

# **Connect**

***supporting student participation***

ABN: 98 174 663 341

***Number 162***  
***December 2006***



**New  
Connect  
Publication -  
out now!**

*In  
this  
issue*

- **Surviving Teaching Rounds: A Student Guide**
- **Year 10 Students Light Up Our Lives: Change a Million Light Bulbs**
- **Students Making a Difference to Our World!**
- **Victorian SRC Update**
- ***Reaching High* Published and Launched**
- **The City Centre: Building Student Partnerships and Community**
- **Resources:** National Youth Conference 2007; SoundOut; SistaSpeak; VIYAC

**& Incorporating the PASTA Newsletter #51**

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# Connect

Number 162; December 2006

- 3 **Reaching High** *Lyn Loger*
- 4 **Surviving Rounds**  
*Glen Pearsall, Seb Haquin and Rohan Day*
- 10 **SYN-FM Crew Required; Big Issue**
- 11 **VicSRC Update; YDAS Website**
- 12 **Connect Publications**
- 13 **PASTA Newsletter #51**
- 13 **Pass the PASTA** *Ken Page*
- 14 **Reporting, Rewarding & Responding**
- 14 **Speak Out** *Charles Kingston*
- 16 **SRC Evaluation Tips; Membership**
- 17 **Year 10 Students Light up Our Lives**  
*Linh Do*
- 18 **Change a Million Light Bulbs & ruMAD?**  
*Adrian Bertolini*
- 19 **The City Centre:**  
Student partnerships and community *Liz Suda*
- 21 **Students making a difference** *ruMAD?*
- 25 **NEWS AND REVIEWS:**  
*Are We There Yet?; SoundOut; SistaSpeak; VIYAC*
- 23 **CLEARINGHOUSE:**  
*Local and Overseas Publications;*  
*Documents Available; Website; Friends of Connect*
- 24 **ORDER FORMS:** *Subscriptions, Materials*

## Why does Connect exist?

Connect has been  
published bi-monthly since 1979.

It aims to:

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

## Cover:

**Reaching High** - Connect's new publication.  
Launched in Nathalia on Friday 8th December, 2006.

## Connect:

ABN: 98 174 663 341

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Connect acknowledges the support of the Australian Youth Research  
Centre, Faculty of Education, The University of Melbourne

## This Issue:

In a recent teacher journal there was a kind and positive review of Connect's publication **Student Action Teams**. I smiled when I read that the book was brought to you by "the team at Connect" and located this magazine as the responsibility of the Faculty of Education at The University of Melbourne.



It's very nice to think that Connect gives the impression of a team of folks toiling away to produce copies every two months, but I need to remind you that this magazine has basically been put together as a one-person operation since late 1979 - however, with the quiet and consistent support of other people in my life, and from the various organisations I've worked for over that time: as a teacher in the classroom, a curriculum consultant, a youth sector policy worker and (most recently) a researcher within the Australian Youth Research Centre. However, Connect remains my responsibility ... and we've even added an extra room at home to house the back issues and associated files!

Over the 27 years that Connect has been produced, the magazine slowly accumulated enough funds to publish our first book: **Student Councils and Beyond** (2005). The sales of this re-generated the capital and the second book: **Student Action Teams** (April, 2006) was produced. While sales of copies of this are steady, it's not yet paid for itself. However, the opportunity emerged to publish the third book: **Reaching High**, and this is now available from Connect (see the article in this issue). Your purchases of this will not only cover the production costs and enable future Connect publications, but 50% of the proceeds after meeting the costs will be shared with Reaching High Inc. to support that Program's continuation.

All of this activity has had an unexpected side effect. To date, while Connect has an ABN (strictly, I have the ABN, trading as Connect), it's not been registered for GST - in the jargon, Connect has been 'input taxed'. That changed in October, with the amount of income from Connect subscriptions and sales, as well as my own consultancies, passing that 'magic mark' where I had to be registered for and charge GST. Hence the last minute note in the previous issue (if you didn't get it, ask for a copy).

As of October, I've been charging GST and, until the end of this year, will absorb it within Connect's current prices. But in 2007, I'm afraid that Connect charges - for subscriptions and publications - must rise to cover this amount and, from 1st January, GST will be added to most charges (a couple of small variations where I'll continue to absorb it - but see the details on the forms next year). That's the first increase for 13 years.

But it does give you the opportunity to renew your subscription or to purchase publications before the end of the year - **at the old cost!** Even if your subscription is not yet due, if you send in a renewal before the end of December, I'll honour it at the old rates and add one, two or as many years to your subscription as you wish.

Looking forward: in 2007, I'm aiming to publish two large **double issues**: #163 will appear as normal in **February**, but then #164-165 will be a double issue published in **April-May** and #166-167 will be another big issue in **October**. Then #168 in **December** as normal. Contributions always welcome!

Have a great holiday season - and see you in 2007.

*Roger Holdsworth*

**NEXT ISSUE: #163: February 2007**  
**Deadline for material: end of January 2007**

# Reaching High

We're caught up in the excitement of being about to launch our book, detailing the history of how the *Reaching High* program has operated in our area for over 14 years. So many people with learning differences proudly tell their stories in this book. There's the talks and the accompanying photos of a whole range of older and younger adult role models, all of whom have, or have had, learning differences. You'll be astonished at all the different careers they have!

What a journey we've had! There's a chapter called *This Is Us* written by three of the co-authors of the book - all students in the program, who became the foundation members for our community association, Reaching High Inc. These are three strong voices that provide three strong perspectives on the program.

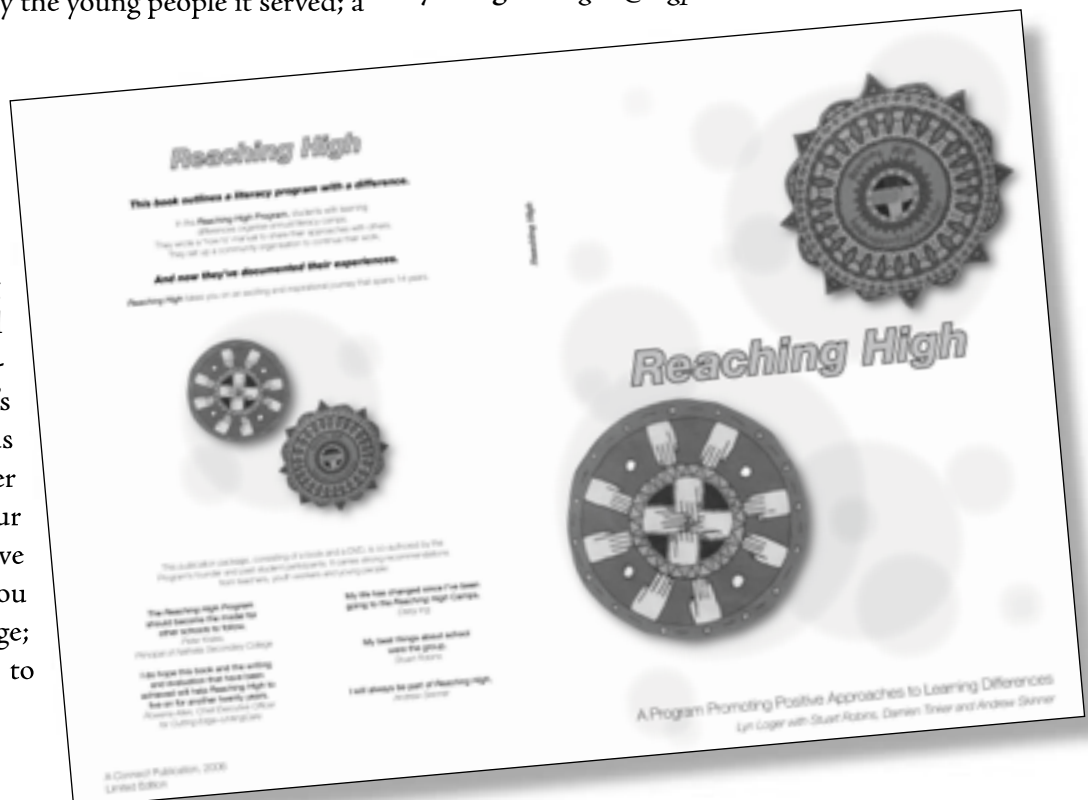
That's what this book is about – threading the voices of educators, mentors and young people with learning differences together (they're in all the chapters) and building from that. And what have we built? A program that is owned by the young people it served; a new way into the future.

It's exciting, challenging, pioneering at its best. Do you want to join us? Read our book to find out and look at the accompanying DVD; it holds a pictorial history and an easy-to-use manual. With Roger's amazing support to us as editor and publisher of *Connect*, all of our experience and skills have been made available to you in this publication package; it is our gift to you and to education in general.

In the last issue of *Connect*, we told you about the forthcoming publication of *Reaching High*, the story of a student-participatory approach to literacy, that is catering to rural, secondary school students with learning differences. The *Reaching High* Program was developed in 1992 at Nathalia High School in north central Victoria and has involved hundreds of students from many schools in that area for over 14 years. The book is now available from *Connect*, and **Lyn Loger** talks of the excitement at its publication and launch in Nathalia in early December.

Monies made from the sale of our books will go towards the development of future *Connect* books and to the development of our not-for-profit organisation. We're doing what our student developed motto says: "Reaching High – hands supporting each other." What better way to risk the future? We're hoping you'll join us.

**Lyn Loger:** [logerl@bigpond.com](mailto:logerl@bigpond.com)



**Copies of *Reaching High* are now available from *Connect*.  
Use the order form enclosed or the form on page 24 of this issue.**

# Surviving Rounds

The **Surviving Rounds** unit involves a group of young people exploring the school experience component of pre-service teacher training. The unit asks students to consider how student teachers might make the most of their rounds, with the students then presenting their findings as an illustrated advice booklet.

The **Surviving Rounds** unit is part of Helen Cahill's *Learning Partnerships* project (see details in **Connect** Issue 154-155; August-October 2005), which brings together trainee teachers and young people to reflect on their shared classroom experiences.

In much of the project - which is based on drama pedagogy - this is done through role-play and other workshop activities. However the **Surviving Rounds** unit was designed for the secondary English class-room and involved a group of Year 9 students and several pre-service English teachers. The unit was conceived as a follow-up on some previous work that the students in the Year 9 class had done on the genre of picture-story books and the important part that understanding audience plays in analysing texts.

The aim of **Surviving Rounds** was to give pre-service teachers meaningful student feedback on the nature of school experience, while affording students an opportunity to reflect on their own interactions with teachers. Two of the students involved in the project, **Rohan Day** and **Seb Haquin**, offered to be interviewed and it is their images that illustrate this article (pages 5 to 10).

The first part of the unit involved a series of activities where students were asked to consider what qualities 'great teachers' demonstrated in their teaching. Students workshoped their responses and then presented them in the form of a list of job interview questions for prospective teachers.

*What were your reactions to the first part of the unit?*

**Seb Haquin:** Well we found the first part pretty easy ... you sort of know what your favourite teachers are like but the hard part was coming up with good interview questions.

**Rohan Day:** I think we hired some pretty bad teachers with our first lot of questions.

In **Connect** 154-155, Helen Cahill and others reported on the *Drama at the Heart of Learning Partnerships* project in which primary and secondary school students are helping to educate classes of pre-service teachers (and medical students) from The University of Melbourne.

There it was noted that three key elements inform the structure of the *Learning Partnership*:

- **Partnership:** The assumption underpinning the partnership is that each of the parties has something to contribute and something to gain, so the relationship is one of reciprocity.
- **Purpose:** Workshops are designed to serve specific 'curriculum' or learning requirements for each of the participants, to impart key concepts and skills, and to inform committed action. To ensure status and sustainability, the workshops are situated in the curriculum and on the timetable for both tertiary and secondary students.
- **Pedagogy:** Drama-based techniques provide the pedagogical design that facilitates the enquiry, interaction, relatedness and skill development.

*Glen Pearsall, Head of English at Eltham High School, and a member of this partnership, introduces two of his students - Rohan and Seb - who have reflected on, and are advising pre-service teachers about, what it takes to survive teaching rounds.*

**Seb Haquin:** Hiring a good teacher is definitely hard!

Students then had to incorporate these questions into a picture-story book that centres on a student trying to hire a teacher for a school they are running. The lead character in the story is **"The Most Powerful 12 Year Old in the World"**.

*After showing your character's unlimited power...*

**Rohan Day:** He even has his own servant to warm his toilet seat!

*... you finished your story with the character being kept in at recess for being late by the teacher he has just appointed. What is the idea behind the way you concluded your story?*

**Seb Haquin:** Heaps of people said that even the teachers you really like keep you in or make you



resubmit your work sometimes. We wanted to show that if you hired a really good teacher they would do that even if you were really powerful.

*This interview is going to be illustrated with images from your advice booklet. I want to ask you about some of the pieces of advice you chose and the images you chose to explain them. For instance, tell me about "Rule 2: Don't try and be our friend ... we already have enough of our own."*

**Seb Haquin:** We had this idea of one of those student teachers who are trying to pretend that they're one of the students and I drew him with a leather jacket and sunnies in class just kicking back.

**Rohan Day:** Like an old Fonzie!

*What about "Rule 6: Learn our names, treat us as individuals"?*

**Seb Haquin:** Lots of people mentioned this rule didn't they? Sort of like those student teachers who call everyone buddy and mate or still keep the whole class in if only a few people are talking.

**Rohan Day:** I really like the look on the last student's face as the stamp hovers over him.

**Seb Haquin:** Rohan's inking is really good in that one. Half his head in shadow.

*What about "Rule 10: Give us a chance to negotiate our curriculum"?*

**Seb Haquin:** All my favourite teachers discuss what you are going to do, not just tell you.

**Rohan Day:** And we had this teacher on a big stand with the hammer thing, the gavel, like the work you have to do is like something you'd get in court.

*Can I ask you about "Rule 1: You are in charge"? Almost every group's advice booklet had a piece of advice similar to that. Why was it so popular?*

**Seb Haquin:** When we all talked about having student teachers, everybody was saying that they didn't like

# SURVIVING ROUNDS:



A STUDENT GUIDE

TO MAKING THE MOST OF  
YOUR ROUNDS!

smilin'  
Seb  
Haquin!

BY

&

Rascally  
Rohan  
Day!

it when the new teacher was all shy or let us muck around too much. I mean it's fun at first! But you don't get things done and you get bored.

*The other popular piece of advice was your "Rule 8: Know your subject". Why did you think so many of the groups had that one?*

**Rohan Day:** Students can tell when teachers can't control the class and we can tell when they don't know what they're talking about.

**Seb Haquin:** I don't like it when they pretend to know everything either.

**Rohan Day:** Yeah but it's worse when an English teacher can't spell or a Maths teacher can't count.

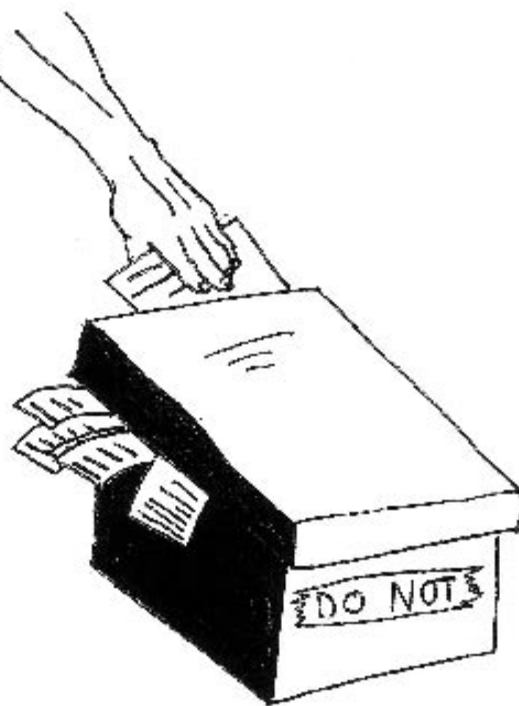
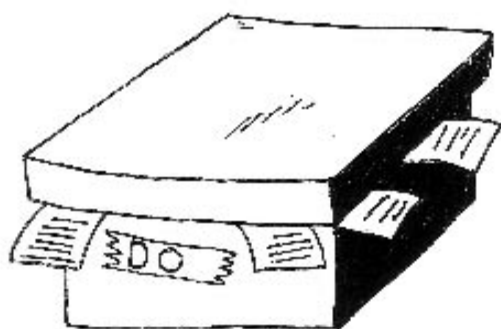


*Much of the advice you offer in your booklet could be used by teachers of any level of experience. Is there any advice you offer in your discussion about rounds, that you noted as being particularly important to student teachers?*

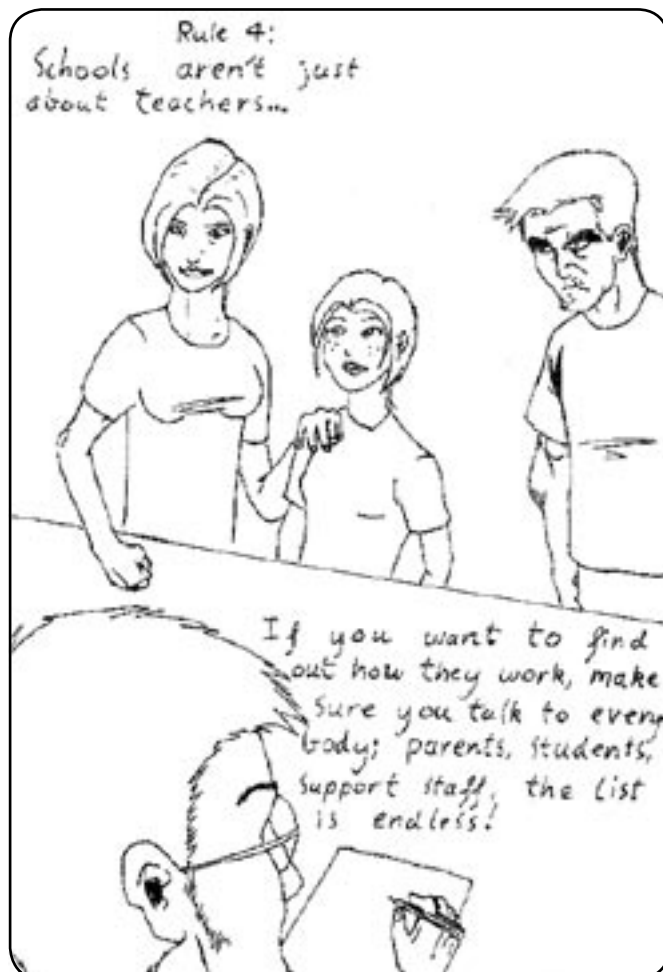
**Seb Haquin:** Well take charge we've already said ...

**Rohan Day:** The one about not talking down to us is a good one.

**Seb Haquin:** No, I think the best one is about giving us work samples to show us what to expect. Student teachers don't normally have old work to show you and then if you hand in something and they tell you that's not what you're meant to do, it's really frustrating. Student teachers should always try to have work samples 'cause it makes it easier to explain what they want you to do.



Well, having worked with student-teachers since Primary school, we have a few hints that might provide some assistance.



Rule 5:

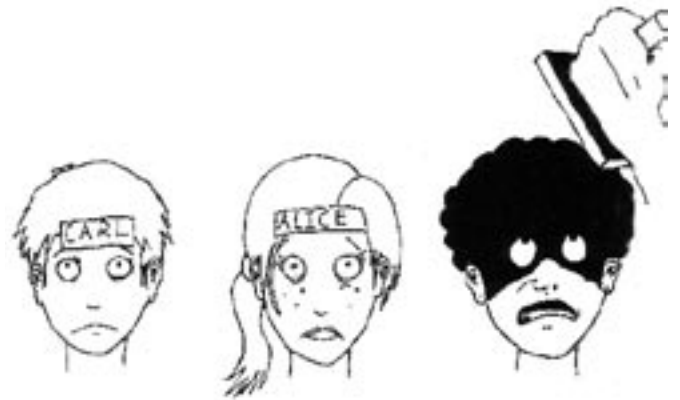
Meet your  
deadlines... or we  
might not meet  
ours!



You finish your advice booklet with a new graduate teacher flying through a door that is surrounded by an enormous good luck sign. Why did you decide on this as a final image?

**Seb Haquin:** You only get a year sometimes to learn to be a teacher. It must be scary. So you need lots of help and you should talk to as many people as possible.

**Rohan Day (laughing):** Yeah like us!



Rule 6:

Learn our names, treat us  
as individuals with different  
talents, learning styles and  
even ways of misbehaving.

Rule 7:

Make time for  
reflection and  
feedback. That way  
we'll get better.



Rule 8:

Know your Subject !



Any final observations?

**Rohan Day:** No. Just look out for our next booklet on teaching classroom music.

As part of the **Learning Partnership** project, Seb and Rowan's booklet was presented to a class of pre-service teachers completing their Graduate Diploma at the Faculty of Education, The University of Melbourne. The work was very well received and the boys, as well as a host of other students, are now working on an expanded version of this project.

If you or your students are interested in being involved, contact Helen Cahill at the Australian Youth Research Centre for details:

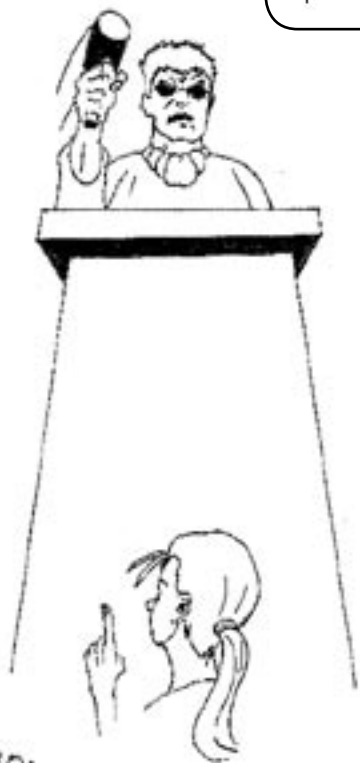
**h.cahill@unimelb.edu.au**

**Glen Pearsall**  
Eltham High School



Rule 9:

Provide examples of the kind of work you expect us to produce.



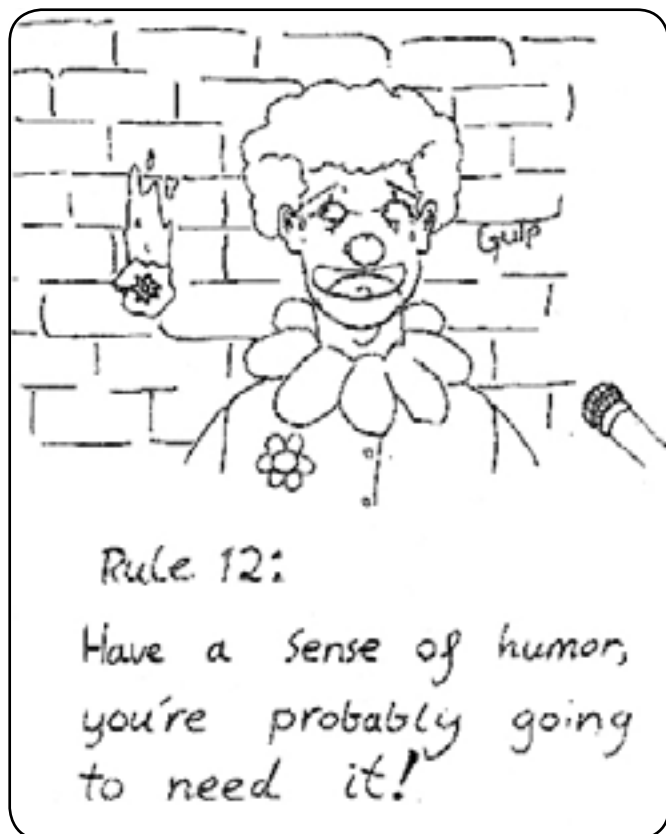
Rule 10:

Give us a chance to negotiate our curriculum.



Rule 11:

Provide a variety of different tasks to keep us engaged.



Illustrations by **Rohan Day and Seb Haquin**  
Year 9, Eltham High School, Vic

## SYN-FM Crew required

**S**YN is Melbourne's only independent youth media organisation. SYN currently operates a full-time Melbourne-wide radio station (SYN 90.7), produces five hours a week of live television (broadcast on Channel 31 Melbourne and Geelong), produces quarterly publications and maintains an online presence: [www.syn.org.au](http://www.syn.org.au) SYN is managed, operated and maintained entirely by people under the age of 26.

Every year SYN puts all volunteer positions up for grabs. Some amazing opportunities are available. Heaps of previous SYN volunteers have gone on to work in the media and creative industries. Some of the positions available include Music Director, Television Manager, Events Manager, Radio Programming Manager, Publicity and Marketing Manager and Technical Manager. Applications are open to all people under the age of 26.

This is your chance to shape the future of one of Australia's most recognised arts media innovators. If you are interested in finding out more, contact SYN for the information kit and application forms. Crew Applications close on 29 December 2006

Inquiries: please go to [www.syn.org.au/jobs](http://www.syn.org.au/jobs) and download an Information Kit or email: [assistant.manager@syn.org.au](mailto:assistant.manager@syn.org.au) to find out more.

## Big Issue Youth Project

**T**he *Big Issue* is one of the most well-known magazines in Australia. It's sold on the streets by people who are homeless or struggling to find regular work – basically, anybody who needs a bit of cash, support and stability. Vendors buy the mag for \$2 and sell it for \$4 to sell on the streets, keeping the proceeds for themselves.

A youth worker has been employed specifically to recruit and support young people to become vendors. Becoming a *Big Issue* vendor provides opportunities for young people to make friends with other young people who will support and look out for you, build self-esteem, develop skills in self-management and customer service.

*The Big Issue* is a not-for-profit company, and only exists to help people earn an income. If you are interested in becoming a vendor or know anyone who might be, please contact the youth worker Virginia Moebus:

phone: 03 9663 4733

e-mail: [virginia@bigissue.org.au](mailto:virginia@bigissue.org.au)





# VicSRC Update

## Darebin SRC Cluster

On October 31st, a group of 30 students from five SRCs in Darebin came together for the first time. The meeting was the initiative of Northland Secondary College who planned and hosted the meeting with support from the VicSRC and Georgia Loukopoulos of Darebin Youth Services. The schools represented were Thornbury High School, Reservoir District Secondary College, Latrobe Secondary College, Preston Girls Secondary College and Northland Secondary College.

Students used the meeting to share their challenges and successes and discussed how working together could benefit them all. They found that they shared many issues in common and there was great enthusiasm about working together in an ongoing way.

The group made the decision to establish the Darebin SRC and began to discuss how it would work. There was much excitement as they established some basic operating principles and then elected an executive of one student from each school to set up the next meeting and continue planning for the future of the Darebin SRC! Since the meeting, more schools in Darebin have indicated their interest in joining the cluster next year.

The VicSRC shares the enthusiasm of the students in Darebin and would like to congratulate them on pioneering the way for other SRC clusters. We'd like to thank Georgia and Darebin Youth Services who have agreed to provide ongoing support for this cluster. The VicSRC is talking with half a dozen other groups who are interested in forming SRC clusters in 2007.

## Wanted! - State Executive Members

The VicSRC is looking for secondary students to be part of an interim student executive committee for the first part of 2007. This will provide management and oversight of the VicSRC up until the VicSRC Congress next year.

An information session for interested students is going to be held on **Friday December 15th** from **3-5pm** at the YACVic Office in the centre of Melbourne. Assistance with travel is available for students travelling long distances.

The gathering will be an informal chance for students to get to know each other and learn more about the VicSRC. There is no obligation for ongoing involvement; students can decide for themselves how they would like to be involved. The information session is open to interested secondary students from government, private and catholic schools.

For more information or to RSVP your attendance, please call James in the office on 03 9267 3744 or Toll Free from outside Melbourne 1300 727 176 or email: [vicsrc@yacvic.org.au](mailto:vicsrc@yacvic.org.au)



### VicSRC Student Executive Information Session

*RSVP to James*

**Ph: 03 9267 3744**

**Tollfree: 1300 727 176**

**Email [vicsrc@yacvic.org.au](mailto:vicsrc@yacvic.org.au)**

**3-5pm Friday 15th of December**

**at: Youth Affairs Council of Victoria  
level 2, 172 Flinders St, Melbourne  
(just opposite Federation Square)**

## Youth Disability Advocacy Service Now Has a Website

The Youth Disability Advocacy Service (YDAS) is raising voices, expanding choices and creating change for young people with disabilities in Victoria, Australia.

YDAS works alongside young people with disabilities between the ages of 12 and 25 to raise awareness of their rights and to support them to achieve what they want.

We provide one-on-one support through our individual advocacy service and also work on broader social issues affecting young people with

disabilities through our systemic advocacy. This broader work is directed by the YDAS steering committee whose membership is made up exclusively of young people with disabilities from across Victoria.

YDAS is a partnership between the Youth Affairs Council of Victoria, the Disability Discrimination Legal Service and Youthlaw. We are funded by the State Government of Victoria.

**<http://www.ydas.org/>**

## Reaching High:

A Program Promoting Positive Approaches to Learning Differences

# NEW!

**Reaching High** tells the story of 14 years' work around literacy in north central Victoria. Student participatory approaches are central to a program that caters for students with learning differences, with an annual student-run three-day **regional camp** as the culmination of that program. This camp brings in *adult role models* who have, or have had, learning differences, to act as mentors for students. Past student participants now also act as leaders, adult role models and assistants.

This inspiring and exciting 120-page book documents the development and operation of the **Reaching High Program**. It outlines the theory and community links behind the program, and how it is built on the active and strength-based participation of students.

First published by **Connect** in December 2006;  
ISBN-13: 978-0-9803133-0-7; ISBN-10: 0-9803133-0-9

Order now: \$30 each (\$25 for **Connect** subscribers).  
Use the form enclosed or the back page of this issue.

## Student Action Teams:

Implementing Productive Practices in Primary and Secondary School Classrooms

This book (first published, April 2006) outlines practical ways to establish and implement **Student Action Teams**. It tells the story of primary and secondary schools in Melbourne's northern suburbs that are currently organising such Teams and reflecting on their implications for their teaching and learning.

The basic ideas about **Student Action Teams** are fairly simple – but with profound implications for schools and communities. These are teams of students who, as part of their school curriculum, adopt a community issue that they care passionately about, research it, decide what needs to be changed or improved and take action to achieve that.

These Teams are:

- **Purposeful:** the learning that takes place is seen by students to have immediately useful purposes; and
- **Productive:** the work that students do produces practical and significant outcomes over and above individuals' own learning and beyond the classroom.

**Student Action Teams** can be set up by individual schools and clusters of schools around issues such as community safety, the environment, values, recreation, bullying, health and so on. The **Student Action Teams** in this cluster of 10-15 schools have been researching and acting around *traffic safety* and the *environment*.

The book outlines the basic principles of **Student Action Teams**, summarises what has been learnt about their practical operation, and tells the story of successful approaches and outcomes in two projects. The principles and approaches outlined here can be used to guide developments in any school – acting alone or in a cluster.

Order copies of **Student Action Teams** from **Connect** using the form provided here.

ISBN-13: 978-0-9803133-2-1; ISBN-10: 0-9803133-2-5



## Student Councils and Beyond:

Students as Effective Participants in Decision-Making

The first **Connect** publication (from 2005) – an exciting 108-page publication from and for Australian primary and secondary schools – supports effective and relevant participation of students in educational decision-making.

It brings together a collection of ideas that **challenge you** ... to go beyond criticisms of ineffective Student Councils. **Student Councils and Beyond** enables you to find out what students, teachers and schools have implemented around Australia: exciting and practical ways that you can **take the next step** to go beyond tokenism ... and make a difference.

Copies of **Student Councils and Beyond** are available from **Connect** for \$30 each (including postage). Current financial subscribers to **Connect** get copies at a discounted rate: \$25 each including postage!

Complete and return the order form to **Connect** with your payment.

ISBN-13: 978-0-9803133-1-4; ISBN-10: 0-9803133-1-7



### Order Now and SAVE!

In 2007, all prices will add GST (which is absorbed at the moment); hence prices will rise 10% at the end of the year.