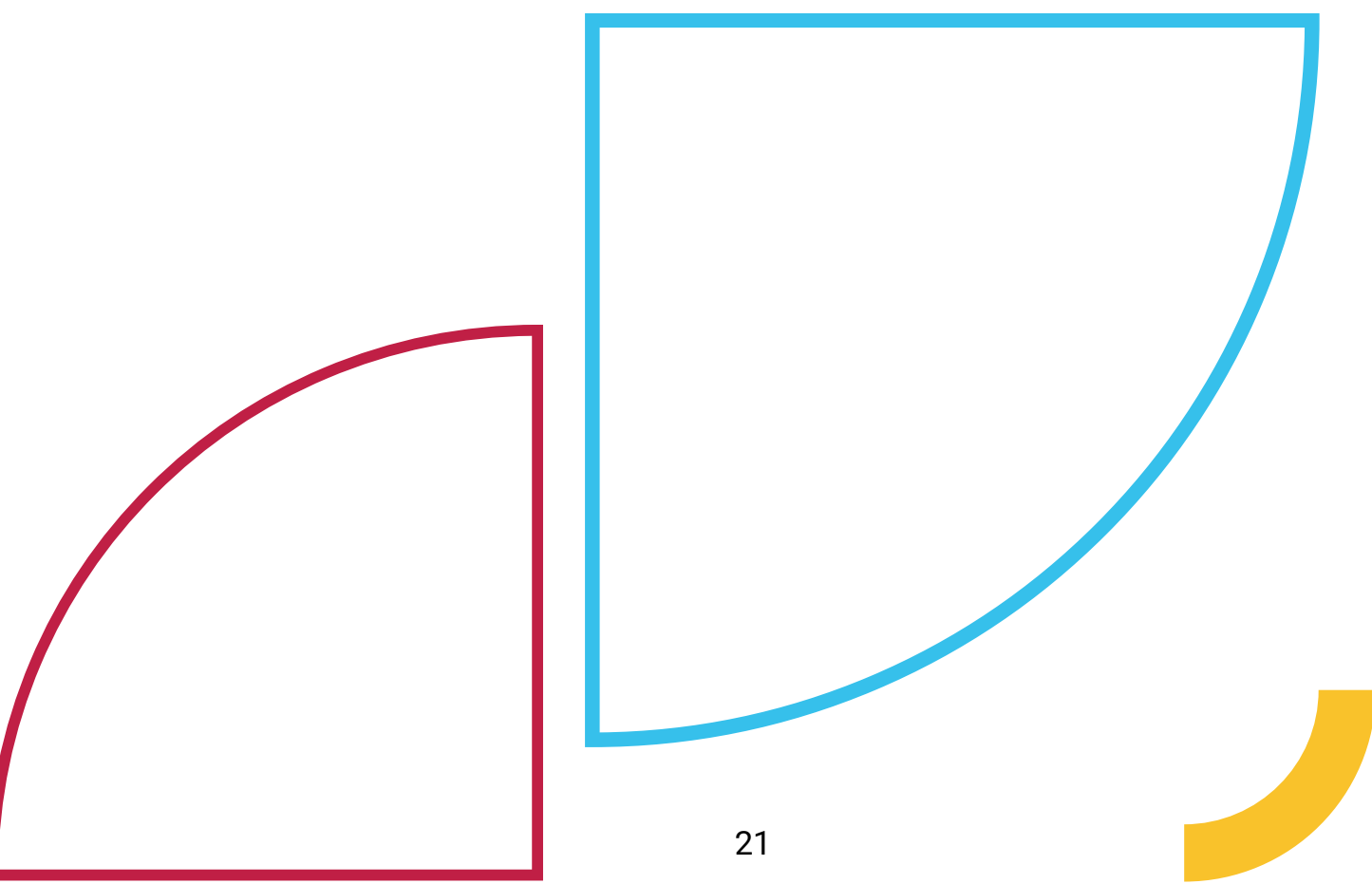
Throughout 2021-22 students attended four EAP meetings supported by VicSRC staff members. Students gave feedback about the new Inside Parliament booklet, provided insights about professional learning and shared advice about several types of resources.

SMILING MIND

VicSRC continued a strong relationship with Smiling Mind and was contracted to support them to consult with students about the impact of their Feeling It campaign. VicSRC recruited a diverse group of participants in years 7-10 and arranged one-on-one interviews with Smiling Mind researchers throughout February-March.

EDAPT

Edapt is a data education organisation with a platform that allows students to take ownership of their learning data and develop their own Learner Profile. VicSRC partnered with Edapt to recruit students for two workshops where students provided feedback and insights about the user experience and design of the platform and Learner Profile.





THANK YOUs

Our enormous thanks to the students of Victoria, especially the VicSRC Student Community and the VicSRC Ambassadors. In another year that was full of unexpected and hard things we could not do our work at all without you.

Our thanks also to the educators of Victoria and the wider education community, particularly the VicSRC Partner Schools, who make student voice a priority and let us come along on their student voice journey.

A final thanks to the stakeholders who support us, including education organisations, individual stakeholders and our funding bodies including the Department of Education and Training, Victorian Electoral Commission and the Australian Education Union.



TREASURER'S REPORT

For the year ending 30 June 2022, VicSRC has reported a surplus of \$56 . This is a great result given the extended lockdown Victoria endured in the last half of 2021 which again impacted schools' ability to engage in VicSRC's programs and events.

Revenue decreased from \$824,537 in 2021 to \$704,551 in 2022 due to grant funding for a completed project coming to an end. VicSRC's core revenue activities remained strong throughout the year.

Expenses also decreased from \$737,167 in 2021 to \$704,495 in 2022. Again, this change is mainly due to costs associated with the completed project mentioned above coming to an end.

Through conscientious financial and risk management, VicSRC has not needed to use any retained surplus in this financial year despite budgeting to use around \$25,000 to invest in an additional staff position to support VicSRC administration. Investing in additional administration support allowed VicSRC to develop training courses and undertake consultation work that created additional revenue, seeing a positive return on this investment. The training products and consultation work also increased VicSRC's reputation as an expert in student voice, agency and participation as well as empowering students in decision making, helping to realise two of our strategic goals.

VicSRC has a retained surplus of \$303,559 at the end of this financial year, maintaining its strong position to continue to invest in growth areas without undertaking unnecessary financial risk.

Statement of profit and loss and other comprehensive income for the year ended 30 June 2022

	2022	2021
Revenue	704,551	824,537
Employee Benefits Expense	(610,327)	(565,328)
Accommodation Expenses	(41,760)	(25,588)
Administrative Expenses	(21,910)	(25,291)
Communication Expenses	(7,222)	(108,469)
Depreciation Expense	(4,595)	(4,020)
Project Costs	(15,661)	(6,802)
Other expenses	(3,020)	(1,669)
Current year Surplus before income tax	56	87,370
Income tax expense	-	-
Total comprehensive income for the year	56	87,370
<i>Total comprehensive income attributable to members of the entity</i>	56	87,370

Statement of financial position

	2022	2021
Assets		
Current Assets		
Cash and Cash Equivalents	461,990	512,630
Short-term Investment	37,642	37,214
Accounts Receivable	2,180	3,960
Other Current Assets	5,591	3,713
Total Current Assets	507,403	559,518
Non-Current Assets		
Plant and Equipment	5,443	6,317
Total Non-Current Assets	5,443	6,317
Total Assets	507,403	559,518

Statement of financial position

	2022	2021
Liabilities		
Current Liabilities		
Accounts Payable and Other Payables	32,012	34,171
Contract Liability - Grants received in advance	118,785	174,071
Provision for Annual Leave	30,972	32,887
Total Current Liabilities	181,769	241,129
Non-Current Liabilities		
Provision for Long Service Leave	27,518	21,203
Total Non-Current Liabilities	27,518	21,203
Total Liabilities	209,287	262,332
NET ASSETS	303,559	303,503
Equity		
Retained surplus	303,559	303,503
Total Equity	303,559	303,503