

# VICSRC STUDENT VOICE SCHOOL OF THE YEAR 2021

## ALBERT PARK COLLEGE

**School size:** 1,500 students across three campuses

**School type:** government, years 7 - 12

Student voice is so much more than just the leadership program at Albert Park College, it's a way of informing curriculum and informing the wellbeing of students and staff, to the benefit of both.

Albert Park College believes in student voice and agency and students having the opportunity to voice their beliefs, concerns, and feedback. The student voice, agency and leadership program covers the entire school, from years 7 to 12. The program encourages students across all co-curricular areas to lead by example, participate in and organise events and share their privilege with others in need. Albert Park College is built on four pillars:

- Student Voice and Agency
- Positive Education
- Curriculum
- Professional Development

Student voice and agency have been so deeply embedded in the culture of the school it is now part of the curriculum and everyday life. Some of the ways students are empowered and work in partnership with educators are:

- A student attends a monthly curriculum meeting with Assistant Principal and leading teachers to give a student perspective on curriculum matters.
- A team of students present each term at staff professional development sessions to show staff a student's view of different areas such as learning differences, reconciliation, and learning styles.
- School Captains meet regularly with the Principal to communicate student ideas, issues and concerns.
- A team of students were provided with the new Positive Education and Respectful Relationships models and asked to provide feedback. The students created a survey which received hundreds of responses, which were then collated by the students and used as evidence to inform the revised implementation plans after a presentation to the staff leadership team.

Students have also led Albert Park College's Reconciliation Action Plan and the school is on track to be the first government secondary school in the region to become a recognised school with Narragunnawali; a school with a pathway to reconciliation.

Students are able to take ideas, questions or concerns from the student body to the Principal, Assistant Principals and to leading teachers. The connection of students with leading teachers and the Principal Class is why Albert Park College has been able to make such big changes. In the school, as seen through the environmental and sustainability changes, students are genuinely listened to, and their ideas are valued.

### **Student-Led Sustainability**

Albert Park College is 100% powered by green energy – all electricity usage comes from reusable energy. This was due, in large part, to students creating a Sustainability Subcommittee – a

subcommittee of the School Council that is made up of students, teachers, parents and community members. Students also lead a student environment team which is open to all students who want to take environmental actions. You can read all about Albert Park College's Sustainability Subcommittee and their achievements on [the school's website](#).

## **Student Leadership**

The Student Leadership Program is embedded in the school culture and involves people from all corners of the school. By involving students, education support staff, teachers and the Principal Team, Albert Park College have created a holistic approach which involves the entire school community. There are over 60 students formally involved in the leadership and student voice program and many more who interview for positions and apply each year.

The Student Leadership Team is the representative group of the student body. It is made up of a Student Representative Council, with students from all the different year levels to represent the concerns of each cohort, and portfolio leaders such as a sport leader, an environmental leader, performing arts, and all different areas within the school, which allows the Student Leadership Team to target and support different aspects of the school community.

Portfolio leaders are mentored by a specialised teacher - music portfolio captains are mentored by the Music Director and the Student Representative Council are mentored by an education support staff member, a teacher, and a Principal Team Member.

The team meet together every fortnight as a big group and everyone brings different perspectives and ideas which really helps with decision making, because the whole school community is represented.

If there's someone who isn't part of the leadership team and is really keen to bring forward concerns or ideas or feedback, they're always invited to meetings to share their thoughts and be a part of decision making.

The year eight cohort (approximately 250 students) study leadership, which is embedded in the curriculum.

The entire school get involved in community days and events such as a student careers seminar, casual clothes fundraising days, sporting, and creative activities and social justice projects. Students decide which causes are important to them and then teachers help to gather the necessary resources to assist them in carrying out their vision. Students this year worked closely with TABOO Period Products to help dismantle period poverty and promote reproductive rights. They were able to drop off over 1,500 flyers in the local community and encourage conversations about periods and breaking the stigma.

These social justice projects have also extended into the classes and curriculum. Year 10 Visual Communication Design students have been working with Empowered Design to create projects for not for profits around the world. These include work with Jezuba, Baansuli and RSKS India, who work to combat domestic violence and period poverty, and deliver socio-economic uplifting initiatives.