



11th Annual
VicSRC
Congress
Report 2016

Join the roar of student voices.

VicSRC Congress is a melting pot of ideas and student-led solutions.

180 students from 68 schools were brought together from all across the state to debate, decide and act on the issues that matter most to their education in 2016.

With over a decade of student-led advocacy and action behind us, 2016 presented an opportunity to say 'Yes, and...', then work out how.

It was the first time we've done electronic voting.

The first time we reached 84,000 people on social media.

The first time we received a personal message of support from the Premier of Victoria, Daniel Andrews MP.

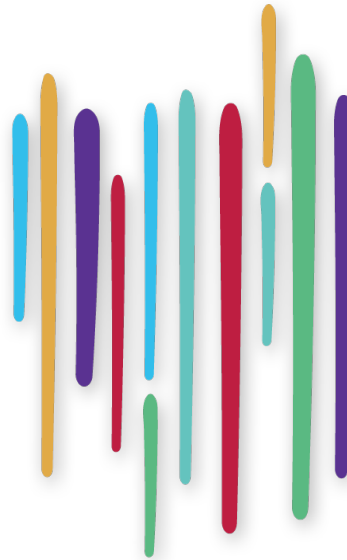
And the very first time VicSRC delivered student-led solutions at an Open Morning with 300 participants.

This report provides an overview of Congress 2016 and ten solutions to issues affecting education that matter most to Victorian students. You can also **download the PDF version**.

We urge all students, teachers, principals and education sector stakeholders across Australia to consider how they can adopt and implement the student-led initiatives within their settings.

Student voices rang out at Congress, and the message is clear.

We have the power to turn ideas into action.





Foreword

If there's a way of doing something better in education, it's our obligation to do it.

From the first time I attended Congress in 2014, until my third and final Congress this year, I have watched students from across the state transform education. Congress isn't just about changing education – it is also about meeting new people and being inspired to make a change for yourself.

From Rochester to Melton, Morwell to Casterton, Bendigo to Balwyn – students came to Congress from all across Victoria. It was a mixed bag of wonderful with 180 students, 29 scholarships, 30 volunteers and staff, 10 action proposals, and an epic Open Morning with over 300 people. It didn't matter if you were from government, private, Catholic, special, TAFE or flexible education settings. What mattered was your voice and knowing that together, we can make education better.

Over the years I've seen the evolution of Congress. This year, the Open Morning initiative was a great success. The hard work from all of the delegates and crew really paid off in the Lightning Lobby and Congress session, where we shared 10 student-led ideas with more people than ever before.

Students care deeply about learning; diversity; wellbeing; and having a real seat at the decision-making table. If there's a way of doing something better, it's our obligation to do it. More than ever, this applies to the way we think about, and do, education.

This is my challenge to all students: Use the action proposals; work together; create solutions; make change and move from talk into action. You won't regret it!

Demi Irwin, 18, Rochester Secondary College | VicSRC Congress 2016 Coordinator

A person with long dreadlocks, wearing a blue jacket, is visible on the left side of the frame. The background is dark and out of focus.

"It's been the best
few days of my
entire life."

Delegate, Congress 2016



Congress 2016

STUDENTS TRANSFORMING EDUCATION



This video content can't be
viewed offline

[VIEW ONLINE](#) 

A photograph of a conference setting. In the foreground, large white 3D letters spell out 'CONGRESS 2016' on a wooden surface. In the background, several people are seated in a room with a large screen and a window. The text 'Setting the scene' is overlaid in the center.

Setting the scene

About us

The Victorian Student Representative Council (VicSRC) is the peak body representing students in Victoria. Our vision is a world where all children and young people have access to education that is student-led, student driven and student-focussed. We exist to empower all student voices to be valued in every aspect of education.

About Congress

VicSRC Congress is an explosion of student voice.

Run by students, for students, Congress brings students together from all across the state to debate, decide and act on the issues that matter most to their education. Through interactive workshops, student-led discussion and solutions-focussed debate, delegates determine the VicSRC policy agenda for the coming year, and appoint the Student Executive that will implement it.

Students transforming education

From March-May this year, VicSRC consulted with over 800 Victorian students to determine the top 10 issues that matter most in 2016. Common threads tied issues together across regions, sectors and ages. These fed into Congress 2016, framing the delegates' experiences and forming the basis of the debate.

A photograph of three students sitting at a table in a meeting. The student on the left is a young man with dark hair, wearing a dark blue sweater and a red lanyard, looking down at a notebook. The student in the middle is a young woman with dark hair, wearing a white jacket and a yellow headband, looking towards the right. The student on the right is a young woman with dark hair, wearing an orange sweater and a yellow headband, looking towards the right and gesturing with her hands. They are all wearing red lanyards with blue circular badges. The background is slightly blurred, showing a window and some green balloons.

Taking student voice
seriously

Student voice involves more than just listening to students – it involves taking seriously what we say. It means students participating in decisions made about our education.

We have the right to participate in making decisions about matters that affect our lives (as recognised in Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child). Giving students a strong voice in our education helps prepare us for our changing world. Students are more engaged in school education when we are involved in shaping our learning.


In order for student voice to impact on the education system in Victoria it must influence policy and program development. Student voice enables policy and program development that is highly relevant and responsive to the needs and aspirations of students.

Students have a right to be heard. In student-focused schools, student participation goes beyond students having a voice only through their representation in an SRC or similar body. When students meaningfully participate in decision-making about their learning, they are more likely to remain involved in education and to achieve better results.

All students have a right to access high-quality teaching, facilities and resources. Needs-based funding is key to helping achieve this. Targeted measures also have a role to play in addressing disadvantage and inequity across school communities.

Respectful relationships between students and teachers matter to students. Respectful relationships between teachers and students strengthen learning. Respectful relationships sit at the core of a thriving and supportive school community. In a culture of respect, students feel safe to learn.

Students learn best when their social and emotional development is supported. Victorians believe that young people's wellbeing should be as important to schools as teaching students to read and write. Schools are uniquely placed to support students' development and wellbeing.

A group of diverse teenagers are standing together at night, possibly at an outdoor event. Some are wearing lanyards and holding folders. A quote is overlaid on the image.

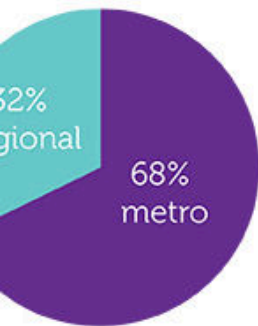
"You have opened
my eyes so much
they are practically
falling out of my
head."



Taylor, Delegate

Congress at a glance

 **94%**
of delegates agree
or strongly agree that
they will take action
after Congress

 **29**
scholarships



 It was truly the
life-changing
event of the year. 
Delegate

 **84,000**
post reach

 **33,300**
impressions

 **1,700**
hearts

 **17,300**
video views



 Electronic
voting

 1 breakfast
TV appearance

 1 Congress
song

1 Congress
song



2 video
messages
of support



Premier &
Minister of Education
Daniel Andrews

Deputy Premier &
Minister for Education
James Merlino MP



10 student
solutions

"So amazing to be part
of such an amazing event
and help students share
their education system
Volunteer

A large group of students is gathered in a hall, seated in rows. In the foreground, two students are seen from behind. The student on the left is wearing a white t-shirt with the text 'JOIN THE ROAR OF STUDENT VOICES' in blue. The student on the right is wearing a dark blue hoodie and a black cap with 'PEOPLE' written on it in pink. The background is filled with other students, some looking towards the camera and others looking away. The hall has a high ceiling with large windows and bright lights.

The solutions of Congress 2016

Turning ideas in to action

The ideas were the drumbeat of Congress 2016 - our chance to share uniquely student-led solutions to issues in education.

Through group work and peer-led activities, delegates harnessed the experiences, passion, insight and creativity of students to create innovative ideas. Delegates presented their proposals at the Open Morning, which comprised the **Lightning Lobby** and the **Congress Session**.

Six VicSRC priority areas for 2016-2017 were determined by students:

1. **Learning & assessment**
2. **Diversity**
3. **Peer-peer relationships**
4. **Student wellbeing**
5. **Student voice in decision making**
6. **Student-teacher relationships**

We encourage all students to use the full 10 ideas in their schools and communities via the [VicSRC Action Resource](#).

A group of people, including a woman in an orange shirt, standing in front of a staircase. The woman in the orange shirt is smiling and holding a water bottle. The text is overlaid on a semi-transparent white box in the center of the image.

"It's completely
eclipsing all of my
wildest
expectations."

Desney, Crew

Vic SRC CONGRESS 2016

STUDENTS TRANSFORMING EDUCATION



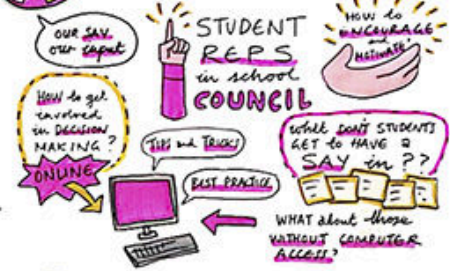
CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT



STUDENT WELLBEING



STUDENT VOICE in DECISION MAKING



PEER-TO-PEER RELATIONSHIPS



DIVERSITY



STUDENT TEACHER RELATIONSHIPS



SCHOOL CULTURE



VICSRC top PRIORITIES for 2016 - 2017:

- #1. DIVERSITY
- #2. LEARNING and ASSESSMENT



RURAL YOUTH AMBASSADORS



FACILITIES and RESOURCES



WORKING TOGETHER



LEARNING and ASSESSMENT





Learning & assessment

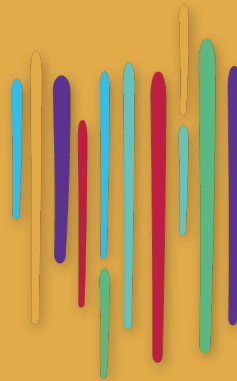
Congress

OUR four ideas to solve this challenge are...

- Website – through VicSRC
- Reverse student-teacher interviews
- Change classroom layout
- Wide variety of careers on careers day

1. Teach students to do their taxes / how to vote / manage finances / understand real estate (via seminars or lessons).
2. Encourage students to teach each other to think outside the box and work together (through team learning and student-led classes).
3. Prepare students to know how to study and work productively (through workshops and creative thinking

Get inside the issue: [hear what students have to say about learning & assessment.](#)





STATS

- 36% of people with a disability aged 18-64 have completed Year 12 (compared to 60% with no disability)
- In Australia there are 1,000,000 people with a disability (that's 1% of the population)
- 45% of people with a disability in Australia are living below or below the poverty line (more than 100% of the OECD average of 36%)
- 1 in 5 (20%) of Australians have experienced racial hate
- 6 in 10 (60%) of LGBT people experience sexual harassment
- 20% experience physical abuse
- 10% experience other abuse
- 40% of children experienced sexual abuse abuse in 2010
- 30% of Gay Men
- 25% of Gay Women
- 37% of Trans Women



- 80% of homophobic bullying occurs at school
- 11 in 100 Australians are LGBTQ+
- 9 in 10 women with intellectual disabilities have been sexually abused
- 1 in 4 Australians were born overseas
- 1 in 2 have an overseas born parent



Diversity

We Believe

In a community where everyone understands the terms relating to race, disability or the LGBTQ+ and consciously choose appropriate language.



In R

Strong derogatory
being used against
in our community



FAGGOT

Etymology:
1. A ball of
scissors or
2. A ball of
board
This term
used to refer
homosexual

GAY

Definition:
1. Homosexual
Synonyms: homosexual, lesbian, gay, lesbian
2. Light-hearted and cheerful
Synonyms: cheerful, merry, jolly
Application: use the word gay as a synonym
for the 'loser' or 'lout'. This can be very
hurtful.

QUEER

Definition:
1. Strange, odd
Queer is often used as a word to describe a
homosexual individual
In the gay community 'in the closet' is
any person that is not 'out'

RETARDED

mental, physical or social
is used for ones age
often used as a synonym for
the 'slow' community and

IT IS UNACCEPTABLE

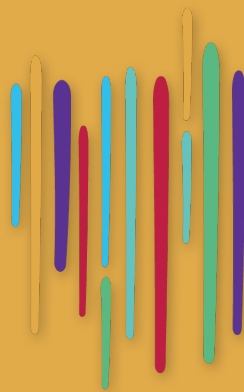
that students are
the impression that
voices are being but a

THE REALITY IS

that students are
and disempowered
resulting in an unhealthy
school culture

1. Students create a dictionary of the origin of hurtful words so that it will create understanding and inspire others not to use those words again.
2. Form 'Stand Out' groups to discuss diversity issues and come up with solutions for their school, and share it with the wider community.
3. Create student-led diversity campaigns to break down barriers of understanding within the school and the community, aimed at students, school staff and families.

Get inside the issue: [hear what students have to say about diversity.](#)



What is the issue?

The main issue in Peer-Peer relationships is the lack of Diversity and Equality between Peers.

It is unacceptable that

There is a lack of support between peers and the lack of education + awareness for younger year levels concerning discrimination.

We believe in a perfect

School where everyone would feel like they belong, where grades wouldn't define intelligence, where social status doesn't define your worth and your hobbies don't define your gender. A child isn't to be held down by the war in their heads.



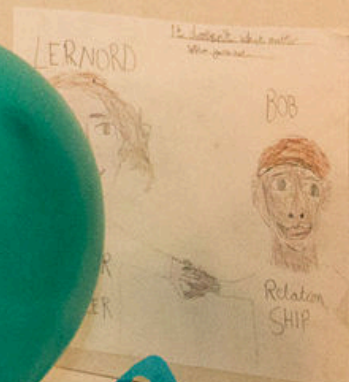
STOP IT WHERE IT STARTS

PEER-PEER relationships

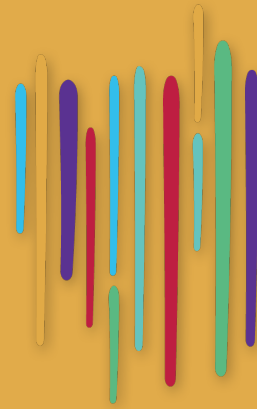


Our three ideas to solve this challenge are.....

- For VicSRC to start a video campaign to increase awareness of Equality between people, thus creating an inclusive environment full of diversity and no bullying. Videos concept is about bullies.
- For schools to create a peer-peer mentoring support network. This will not only provide support to students but also increase the positive relations between peers.
- For government to provide more funding to schools so that they can have either smaller classrooms (10 students per teacher) or additional teachers in each classroom. It will lead to students receiving a more specified support.

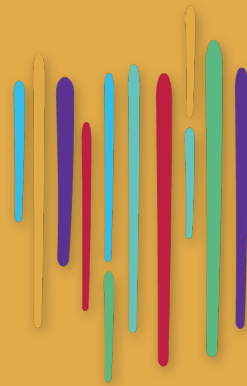



Get inside the issue: hear what students have to say about peer-peer relationships.





Student wellbeing



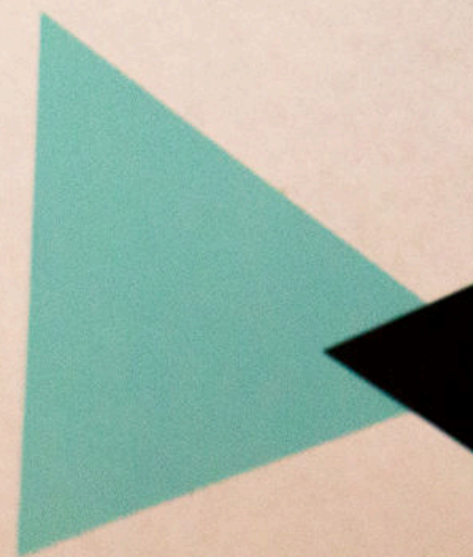


SRC Guidelines

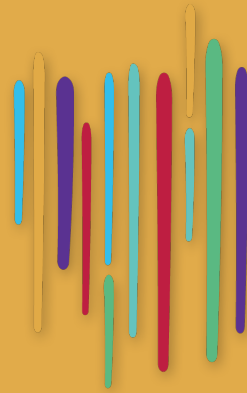
We are endorsing a vicSRC app and recommending guidelines that lead to incorporating a one way and two way approach to student voice in decision making in schools.

Student voice in decision making

Additionally we recommend that where the systems of transparency in place whereby the wider school community is able to access what takes place in all meetings, either through having attending students on rotation or meeting minutes that are made available to the whole student body and parents and staff.



Get inside the issue: hear what students have to say about student voice in decision making.

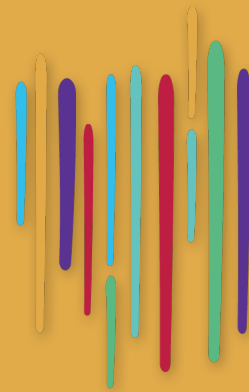


"Educators need to see the extreme potential of young people and the issues that are important to us."

David, delegate

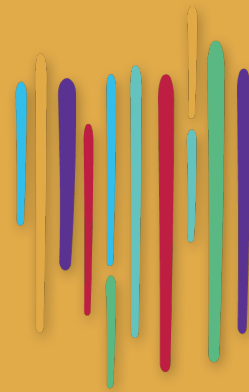
A photograph of a male teacher with glasses and a green t-shirt, smiling and interacting with two female students. The teacher is wearing a red lanyard and a green t-shirt with "CONFERENCES 2016" printed on it. The students are also smiling and looking at each other. They are sitting at a table with a blue cup and some papers. In the background, there are whiteboards with handwritten notes.

Student-teacher relationships



Classroom management





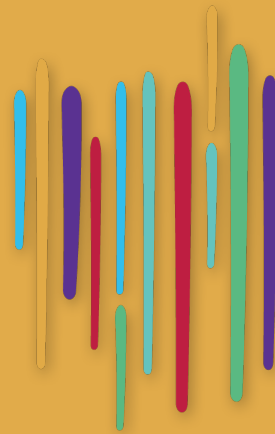


School culture

CULTURE ENCOMPASSES ALL ISSUES!!!

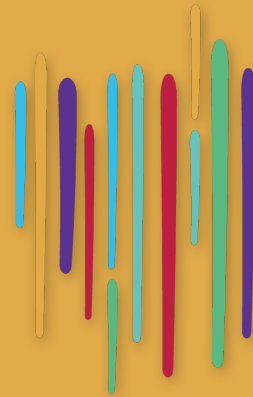
WE RECOGNISE

Get inside the issue: hear what students have to say about school culture.





Working together



Facilities & resources

In a Perfect World...

THERE WOULD BE EQUAL FUNDING in ALL ASPECTS OF EDUCATION, STUDENT WELLBEING AND BUILDINGS

It is not acceptable that there are safety hazards within the school.

Small schools getting less funding when they are the ones who need to grow.

It is not acceptable that a large sum of money is directed to funding

FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

Money is going to unnecessary and unnecessary things and not for education, safety and hygiene

With the lack of teachers and resources causes negative effects such as less opportunities for students and lack of motivation and purpose in learning

With the lack of teachers and resources causes negative effects such as less opportunities for students and lack of motivation and purpose in learning

The Solution

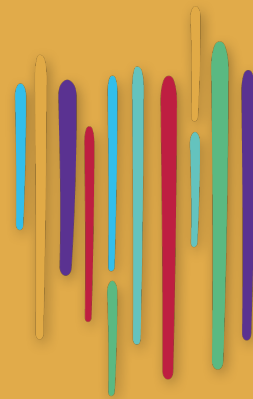
GETTING A DIVERSE group of PEOPLE TOGETHER TO COMPILE A 12-MONTH plan REGARDING FUNDING TO PRESENT TO THE GOVERNMENT at the START OF THE YEAR TO SHOW HOW THEY PLAN TO USE THE MONEY


The Mint Team (T.M.T.)

Corey.T
Zoe.D
Alex.T
Liam.K
Cory.G
Claire.S
Bryce.P
Lena.C
Cory.D

John.Y
ToBIN
Britney.E
Brooke.H
Chloe.H

4schools





"Students came back
with an insatiable
appetite for student
voice."

Sally, Teacher



A group of young people, the VicSRC 2015-2016 Executive team, are posing in front of a stone building. They are holding various colored flags (red, blue, green, orange) that feature the VicSRC logo and the word 'CONGRESS'. The text '2015' and '2016' is also visible on some of the flags. The group is diverse in age and appearance, and they are all smiling at the camera.

Goodbye...

We proudly acknowledge the
work of the outgoing VicSRC
2015-2016 Executive team.

Liz Chiem, Mount Waverley Secondary College | **Simana Latu**, Copperfield College
| **Margaret Tran**, The Mac.Robertson Girls' High School | **Danai Harawa**, Frankston
High School | **Demi Irwin**, Rochester Secondary College | **Sam Ilobuchi**, Frankston
High | **Kristen Sellings**, Yarram Secondary College | **Marine Chu**, The Mac.Robertson
Girls' High School | **William Hornstra**, Trafalgar High School | **Victoria
Vassallo**, Catholic Regional College Melton | **Spencer Davis**, Footscray City College
| **Shania Hallyburton**, Brauer College | **Matty Sievers**, Bendigo Senior Secondary
College | **Thomas Velican**, Nossal High School | **Dave Serpell**, Northern College of the
Arts & Technology

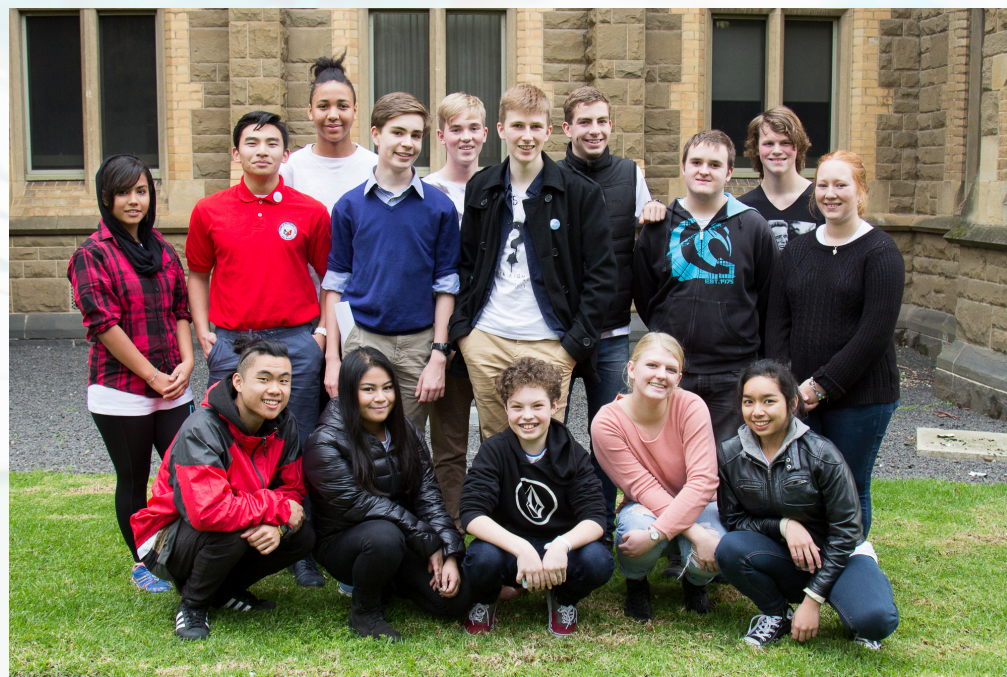




...& Welcome!

We are thrilled to introduce the
newly elected VicSRC 2016-
2017 Executive team.

Bryce Pace, Brauer College | **Campbell McGown**, Mount Waverley Secondary College
| **Chelsea Hard**, St Joseph's College Echuca | **Chloe Laurel**, Catholic Regional College
Melton | **David Trevorrow**, Braybrook College | **Feyla Anja**, Mount Waverley
Secondary College | **Gerard Filipe**, Frankston High School | **Jacob Baker**, Rochester
Secondary College | **Phoebe Cody**, Brauer College | **Roghayeh Sadeghi**, Northern Bay
College | **Ryan Wijaya**, Nossal High School | **Sam Ilobuchi**, Frankston High
School | **Spencer Davis**, Footscray City College | **Tobi Naylor**, Auburn High School
| **William Wilson**, Yarram Secondary College.



Together we are powerful.



  @VicSRC  @VicSRC_gram #VicSRC

VicSRC Victorian Student
Representative Council



Education
and Training



ORMOND COLLEGE
THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE



**NEWSBOYS
FOUNDATION**

