

A smiling woman with glasses and a scarf is the central focus of the image. She is wearing a blue jacket and a patterned scarf. The background is a soft, out-of-focus blue and green, suggesting an outdoor setting. On the left side, there are several vertical white lines of varying heights, resembling a stylized bar chart or a decorative element. The text '12th Annual VicSRC Congress Report 2017' is overlaid on the left side of the image in a white, sans-serif font.

12th Annual
VicSRC
Congress
Report 2017

Speak out, spark change.

Three days, 180 students, 15 Exec, 37 volunteers, 7 staff, our second ever Open Morning and a choose-your-own-adventure model - it's safe to say that the VicSRC Congress 2017 was the biggest yet!

For three days in July, the collective genius and positive energy of students from all corners of the state simply could not be contained. From within and outside the halls of Ormond College, the roar of student voices rang out.

Congress 2017 was truly owned by the students who attended, where they pitched unique ideas, decided in real-time on the issues they wanted to act on and formed action teams that deliberated over where to go to go next.

Congress 2017 also saw:

- Over 50 educational sector stakeholders support Congress Open Morning and listen to the roar of Student Voice.

- A reach of over 151,000 people on social media.
- A personal visit from James Merlino, Deputy Premier and Minister for Education.
- The VicSRC's Student Representation on School Governance Councils research report enthusiastically launched by Principal Commissioner for Children and Young People, Liana Buchanan;
- The launch of the VicSRC 2017-2020 Strategic Plan - a significant feat for our tireless Student Executive Team that provides a strong direction for the organisation for the next 3 years.

This report provides an overview of Congress 2017 and twelve solutions to issues affecting education that matter most to Victorian students. We urge all students, teachers, principals and education sector stakeholders across Australia to consider how they can adopt and implement these student-led initiatives within their settings.

Student voice was strong and we truly saw students speak out and spark change.



Foreword

With your voice, your ideas and by working together, we can make a positive change to our education.

The first time I attended Congress in 2016, I was inspired by the amount of students from across the state wanting to transform and be in charge of their education. Though no matter how important it is to make education better for students - Congress is also about being inspired and connecting with other students from all across the state!

From Echuca to Warrnambool, Bendigo to Melbourne and everywhere in between, students come to Congress from all across Victoria. Not only did staff, volunteers and our amazing 15 executive members experience a thrilling three days, we were accompanied by over 180 students who presented 12 action team proposals at an amazing Open Morning Lightning Lobby to over 300 people.

It doesn't matter whether you came from a government, private, Catholic, TAFE or flexible education setting - what mattered was your voice, ideas and knowing that if we work together, we can make a positive change to our education!

My first year at Congress I was elected onto the Exec, and I knew from the beginning that I wanted to work alongside some other amazing people to create a Congress that was just as good, if not better than what I was privileged to experience.

Having an un-conference style at this years event meant that students could organically choose the issues that were most important to them at the current time! Thanks to the amazing staff, volunteers, Exec and delegates, our Action Market and Open Morning sessions were a huge success.

It is clear that the students who come to Congress care deeply about their education and are willing to do everything they can to speak out on behalf of all students. If there's a way of making a positive change, the delegates will find it, by working together and achieving great success.

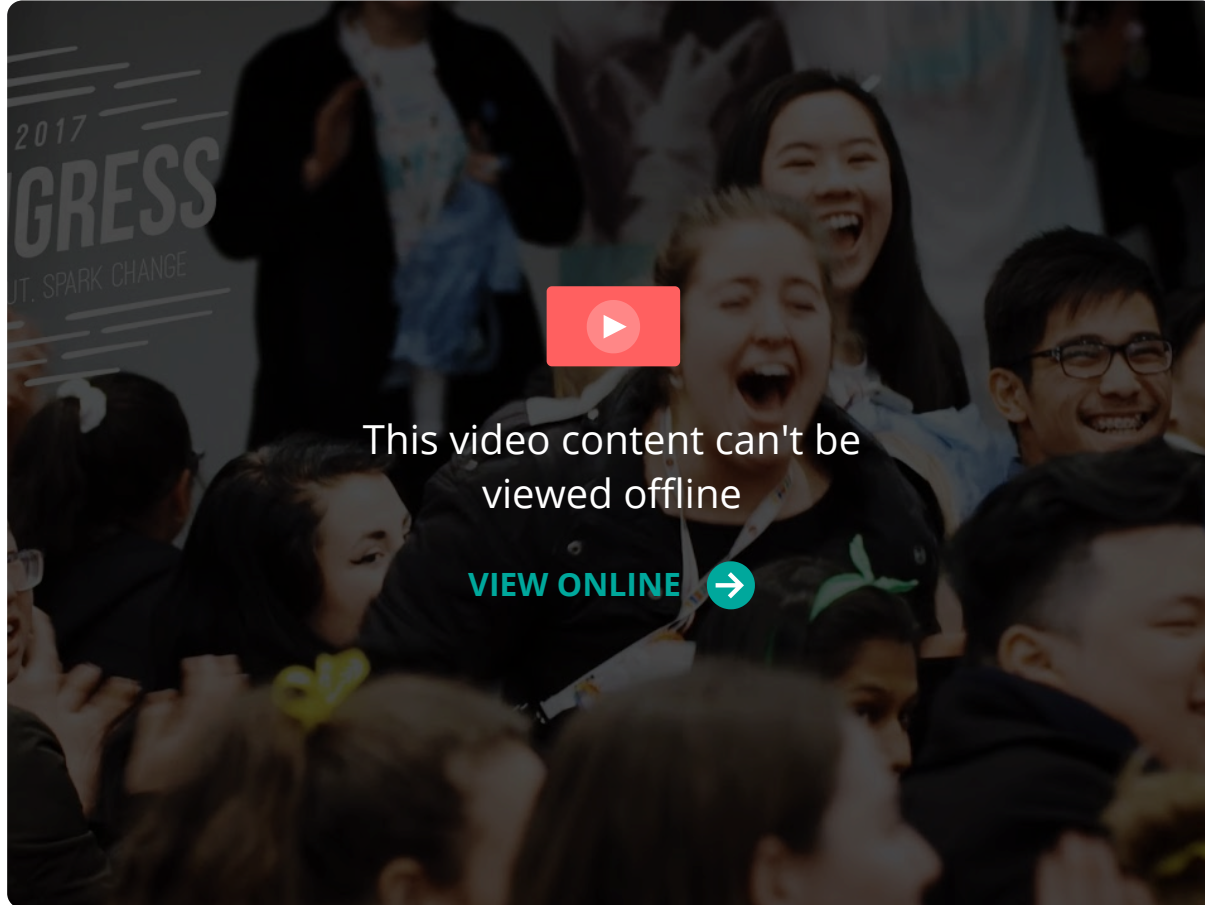
Chelsea Hard, 17, St Josephs College, Echuca | VicSRC Congress 2017 Coordinator

A group of young women, likely students, are gathered around a document. They are wearing winter jackets and are looking at the document with interest. The background is a stone wall.

"The best experience
OF MY LIFE and i'm
definitely coming
next year!!"

Delegate, Congress 2017







Setting the scene

About us

The Victorian Student Representative Council (VicSRC) is the peak body representing students in Victoria. Our vision is a student-focused education system that enhances young people's capacity to change the world. We exist to empower all student voices to be valued in every aspect of education.

About Congress

Together, we are powerful.

Run by students, for students and attended by the Minister for Education, the VicSRC Congress brings students together from all across the state to debate, decide and act on the issues that really matter to their education.

Through interactive workshops and solutions-focused debate, student delegates determine the VicSRC policy agenda for the coming year, and appoint the Student Executive team that will implement it.

In 2017, we mixed things up. Delegates shaped Congress in real time, taking control of the conversation by incorporating a choose-your-own-adventure format. Their passions drive their voice and choice as students worked together to set the agenda for education change.

Speak out, spark change. This is #Congress2017.

A diverse group of students is seated in an audience, likely at a school event or conference. In the center, a young man with glasses and a green scarf holds a microphone. To his left, a young man wears a blue headband and a white t-shirt with 'CONGRESS' printed on it. Another student in the foreground wears a grey hoodie with 'EAST' and '1990' visible. A young woman to the right wears a blue denim jacket and glasses. The background shows other students, some with headbands, looking towards the front of the room.

Empowering Student Voice

Student voice involves more than just listening to students – it involves taking what we say seriously. 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 young people, some making peace signs, with a person lying on a wooden table in the foreground. The background shows a room with large windows and a whiteboard.

"This week has been amazing and really inspired me to go to my own school and act"

Delegate, Congress 2017

Congress at a glance



180

Students

12 student-led solutions

72 schools represented



Special guests

Deputy Premier & Minister for Education James Merlino MP

Principle Commissioner for Children and Young People Liana Buchanan

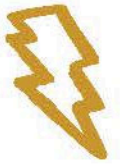


7 staff and 36 volunteers



30

scholarships awarded



Electronic voting



32%

of students travelled 200 - 400kms to attend

“Congress has literally changed my life and will change many others”

Delegate, Congress 2017

Exec

for law Students
of Victoria VIC Council

The solutions of Congress 2017



UL
HIPS


Turning ideas in to action

The Resolution Action Pitches (or RAPs) were the heartbeat of Congress 2017 - our chance to share student-led solutions that go beyond talk into real action.

Through group work and peer-led activities, delegates harnessed the experiences, passion, insight and creativity of students to develop innovative ideas. Each Action Team brought their RAP to present at the solutions-focused Open Morning.

Students voted on each proposal, with the top five forming the VicSRC advocacy platform for 2017-2018.

- 1. Real World Skills**
- 2. Student Rights**
- 3. LGBTIQ+ Equality**
- 4. Student Mental Health and Wellbeing**
- 5. Taking Student Voice Seriously**



"This event has had
a profound impact
on my life"

Delegate, Congress 2017

VicSRC Congress Debate 2017

RE-ENGAGE DON'T DISENGAGE

STUDENTS KEEP DROPPING OUT

ONLINE SYSTEM TO SUPPORT STUDENTS and HELP LEADERS UNDERSTAND WHY they DROP OUT

NETWORK of SUPPORT

ASSESS SCHOOLS anonymously

TAKE STUDENT VOICE SERIOUSLY!

SHARE OUR ideas

inspire leadership! BE HEARD

SOLUTIONS - we come up with get ignored

STUDENT COUNCIL

BRING STUDENTS TO THE TABLE

WORKSHOPS & RESOURCES SHARING

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

everyone is welcome

all of us together

#INCLUDE US

BETTER for EVERYONE

SCHOOL AWARDS INCLUSIVITY

SHARING STORIES

LGBTIQ+ EQUALITY

awareness of SUICIDE DEPRESSION

CELEBRATE PRIDE

SAFE and WELCOME

Info and strategies FOR SUPPORT

CALL OUT TO SCHOOLS

SUPPORT GROUP DEVELOPMENT

CASE STUDIES

STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING

IT'S HARD TO SPEAK UP

HOW DO TEACHERS know when they aren't TRAINED?

EDUCATING teachers how to help

ELIMINATING STIGMA

SHARED

STUDENT TEACHER RELATIONSHIPS

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

RESPECT both ways

ADDRESSING STUDENT and TEACHER WORKLOAD

innovative Workshops

PROGRAM is TAILORED

DIVERSE TEACHING Methods

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

THE ENVIRONMENT is fundamental

BETTER ENVIRO EDUCATION

TEACHER TRAINING

INSPIRING ideas and SOLUTIONS

RANKING SCHOOLS on their ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

TACKLING STIGMA AROUND VCAL

DISEMPOWERING equated with failure

ENCOURAGE POSITIVE VIDEOS and PAMPHLETS

PATHWAYS

VCAL AWARENESS

A POSITIVE OPTION

EDUCATION NEEDS

DIFFERENT needs and ABILITIES

ENCOURAGING different STUDENTS

HELPING STUDENTS SHINE

TEAM ENCOURAGEMENT different METHODS

WATCHING to EVERYONE

ABILITY NOT AGE

REMOVING year LEVELS

MORE CONFIDENCE

PASSION and INTEREST

INDIVIDUAL interests and ABILITIES

MATURITY

ABILITY

STUDENT RIGHTS

LEGALLY entitled to

SAFETY

FAIRNESS

Let's make them more accessible

RIGHTS document

MOST PEOPLE DON'T KNOW THEM!

free education

gender neutral uniforms

fair hearing before expulsion

REAL WORLD SKILLS

REAL world skills please

FIRST AID

HEALTH

WORK FORCE

HOUSING

FINANCES

MAINTENANCE

develop TOOL KIT





Real World Skills

housing market.

2. Develop a tool kit covering the above topics, created in partnership with young people. The tool kit would be provided to schools as a resource that could be used from Years 7 to 12. The activities would be engaging and relevant and work well as stand-alone lessons or as a course, allowing schools to focus on those lessons most relevant to their students.
3. The tool kit could also be offered as an online resource that students could access outside of school hours.





Student Rights

2. The VicSRC form a committee of student volunteers to research and develop a draft of this document with the support of different organisations.
3. We stress the inclusion of teachers' rights because we believe that they also need to feel safe in schools and play a vital part in our learning.



LGBTIQ+ Equality

THE VICSRC WILL PROVIDE A PLATFORM FOR CHANGE THROUGH THEIR WEBSITE, BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE FUTURE FOR LGBTIQ+ YOUTHS
Providing credible websites with sources, information and strategies.
CONGRESSPRIDE
#VICSRCPRIDE



#CongressPRIDE

identify as LGBTIQ+ to connect and share their school experiences.

3. Schools are encouraged to implement strategies of support for LGBTIQ+ identified students, including celebrating these identities and embedding understanding of these identities within curriculum.



Student Mental Health and Wellbeing

The Current Issues

- Lack of awareness
- Stigma
- Lack of resources
- Lack of support

Facts

- Evidence suggests that 3 in 4 Adult's mental condition emerge by the age of 24
- 1 in 10 young people experience a mental health problem

Student Mental Health and Wellbeing

How can we solve it?

- Increase awareness of student mental health
- Provide peer support
- Offer resources
- Encourage students to seek help

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Instagram: @studentsmhaw

Facebook: StudentsMHAW

Snapchat: @VicsEC Action Group

#TIMETO TAKU

follow up on wellbeing initiatives already in place. Those ideas and initiatives should be consistently reinforced throughout the school year.

3. Schools to promote a social media campaign to spread awareness, challenge stigma and encourage those with wellbeing issues to speak up and seek help: *#TimeToTalkAU*



A young woman with glasses and a green hair tie is speaking into a microphone in a school assembly. She is wearing a white t-shirt. The background is filled with other students sitting in red chairs, some looking towards the speaker. The text "Taking Student Voice Seriously" is overlaid in white on the image.

Taking Student Voice Seriously

3. A social media platform where all Victorian SRC students can share achievements and ask for best practice advice.





Student Teacher Relationships

learning styles. The data will then be evaluated by teachers to help them further engage their students.

3. Develop forums for whole school communities, including parents/guardians. These will be opportunities for everyone to learn more about each other and develop their relationships in safe and fun ways.



ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION



available on a platform such as the Department of Education website to encourage schools to perform better.





Tackling Stigma Around VCAL

FORMED

VCAL

LISTEN TO
YOUR HEART

=

VCE

DEMAND INFO
NOW!

STOP THE
STIGMA

IF VCAL & VCE BE EQUAL!

Department of Education that features students who have chosen either VCAL or VCE discussing their experiences.





Education Needs

strategies.

3. Advocate and communicate the guidelines to all Victorian schools.



Eliminating Year Levels

Ability Not Age

2. Students can start VCE classes at any time during their education, dependent on their ability.
3. To ensure students don't stay too long at school, students are only able to stay up to the age of 20.



Re-engage Don't Disengage

STUDENT
VOICE
WORKSHOPS

TEACH THE
TEACHER

ADVOCACY

2. The VicSRC provides workshops to teachers that focus on the ways teachers and schools can re-engage disengaging students through student voice.
3. Set up student-run support networks within schools to provide peer support. The VicSRC promotes these actions in schools as a constructive and student centred way to help re-engage students.






Inclusive Education

that promotes the achievements of diverse learners.

3. General advocacy for those with diverse learning needs through the work of the VicSRC and the Department of Education. Support from the Department of Education to schools to encourage inclusive education.

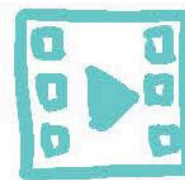


A close-up photograph of a young man with dark hair, smiling broadly. He is wearing a green t-shirt and a white lanyard with a colorful logo and the text "Victorian Elect" visible. The background is blurred, showing other people and what appears to be a social gathering.

"This was my first
Congress. The
preparation, passion
and engagement
was outstanding.."

Volunteer, Congress 2017

271
VicSRC Snapchat
Geofilter uses:



14,300
video views



82,000
post reach

2017
CONGRESS
SPEAK OUT. SPARK CHANGE

143
mentions



3,929
hearts

21,346
impressions



33,300
impressions



100% of volunteers
want to stay part of
VicSRC

Goodbye...

We proudly acknowledge the work of the outgoing 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.





...& Welcome!

We are thrilled to introduce the newly elected VicSRC 2017-2018 Executive team.

Aayushi Khillan, The Mac.Robertson Girls' High School | **Alyssa Lai**, Bendigo South East Secondary School | **Alyssa Shannon**, Narre Warren South P12 College | **Angelique Corke-Cox**, Sunshine College | **Anya Robinson**, Kurnai College Churchill Junior Campus | **Briana Hines**, Myrtleford P-12 College | **Clare Joseph**, The Mac.Robertson Girls' High School | **Cohen Saunders**, Castlemaine Secondary College | **Mia Sherman**, Melbourne Girls' College | **Rames Williams**, Westall Secondary College | **Ryan Wijaya**, Nossal High School | **Tiffany Yang**, Mount Waverley Secondary College | **Tobi Naylor**, Auburn High School | **William Wilson**, Gisborne Secondary College | **Wren Gillett**, Upwey High School





2017

CONGRESS

SPEAK OUT SPARK CHANGE

VicSRC Victorian Student Representative Council

