Building Student Participation

Registered by Australia Post; publication no. VBG 3555  ISSN 0158-4995
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### Cover:

Front cover illustration: from report of the in-service 'Bringing Student Participation Support Teachers Together'.

*Connect* is edited and published by Roger Holdsworth, 12 Brooke Street, Northcote 3070. Phone: (03) 489.9052.
The State Association of Student Organisations (SASO) began with a meeting/workshop at Kelso High School in Bathurst on the weekend of 7-8th December 1985. Over 80 students and adults from five regions of the state (Western, Met Southwest, Met West, Met North and Met East) gathered to get to know each other, discuss regional needs, learn about youth participation projects in general and create a steering committee to work towards the formal establishment of SASO by 1987.

The initiative to develop a state association of secondary students was funded by an International Youth Year grant and organised by the Regional Association of Student Government (RASG) which has been active in the Western Region of New South Wales since 1981. RASG exists to promote the ideas and activities of student councils and other youth participation activities within and between the schools in its region. To date, it has organised six senior and two junior leadership camps involving hundreds of students, trained scores of students from years 8 to 12 to be group leaders at these camps and carried out workshops for schools and for students on PEP committees. RASG has established itself as a positive voice for the active involvement of students in activities and policies of most direct concern to them - in their schools.

A similar organisation, Liverpool Association of Student Activities (LASA) - was established in the Met Southwest Region in November 1985 as a result of a PEP initiative and support from RASG. LASA is currently developing its constitution and its own program of activities.

There is considerable interest from responsible, dedicated students and teachers in other regions to create similar associations, and it is hoped that the successful establishment of SASO will assist to make this possible.

When SASO is in operation, its main roles are envisaged to be to affiliate all the different secondary student organisations in NSW together, to provide advanced leadership training, to increase communication between schools and regions and to become a broad lobby group. It is hoped that when SASO is operative, it will provide a truly representative body for high school students.

SASO Conference

It is proposed to hold a SASO Conference from Friday 28th November to Sunday 30th November at Mowbray Park in Picton, NSW.

The main aims of the Conference will be to:

a) discuss the proposed changes to curriculum and accreditation in NSW schools that are currently being developed from the 'Future Directions in Secondary Education' document;
b) to make student recommendations to the Department of Education and to the Minister of Education on these matters;
c) to formally adopt a constitution for SASO;
d) to elect a coordination committee for SASO for the following year.

It has been proposed that the Conference be restricted to qualified students with experience as group leaders, representatives on educational committees or those with other appropriate previous participation in student affairs and that attendance at the Conference be by application. The Steering Committee feels this would result in a stronger, more articulate airing of student views than that which might occur otherwise. We invite your views on this matter.

For more information, contact: Charles Kingston, 1 Gladstone Ave., Bathurst 2795 NSW.
Phone: (063) 318.292. Wk: (063) 361.606

RASG AGM RECOMMENDATIONS

The RASG AGM was held during the RASG Senior Leadership Camp and was attended by the camp participants. The meeting was chaired by Melissa Cobby. The motions carried were:

1. That Broken Hill SRC be responsible for liaising with South Australian student organisations on behalf of RASG, to find out what student government activities are taking place there.
2. That these schools: Bathurst High, Kelso High, Blayney High and Oberon Central - elect three representatives each to be the RASG Coordinating Committee to be responsible for communication with the Education Department and all of RASG's affiliated groups.
3. That these schools: Broken Hill, Willyama, Wicannia, Menindie, Ivanhoe and the Broken Hill Combined SRC be host schools for the 1987 RASG Camps and form a coordinating Committee for publicity, leadership training and such other activities as they can effectively carry out.
4. That RASG recommends to the Department of Education that these two Coordinating Committees of RASG be provided with the resources to enable them to meet at least twice a year for liaison purposes.
5. That every school in the Region accept its responsibility of paying its annual affiliation fee to RASG. Also that this fee be amended from the sum of $20 to the sum of $35.
6. That RASG recommends to the Department of Education of New South Wales the following:
   a. That provisions be made for creditation of students in youth participation projects and school activities;
   b. That there be representation of students on the Board of Secondary Education as foreseen in the 'Future Directions in Secondary Education' document.
   c. That there be official recognition and support of SASO (State Association of Student Organisations).
   d. That the curriculum in NSW secondary schools be changed so that student governments, student councils, leadership courses and other youth participation projects be seen as legitimate parts of the total curriculum.
   e. That inserviceing in the area of student councils and student activities be a top priority for teachers and students in all schools within the state.
7. That the Department of Education look at the possibility of vertical streaming in small secondary schools.
The SASO Steering Committee has asked the Willyama High School (Broken Hill) SRC to compile a list of student governments and SRCs in NSW. This list will include the names of the student organisations and also the name of a contact person within the different organisations. This will enable direct postal communication with student governments, which means that the correspondence that is presently not handed on by administrators will go directly to the body concerned.

If your school has an SRC or student government body, write to:

David Nebauer,
Willyama High School,
Murtin Street,
Broken Hill 2880

and tell him the name of your organisation, its role and the name of a contact person. The SASO Steering Committee can then make sure that you receive all applicable RASG information and the list will also be very useful to the SASO committee when they make decisions about the state body.

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**BROKEN HILL COMBINED SRC**

Combined Students Representative Council of Broken Hill - could this be a model for your city or region?

Broken Hill has three high schools. The two government schools are Broken Hill High School and Willyama High School. The third school is St Joseph’s High School, which is a Catholic school that covers years 7 to 10.

Each school has its own fully independent student council. These operate in a similar way to any other student council. However, in Broken Hill, we also have a Combined Students Representative Council. This Combined SRC is composed of members of the three High Schools’ SRCs.

How does it operate? The Combined SRC meets once a month or more frequently if required. The meetings are rotated between the three schools. This means that the two visiting schools are restricted to a car-load of representatives – usually a teacher and four students.

The host school provides lunch. Then the meeting takes place. It is chaired by a member of the host school’s SRC. That school also nominates someone to be secretary for that meeting. The Combined SRC has its own bank account and the treasurer is elected at the first meeting of the year and remains treasurer for the entire year.

What does it do?

The Combined SRC runs a Regional Youth Forum each year over three days for students in far-western NSW, northern Victoria and NE South Australia. It runs bush dances and discos for students from the three schools. It runs ‘Braindrain’ nights. It has run a leadership workshop as part of its RASG activities in zone 10. It co-ordinates student activities in the city and student attendance by Broken Hill delegates at many out-of-town conferences. It provides a representative body that community groups can consult with eg Community Health, Council Community Worker and Council Youth Worker, Blue Light Disco Committee, CYSS, service clubs. It provides a vehicle for student council reps to exchange ideas.

Why should your town try it?

It works for us. It might work for you. It enables lots of good things to occur that everyone benefits from. Problems – very few. It does require LOTS of HARD work, but it’s rewarding.

David Nebauer
Willyama High School, Murtin St., Broken Hill 2880
The Director-General of Education in New South Wales has issued the following memorandum (86-108) to Regional Directors on 23.5.86:

**Student Participation in School Decision Making**

After consideration of the views expressed by the Regional Directors at the meeting on 21st April 1986, on the proposal to encourage the development of student councils, Regional Directors are requested to undertake the following:

1. Encourage each high school to have a student council. The individual school is to be the major focus of student activities. As each school is unique it may wish to structure its Student Representative Council in different ways and at a different level of involvement. Within the framework of state wide policies and having regard to the philosophy of the school and its community, Student Representative Councils may concern themselves with any or all of the following:

   a) creation of guidelines (or a constitution) which outline the aims, organisation and functions of the council and elections for and duties of its officers.

   b) frequent consultation with the school community, i.e. principal, staff, parents and other students on issues and concerns.

   c) organisation of activities.

   d) preparation of material for the electorate (the student body) identifying and informing it on cultural and social activities.

   e) establishment of sub-committees to assist the Principal in regard to policies, e.g. canteens, uniforms, playground, etc.

   f) representation on school committees as considered appropriate by the Principal, e.g. Discipline Committee, Sports Committee, Curriculum Committee.

2. Nominate a person (probably an Inspector) to be responsible for providing/organising activities re student councils.

3. Sponsor a regional camp during 1986 for representatives from the student councils. No additional resources can be made available to regions. Individual students will be required to fund their own activities, attendance etc.

The Schools Directorate under the Assistant Director-General (Operations) will be the functional directorate responsible for the organisation and promotion of the initiative.

A meeting with regional liaison people will be held at the end of 1986 to organise a state conference of student representatives in 1987. Some funding will be available for state wide activities. Individual regions may care to consider a theme or focus for 1986. The theme for 1987 will be decided at the end of year meeting.

**VIC: STUDENT FORUM**

The Victorian Inter-Region Student Forum (July 30, 1986 at University College) brought together over 60 students from 11 of the 12 Victorian education regions, student observers from non-Government schools and consultants.

The day was funded and supported by the Disadvantaged Schools and Participation and Equity Programs. It aimed to enable students to share information on regional developments, plan future directions, meet with members of the Student Research Team and to elect students to DSP and PEP Committees and to a student planning group for the October State Student Conference.
The following students were elected to state bodies:

PEP Committee: Colin Michael (Northern)

PEP Schools Advisory Committee:
- Billy-Jo Lockwood (South-Central)
- Gemma Pinnell (Eastern)

DSP Committee:
- John Hurt (Western)
- Juan Rodriguez (South-Central)
- Michelle Redding (Barwon South-West)
- Sharon Griffiths (Tullamarine)
- Alex Graham (Barwon South-West)

State Conference Planning Group:
- Faith Orchard (Gippsland)
- Mark Ryan (Tullamarine)
- Alex Stamenkovic (Tullamarine)
- Nicole Chaffey (Northern)

The latter group of students joins the following students on the planning group:

from the Student Research Team:
- Ricky Ortega (Western)
- Debbie Ridgeway (Western)
- Jo Lambert (Tullamarine)

from non-Government schools:
- John Beno (Kingswood College)
- Jacqui Bowles (Siena College)

RECOMMENDATIONS

The workshops raised a number of recommendations and, as always, time ran out in the plenary session before these could be all discussed and decided upon.

The following recommendations were carried:

1. That this meeting write to the Ministerial Working Party on Student Participation asking that the issue of adequate consultation with students be addressed on any further Project Teams.
   (Action: Student Research Team)

2. That this meeting write to the Ministerial Structures Project Team saying that we dislike the process involved in the '1990s' proposal implementation.
   (Action: Western and Tullamarine Regions.)

3. That this meeting urges the Minister to place student representatives on the VCAB and State Board of Education (with full accreditation and travel support).
   (Action: letter to J Dunstan, I Cathie.)

The following recommendations from workshops could not be considered and will be referred to the planning group:

4. That there should be a network between all regional student groups.

5. That students on Regional Boards put forward a proposal for a regional student participation officer.

That this be raised at the September regional meetings.

6. That this meeting believes there ought to be student input into the shape of the VCE and that VCAB should consult with students (from networks, sub-regional networks, clusters, SRCs).

7. That this meeting strongly believes that all students voted to the PEP, SAC and DSP committees should have full voting rights (one each) and further that the PEP and SAC committees increase the number of student representatives from (the present) two members to four members or more with full voting rights.

8. That we investigate whether all schools should be joined by modems for better communications between schools, regions or state-wide.

9. That we have more inter-regional meetings like today.

10. We believe that SRCs are really important groups in the schools and ought to:
    - have secretarial help at all times;
    - have access to a telephone at all times;
    - have access to their own room;
    - have unrestricted mail to the SRC.

11. We believe that there ought to be regular regional and state-wide meetings such as this to support SRCs and student participation in general.

12. That a committee be formed to develop Accreditation Policy, made up of students, working in conjunction with other committees looking at this problem.

13. That students in country areas are disadvantaged. We have a lack of money for transport to our Regional meetings. We suggest that there be a funded program for transport reasons.

14. That the jargon used is too difficult to understand and it ought to be simplified.

NEXT:

There will be series of regional forums and meetings in Youth Participation Week (September 15-19) and a State-wide Student Conference in Geelong on October 5-7. As well as students from the Regional Networks, this Conference will also include TAFE and non-Government school student representatives.
Cartoons adapted from 'Australia Lucky For Some'
- A Comic Book History of Australia - Published by Hyland House 1985

Suzane Fabian, South Central Region.
The following articles concentrate on some examples of student participation in the Northern Metropolitan Region in Victoria.

The accounts are all written by Fiona Colin and are drawn from PEPspectives, published in 1986 by the Participation and Equity Program in the Region. For more information and for copies of PEPspectives, contact Meryl Hyde and Peter Mildenhall at the Northern Regional Office, Car Waterdale and Dougharty Rds., West Heidelberg 3081. Phone: (03) 450.0521.

Radio Across the Curriculum

A group of schools who shared an interest in the use of radio in education met in Term 2, 1985, to discuss the concept of a Regional radio network and to plan a Supplementary Grants submission for funding.

Various schools in Victoria's Northern Metropolitan Region (Reservoir, Preston Girls', Thomastown and Preston East High Schools, Preston and Preston East Technical Schools, and Reservoir East Primary School) had been operating radio studies/stations and the network was a logical and innovative initiative.

Jeff Cooper, a teacher involved in the radio studio at Reservoir High School, was released for ten (PEP) days in term 3 to coordinate the project and develop curriculum material. The achievements of the studio at Reservoir, and at Preston Technical and Preston Girls' High Schools, form a sound basis for a successful network.

CURRICULUM

The radio facility at Reservoir High has been used extensively and creatively across the curriculum, sparking a great deal of interest within the school and elsewhere. Whilst some schools do have radio facilities, they may be under-utilised or used only for lunchtime broadcasts, for example, which Jeff believes is important as a means of encouraging students to be involved but not the main benefit to be gained. At Reservoir, Radio electives operate at years 9, 10 and 11 but any student in
the school can join one of the radio committees and learn to operate the equipment. Teachers, often taught by volunteer students in their spare time, have also been encouraged to use the studio and/or its programs. Elective students begin by learning how to care for equipment, using portable tape-recorders and eventually work on major documentaries e.g. "The history of student newspapers", "Greek dance", "School theatre program". A colourful example of the medium's application and versatility was a Maths Week program initiated and performed by students which was broadcast to Maths classes and used to promote Maths Week to the whole school.

In the literacy area, results can be surprising - an 'ordinary' sounding piece of writing, perfected and recorded by the author and set to music, can create totally new and appealing results.

PARTICIPATION IN MANAGEMENT AND USE OF THE FACILITY

Out of a general meeting of students at the beginning of the year, fourteen students representing all levels were voted on to a management committee which has the overall responsibility for policy about programming (acceptable behaviour/language), bookings, use of studio and publicity and contact with the broader community. There are also student sub-committees: production (organising training), technical (electronics wiz kids), library (cataloguing records and tapes) and publicity.

A certificate is awarded to anyone who reaches a certain competency, and this entitles them to use the studio and to teach a friend.

According to Jeff, the only area in which girls have shown any reticence is in the technical area: "Girls do everything else and, organisationally, they are probably the most active and push for things."

The group nature of the studio work encourages all students to work together and make collective decisions about what is appropriate.

Year 11 students took on cross-age tutoring roles with students from Reservoir East Primary School who were using the Graves approach to writing. The younger students recorded their work and the year 11s operated the panel and provided sound effects:
"There was one little kid who apparently hadn't spoken all year. He got in front of the microphone and spoke for the first time." (Jeff)

As the students develop confidence in handling the technology, so does their confidence in their creative abilities grow. "I was scared to use the equipment; I thought I was going to break it. Now we're doing interviews. It's good fun." (year 9 student)

DIRECTIONS FOR THE NETWORK

The aims of the Network are to share expertise, ideas and resources between the participating schools, and to provide a communication link for the Region:
"We've got a very good facility and it's a shame it's cut off from other people. Apart from just the social aspect of our students getting together with other schools (which is important), I like the idea of swapping creative ideas, of programs being shared, duplicated and moved around the network. For example, if someone's doing a documentary on social or local issues, we can keep the Region up to date. I find our students are very insular in their outlook." (Jeff)

The existing radio stations will be the focal points from which equipment can be loaned out for pre-production (recording) use, and then the studios can be used for production.

Other plans include the production of Network programs for regular public broadcasting (on 3RRR, 3PBS and 3CR), a regular time on Radio Australia and, in Preston, a community-based radio station (with a limited licence) for which the Network would be the obvious source of expertise.

"Communication and awareness would be expanded to the whole Region hearing and understanding what's going on in the northern suburbs, which I don't think we've had. The easiest way to do it is to turn on the tranny." (Jeff)
The Students' Representative Council is a dynamic and important link in student participation at Preston Girls' High in Melbourne's Northern Region. It developed out of the work of a Politics class, whose teacher (Brian Griffin) believed that the process of elections at the student level would not only be an excellent learning experience for students but would also, if successful, be of lasting benefit to the school community as a whole.

Brian's attitude was that students had to make it work on their own:

"When they were establishing the SRC, it looked as if the whole thing was going to collapse. I found that really difficult. I was criticised by my peers who thought I should have intervened. But my idea was that it would be more sustained if students worked out their own problems. I was always accessible if they wanted information or advice but I didn't tell them how it should run."

Students had held elections (with posters and campaigning for individual candidates) and decided to have two representatives from each form. This made for a very large SRC.

"It nearly collapsed because students had an unreal attitude to what politics was all about. They didn't see it as involving conflict and looking at ways of resolving conflict; they thought it would be everyone getting together, agreeing about what they wanted, going and asking for it, and getting it," said Brian.

Students were not accustomed to listening to each other and had different ideas about how meetings should be run. Different attitudes and personalities emerged. 'Participation' meant different things to different students; some kept information to themselves, while others saw the importance of disseminating information to the whole school.

"She really motivated a lot of students, just by encouraging everyone ... she was a friend of ours at the time and ... we supported her while at the same time she encouraged us to get involved. She was trying to promote student participation," said a student, speaking about Afro, a year 12 student in 1985.

A major strength of the SRC has been the participation by students at all levels, with years 7, 8 and 9 often giving it its strongest support. Brian believes participation at junior levels is encouraged by the nature of an all-girls school and the absence of any apparent stigma attached to friendships across year levels for example. Students feel free to articulate ideas, and have developed the confidence to interact with others to achieve common goals.

Student participation has spread from the SRC, representation on School Council, committees and the Parents', Teachers' and Friends' Association, to a more generalised awareness of issues affecting students.

In years 7, 8 and 9, students have set up SRC sub-groups to cut down the number and length of SRC meetings and to further discuss SRC issues and the way they're affecting the different year levels (e.g. streaming, uniforms, red phone).

The nature of student participation has led to more frequent interaction between students, parents and teachers. Relationships have not always been smooth.

"There's been quite a bit of conflict about the role of students in the decision-making process. For example, students have often been more informed and better prepared than teachers and parents but have confronted a united parent-teacher group ... Some assume that once you give students the right to participate in the democratic process, they're going to start demanding the world. It's not like that. The students involved take responsibility for their decisions - they've thought about the repercussions ... Other teachers say they support student participation but don't in their actions."

(Brian)

Accreditation has been a big issue, with some teachers reluctant to recognise student participation as a legitimate area of the curriculum. With several students involved with the Student Network, participating and speaking at conferences and other schools (sometimes interstate) and working to increase student participation, the accreditation issue is an important one to resolve.

"I'm prepared to give up a class and go along to a meeting and participate there. There's more education in meetings sometimes than in the classroom - you get more done ... but I've had
it said to me - it's in my report - she failed because of extra-curricula activities." (student)

As far as Brian is concerned, whether students are on the SRC or any other school committee, it is important that their contribution is recognised in reports, references etc. This would encourage a broader base and help to ensure that expertise is shared through all levels of the school.

STUDENT PARTICIPATION VIDEO

This video, made in term 3 1985, documents the development of student participation at Preston Girls' High.

It looks at the School Improvement Plan (SIP) student survey which was conducted in 1984 and identified areas of greatest concern to students. These were:

- negotiated curriculum (Preston Girls' now has a rapidly expanding STC group);
- canteen;
- student participation and accreditation.

The video also looks at the development of the SRC and student representation on the School Council; it also focusses on individual students to explore the impact of student participation in decision making at school on personal development and life in general.

The video is oriented to students, but it is hoped that it will be distributed Australia-wide for school communities generally. Brian believes that the honesty of the students, and what they have to say, would be of great value to any school in the country.

Contact: Brian Griffin,
Preston Girls' High School,
Cooma Street, Preston 3072
Phone: (03) 470,2755

THORN BURY HIGH

In 1985, student participation developed with the assistance of the Pupil Welfare Coordinator (Rod Lethborg) who was given an SDA (Special Duties Allowance) to form an SRC. In 1984, a year 10 group had formed an SRC which, in 1985, became a catalyst for wider student participation. Early in 1985, Rod addressed each year level on what an SRC was, the responsibilities of the representatives and the electors. Rod also took a pragmatic line, explaining to students that they wouldn't change things overnight, and that they should be prepared for some opposition from both teachers and students. In reality, support for the SRC was enthusiastic.

A key factor in the success of the SRC was the lunch-time activity program, which had essential staff support and included video movies, Greek dancing, aerobics and board games. The most significant activity, however, was the re-opening of a sports store-room which
was turned over as a students’ PEP room from which year 10 and 11 students gave out sports equipment every day.

"Kids could see things happening that they were getting direct benefit from." (Rod)

The equipment roster and the formation of the SRC and year-level committee groups happened around the same time and consolidated support for the SRC.

Another way in which the SRC was seen to have direct effect was in the school canteen, where students had waited endlessly in long queues. A work-experience program was set up in which students served in the canteen and were given references as in any other work placement. With these students on a permanent roster, long queues were a thing of the past.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

Various changes were made to ensure equal opportunity in various areas:

* special queues at the canteen for years 7 and 8 – due to their size, they tended to be pushed back to the end of the line;
* redistribution of playing areas to ensure equal access for girls and boys;
* obviously sexist references in the school diary revised;
* all SRC members in 1986 to be given the opportunity to supervise sports equipment;
* student EO committee set up in conjunction with the school EO committee.

"There has been a huge change in attitude beyond the feminist issues to looking at what all kids (not just the strongest, oldest, male, sporty) get out of their education." (Rod)

Students as a body have yet to be totally convinced of the value of the SRC and do not fully utilise it. Plans for 1986 include:

* a student-initiated radio station;
* student news-sheet;
* development of the year-level committee;
* school magazine committee;
* drama centre committee.

Those involved in the activities in 1985 hope that students will be represented on all committees in the school and that there will be greater communication between all groups, thus spreading participation at all levels.

The successes in 1985 have encouraged students to become more involved; 1986 will see further development of student initiatives.

"One of the difficulties with student participation at the moment is that it's open to my manipulation – I use my experience to, at times, steer clear of what I see as losing areas for the kids. A full-growth situation would let kids lose and I wasn't prepared to do that in the first year. I'm prepared to let it happen next year because they've got to understand that they can't win all the time. But at first, they need the confidence to feel they can say things and have them acted upon." (Rod)

ACCREDITATION FOR STUDENTS INVOLVED IN SCHOOL COMMITTEE WORK/PARTICIPATION

In mid 1985, all students participating in the lunch-time program and SRC were given a school participation report. Its purpose was clearly explained and readily accepted by staff.

Two students at Thornbury High School – Jenny Zoumas and Spiros Soulimis (year 11 in 1985) made a strong commitment to student participation, both at the school and Regional levels.

As well as educating themselves and other students about meeting procedures, developing a constitution for the SRC, etc., they also played a role in educating teachers about student participation.

"Teachers seem to feel threatened when students do start to speak up, are on school committees. We bring up things like PEP and Blackburn – for them they're issues that have been floating around but they're pretty vague. For students like Jenny and myself, those issues are everyday ones. It caught some teachers by surprise but I think they have come to realise we're capable and I think next year they'll be even more on-side. It needs a long process and we've had tremendous teacher support." (Spiros)

Both Jenny and Spiros were involved in the Student Network, which developed a submission to the Regional Board on this issue of accreditation. This submission was successfully used in negotiations at Thornbury High to gain accreditation. Both students dropped a subject, thus freeing them for five hours per week for student participation work.

"It wasn't really a hard decision to make because they were subjects we didn't like and would probably have failed. (It would be difficult if the student doesn't want to drop a subject.) We had to get parental approval. It was a surprise to get that because it doesn't really go with the image of Thornbury High. We're the first students in Victoria to actually drop a
subject in order to work on student participation." (Jenny)

These two students entered into a contract for 1985 which set down duties, method of reporting and accreditation. Their work led to a proposal for a "School Government" subject in 1986. The proposed course content grew organically out of the activities of Jenny and Spiros. Rod identifies one main problem as that of providing equal opportunity for all students - how is selection to be made? have the two stu-

dents set unrealistic expectations for others? how can the subject be adapted
to different needs? The PEP Task Force will be looking at these issues for 1986.

Contact: Rod Lethborg,
Thornbury High School,
Collins Street, Thornbury 3071
Phone: (03) 480.5711

STUDENT NETWORK

"The most important thing happening in schools is that students have a say and a much bigger responsibility than we've had in the past. Students, parents and teachers are getting together to make things work. The school functions with all three bodies and, without one, the others can't go on."

(Stella)

The Student Network in the Northern Metropolitan Region (Victoria) has been a vital source of support, information and ideas with which students have returned to their schools to promote and develop participation in decision making.

Since its first meeting in March 1985, it has involved hundreds of students from Government and private Post-

Primary schools across the Region. The main issues confronting the Network in 1985 were the establishment and encour-
gagement of SRCs, the promotion of school and regional participation, the Blackburn Report and Ministerial Papers. The Blackburn Report and the Ministerial Papers have important implications for students, particularly in the areas of curriculum and student participation, and school structure. The related issue of accreditation for students involved in decision making and administration
(at the school and regional level) was also a central one for the Network.

Over the year, students had to familiarise themselves with a lot of complex information, take that information back to their student bodies and encourage further discussion. The Network invited guest speakers who provided up-to-date information and answered questions on a variety of issues.

An example of this was the October meeting to which Dr Ian Allen (Executive Director, Educational Programs) and Mr Michael Norman (member of the Ministerial Working Party on the Blackburn Report) were invited. Some Network students had prepared a "Student Response to Blackburn" and this, together with a summary of Ministerial Paper No 6, formed the basis for small group discussion before the panel discussion with the visitors. The questions which were prepared were, as Dr Allen commented, 'curly' and showed a high level of understanding and involvement of students. Below are some examples:

* Is Ministerial Paper No 6 in line with Blackburn and therefore will assessment for the VCE be non-competitive?

* MP6 insists on student participation in decision making. How are we going to be accredited for it, because as students we cannot participate without some form of accreditation - we can't combine our school studies with school administration duties?

* Why didn't students know about MP6 before it was policy?

* Has the Committee considered how important the links are between senior and junior students? Will the split between years 10 and years 11 and 12 cause problems in this area?

* If test scores aren't used for streaming purposes, how do universities decide who is acceptable?

ACCREDITATION

With the development of the Network and the Ministerial recommendations that students participate in a democratic decision-making process in schools, students have become increasingly involved in setting up structures (eg SRCs) through which student participation can succeed.

One of the major issues faced by these students is that of accreditation. Whilst some students have been able to negotiate some form of accreditation, other students have been faced with a choice between 'school' work and student participation/administration work:

"You have to make a choice, but we shouldn't have to. My marks have slipped because of the student participation work I'm doing. SRC work is really good experience, part of your education. Not only that, the Blackburn Report says there has to be representation on Regional Boards for example, but at the moment we're not given any time to do it." (Rachel)

"It worries me that I miss out on a lot of work. There are so many after-school hours that it's impossible to do your work." (Spiro)

"In some schools, students have been successful in initiating a form of accreditation which recognises that student participation benefits the school and is a worthwhile part of the curricu-
lum. Their work forms part of their report, so that parents can see what they've been doing."

WHAT'S GOOD ABOUT THE NETWORK?

The Student Network has been of tremendous value to those attending. Students from a wide variety of schools have been able to share their experiences in a supportive and well-organised environment:

"I've made good friends, become involved in things at the Regional level and found out a lot more about how the Education system works and how kids have a say." (Antony)

"The Network was really good because we could turn to the meetings for help through our toughest obstacles in getting an SRC started. The most important thing was learning from others' experiences." (Cathy)

The Network provides a forum through which representatives can be democratically elected to important positions within schools and at the Regional level:

"The good thing is that, before, representation on committees wasn't democratically decided - people were just plucked out of schools. Now we've got a representative group so that when it comes to elections to the Regional Board or other committees, we've got somewhere to go, and we can have representation on a large number of committees." (Rachel)

The Network has encouraged students to speak out on all the issues which affect them and to attempt to involve all students in the decision-making process:

"The Network has encouraged everyone to take a greater role at their school, and to take the information they've learnt back to their SRCs. We'd like to encourage younger students to come to the meetings because we're gonna go soon and we need someone to step up and take our places."

"We've learnt to be able to put our point across without being self-conscious. Speaking in public is an art everybody should learn. If you can't debate successfully, what you want is probably not going to happen. You've got to get in and fight for what you want." (Rachel)

"Students are now on curriculum committees. Getting students, parents and teachers together really gives you a better outlook on everything. You discover teachers are human, they're not just people who say: 'Look, you have to do this.' Having a say in everything really helps." (Stella)

The success of the Network has generated a lot of interest from other Melbourne and country areas. In October 1985, for example, a group of eight students from Wodonga schools attended the Planning meeting (this consists of about 10 students and the two consultants and meets before each Network meeting to carefully organise agendas, materials, speakers, venues and catering - plus is responsible for devising evaluation sheets for each meeting) and spoke at length with students from the Network about how to set up an SRC, how to get together with other schools, the Blackburn Report (what is it?) and many other issues. Students from the Network have been invited to speak to students as far away as Benalla and Mallacoota. Some have participated in radio programs discussing student rights and the importance of student participation.

Contact: Meryl Hyde and Peter Mildenhall
Northern Regional Office,
Cnr Dougharty & Waterdale Rds.,
West Heidelberg 3081
Phone: (03) 450.0521
The Student Network meeting was held at Reservoir High School on Wednesday 25th June, 1986. The theme of the day was 'Having A Say', with a particular emphasis on classroom and curriculum issues. About 70 students from 22 schools across the Region were involved.

Bert Van Halen, a consultant from the Western Region, was invited to speak on 'Having A Say'. He started by saying that student participation, especially in the classroom, is part of government policy, by displaying statements and quotes from Ministerial Paper 6.

He distributed a worksheet asking questions, ranging from name and starsigns to changes students would like to see in the classroom. Students grouped together to answer some of the questions and discussed their answers.

This was followed by a feedback session where students shared their ideas with the whole group. Some students found this helpful and well organised while others felt that he spoke too long.

Three students, Rachel, Spiro and Tery, involved with the Network, spoke for a short time on their experiences in the classroom. This included the difficulties the students have come across when attempting to negotiate curriculum with their teachers.

Students divided into small groups of about 10 for a role play. Consultants and other adults acted as teachers and set a typical classroom task, such as a set novel. The 'teachers' left the group to allow time for the students to prepare strategies for negotiating with the teacher. They then returned to the group to discuss/negotiate the task that had been set. This was followed by a ten-minute open discussion about the strategies they had used and their possible effect in a real classroom. Most students enjoyed the role play and took it seriously.

From these three sessions, students were able to gain an understanding of how negotiation can work for them in their classrooms.

The full text of this report of the June 25th meeting of the Northern Metropolitan Regional Student Network is available from Connect: $2.80 (50c).
In the last issue of Connect (39), I was given the opportunity to share with readers the development of the Student Research Team (SRT). The SRT is one of the possible links between student participation and youth policy development. If we are serious about student participation, then we must come to recognise the responsibilities and rights that go with it. One of those rights ought to provide students with the opportunity to have a part in the development of policy about issues that affect them.

This right is being recognised through the current discussions about Social Justice Policy, particularly by the (Victorian) Youth Policy Development Council. We in the education sector must also come to recognise this. We certainly cannot bring about the changes within the education system unless we impact on those who affect education. This includes employers, local councils, groups with responsibility for youth and government departments, in policy areas of health, housing, income support and employment - the major areas of need for young people. In order to have this happen, we must start to look at possible ways of building bridges and making links in order to get away from the participants being manipulated, co-opted and merely tokenist in their role.

The forthcoming Victorian Youth Participation Week (September 15-20) and the Victorian Student State Forum (October 5-7) provide us with opportunities to explore some new structures as part of the bridge building.

Regional Forums

During Youth Participation Week, each of the twelve education regions have been funded through the Bureau of Youth Affairs to hold a forum to discuss issues relevant to students and youth in general. Regions have been asked to establish planning committees made up of a broad group of people who are involved with youth in the region - this includes youth workers, youth officers from local councils and representatives from other agencies that work with youth. This could include people from CYSS and the CES, as well as welfare agencies. Perhaps for the first time we are seeing the coming together of all those people working with youth.

One of the tasks of the regional forums will be to elect a team of students from the region to be responsible for bringing the issues raised during the forums to the state student conference - not just education issues, but issues relevant to all youth. With a little more time and planning, the regional planning groups could also include students who have recently finished or left secondary schooling so that we can make links and keep together those people who are making the transition from school into work, further schooling, unemployment and elsewhere. Through this exercise, students will be able to start relating to the outside world whilst still at school. One of the early benefits of this in the Western Metropolitan Region is that some of the people in the community who have wanted to build bridges with the schools sector have finally been given the opportunity to do so. The question of support and protocol will be dealt with further in this article.
THE STATE STUDENT CONFERENCE

At the State Conference, students from the twelve regions, hopefully with representatives from all the sectors, will come together to present issues and workshop these as the first stage in policy preparation.

One of the identified issues is that of student participation and the Ministerial Working Party's papers on the matter. It was at the student conference last year that the Ministerial Working Party was announced (see Connect 37/38). The State Student Conference is being planned and organised by a team of students and support adults. The students on this committee were elected at an inter-regional student forum on July 30th (see elsewhere in this issue), organised jointly by the Disadvantaged Schools Program and the Participation and Equity Program. This forum also raised many issues that were of concern to the students present.

A similar situation arose at the State Student Conference in 1985. Many issues of concern were raised, not all to do with 'education', but relevant to students and with no-where to go. What we must now do is to try to think of ways of making links so these issues can impact on policy and get to the people, sectors and departments that they pertain to.

AFTER THE STATE STUDENT CONFERENCE

Many reasons can be put forward for these links not having been made earlier. The question of representation is high on the list. So too is the question of rights. There are no structures that exist at present through which these issues could be carried. We do not have a State Student Committee to go to. Students don't have a union or organisation to represent them. All they have are bureaucrats acting on their behalf and structures representing them on which they have no voice or position.

With the current debate and discussion centring on student participation, one of the hottest issues is that of participation and the classroom. There are people about who argue that participation in decision making should only occur in the classroom. Yet we find that students do want to participate in decision making about many issues that affect them that they cannot do within their classroom at present.

The link between a student research team, regional forums and State Student Conference could provide for a model through which issues could be highligh-
lum. Maybe different regions could take on the responsibility for researching different issues/policies/topics. The outcomes, findings and papers could then be presented at the next State Conference for clarification and presentation to parties concerned.

THE SUPPORT NEEDED

If this were to happen, then the question of resources and support would need to be carefully considered. We could look at paying recent school leavers who may not have found work yet. We could pool together youth working within departments to whom the policy/issue would be relevant, to work on the set tasks. A State Research Team could be established every six months to take on the coordinating job and do the final drafting and writing in cases where two or more regions were working on a similar issue. A full-time executive officer or field officers would also be needed to help coordinate the different participating bodies (a lesson learnt from trying to organise the Student Research Team based across three regions). All workers could have a reference group that includes people from already existing youth support and advocacy groups (eg YACVic, Bureau of Youth Affairs). This support group would also have on it people from the sectors that are involved with the issues being raised and worked upon.

Six months has been deliberately used as the time span between state conferences. The reason for this should now be obvious. It fits in perfectly with the proposed VCE/VCAB units of study. What better way to make students' work relevant, meaningful and more active. This would need to be kept flexible as there would be some difference between the time needed to work on policies and issues. Some are short-term while others will need a whole year.

IT IS NEITHER A DREAM NOR A NIGHTMARE

Already we have examples of the Bureau of Youth Affairs and the Youth Policy Development Council starting to build links between the many sectors of our society affected youth. We in the education sector now also have a chance to play our part in taking education to the outside influences that impact upon it. The model presented here is maybe a little loose and has some still unanswered questions. However, it is a model that could provide the bridge we have been looking for. It certainly builds upon things that we know make for good learning, that empower students. It will also allow for teachers to keep on learning in the process. And what is even better, we have the opportunity to take student participation in decision making into the classroom, so that far more young people can start to have a say in the development of policies that affect them as partners in education and active members in shaping a democratic society that is fairer to all.

I would certainly like to hear readers' views on these bridges and links. Also, we need to give consideration to what will happen to the recommendations made by the Ministerial Working Party on Student Participation to the Minister in March 1987. We do not have a Student Union or representative organisation. We can, however, build structures to ensure the work and developments in the area go on past the Working Party.

Bert Van Helen

PEP Consultant, Western Metropolitan Region

Friends of Connect

We gratefully acknowledge receipt of the following contributions since last issue:

SUSTAINING SUBSCRIBER ($100):
Marie Brennan (Thornbury, Vic)

PATRON SUBSCRIBERS ($20 pa):
Barb Champion (Nth Melbourne, Vic)
Peter Blunden (St Albans, Vic)
Jan Hargreaves (Roma, Q)
Barbara Gibson (Albert Park, Vic)
Jenny Mallon (Brighton Sth., Vic)
Libby Knight (Kirwan, Q)
Tony Knight (Bundoora, Vic)
Ian Adams (East Burwood, Vic)
West Education Centre (W Footscray, Vic)
Michael Ward (Melbourne, Vic)
Catherine Kelly (Bonbeach, Vic)
Bill Stringer (Carlton, Vic)
Churchill Post Primary School Student Executive (Churchill, Vic)
Colin Hollow (Croydon, Vic)
T O'Brien (Wendouree, Vic)
PEACE EDUCATION

Students are asking more and more about peace issues – and so they should. When recent surveys suggest that 70% of young people believe there will be a 'nuclear war' in their lifetime, action has to be taken to reverse this attitude. Action can be in various forms, but one method is obvious. Students are taking more initiatives towards creating positive ways of developing peace. By being involved in student SRCs, in peace clubs and movements, in local councils and by being 'peace educators', students' ideas and common sense promote peace and raise the disarmament debate.

In Victoria, the Ministry of Education, with the aid of an International Year of Peace (IYP) grant, has set up a Peace Education Resource Collection. Two full-time liaison officers are available to visit schools and speak with both students and teachers. Added to this, the Peace Education staff are setting up a Student Peace Institute which will be a student in-service activity organised through local councils.

For any information concerning peace issues, please contact us.

Martin Peake

RESOURCE COLLECTION

- established by the Minister of Education, Mr Ian Cathie, in conjunction with the Peace Education Task Force.

Aim

To provide the development and implementation of Peace Education in Government Primary and Post-Primary Schools.

Service

To provide reference books, curriculum, videos, networking and other materials for schools.

Support Staff

Two liaison officers are available to talk in your school on Peace Education and related issues.

Students

Classes can be booked into the Resource Collection to view videos or for workshops.

Where?

234 Queensberry Street, Carlton 3053
(second floor)

Phone

Susan Smith (Primary) (03) 341.4468
Martin Peake (Post-Prim.) (03) 341.4466

Open

9.00 am - 5.30 pm
(or later by arrangement)

Welcome

“BREAKING CHAINS .. MAKING LINKS”

Breaking Chains ... Making Links is a peace conference and festival run by and for young people in Victoria. It will be held on December 6-7 at the Abbotsford Conference (Institute of Early Childhood Development), St Heliers St., Abbotsford.

Registration forms for the Conference and Festival are now available. It will cost $30 to attend, but this covers all costs – food, accommodation, materials, entry etc.

Contact Lynette Thorstensen, IYP Secretariat, Ministry of Education, GPO Box 4367, Melbourne 3001. Phone: (03) 341.4491 or (03) 341.4457.

VSTA NEWS

The VSTA News of August 14, 1986 (Vol 7 No 25) contains a 'Peace Education Supplement' which includes interesting and useful articles on activities at Lyndale and Williamstown High Schools. Available from VSTA, PO Box 1124, North Richmond 3121. Phone: (03) 429.2422.
AIM

The initial aim of Goulburn North-East PEP is to establish a small, lively network within which students will 'chat' and exchange information with their counterparts in other schools. The system should offer a more accessible medium than direct phone conversations (it is often impossible to get a student on the phone at the right time) while allowing the transfer of documents - agendas, news items, essays - far quicker than could be achieved by mail.

HOW IT WORKS

The modem is a device which connects the computer to a phone line. Through the modem, messages and documents can be sent. It is possible to send to an individual computer or to a list of computers in a single operation. It is also possible to leave a message on a Bulletin Board to be accessed by any user in the system.

To use an electronic mail service, you enter the service on your own computer, usually in several simple steps. You then supply your name and security password, after which the central computer which holds the mail, lists the messages which await you. After reading, printing or saving the messages, you can answer directly or log off.

It is possible to send information on a disk via modem, which means you can compare lengthy documents on a word processor at your leisure and then send them in a matter of seconds. Similarly, you can receive a document via the modem, save it on disk, edit it at leisure.

The modem can also be used for accessing data banks such as Edline and commercial services such as Viatel.

EQUIPMENT

As of April, 1986, 16 schools in the Region have formed a computer communications network using PEP supplied modems. The schools are either PEP targeted schools this year or were targeted in 1985.

Each school was supplied with a modem and software to fit to an existing computer. As it is desirable (but not essential) to have a separate phone line for computer communication, a number of these schools have used their own funds to install an extra phone line and they will, of course, have to find the annual rental for this. Other running costs for the system are not certain yet, but it is probable that it would cost in the vicinity of $10 per hour to use the Telecom service 'Telememo'.

SUPPORT

Although the initial impetus for the GNE PEP Network came from a regional student meeting in September 1985, it was essential to have technical assistance in the difficult setting-up stages. Regional computer consultants and the Regional Manager of the Computer Education Resources Centre involved themselves willingly in explaining the system, advising schools on installation, trialling the products and inservicing students and teachers as the modems became available.

At the same time, the PEP consultant has publicised the project and enlisted the support of regional personnel. This has been a most rewarding task as consultants, Regional Education Officers and Senior Education Officers working in a large country region are only too happy to support a system which might help reduce the time spent travelling.
while giving students a means of quick, accessible communication across the region.

Principals have generally been very receptive to the proposal, though understandably guarded about recurrent costs. It is fortunate that the State Computer Education Centre has been running a trial project on modem use in schools and have been able to offer GNE PEP free use of Telememo. This is enabling schools to 'play around' with the new equipment and establish operating procedures without incurring high costs. Unfortunately, free use of Telememo will end soon.

**Usage**

Early use of the system is to be monitored by a committee consisting largely of students, so that emerging problems can be identified quickly, and addressed.

Membership of the Telememo project is closed, so no new schools can join the network during this early stage. However, it is envisaged that there will be a regionally operated Mailbox/Bulletin Board Service by the end of this year which should allow all GNE schools to join in and enjoy a low-cost service. In addition, GNE PEP schools are able to communicate with users of several other networks using Telememo at this time - the wider membership of Telecom Project, Benalla Project and SCEC.

**Issues**

a. **Selling the idea**: After the student meetings last year, students had to go back to their schools and persuade the SRC, staff and administration to devote a computer and phone line to modem use. This has been a difficult exercise in some schools and has shown up problems of communication, student credibility and, importantly, continuity. In some cases, the prime movers left school and there was no momentum for the project in term 1 this year.

b. **Usage**: Is there a real need for students to communicate inter-school on a regular basis?

c. **Access**: Who can use the system? Will students be able to operate the equipment to send messages, or will they have to hand their material over to authorised operators? Who is the custodian of the Password? Who checks the mailbox daily and how efficiently do they distribute the messages?

d. **Policy/Decision Making**: Will the school really hand the modem over to students or will it be guarded by a member of staff? Will student use take precedence over staff or administrative requirements? How will decisions regarding its use be made?

The early success of GNE PEP will depend to a large extent on there being regular, useful, important, attractive reasons for students to go to the modem and check their mailboxes.

**Further Information**

1. Steve Gawler: Regional PEP Consultant. Phone: (057) 62.3366.
   Peter Gerdesen, Computer Consultant. Phone: (057) 62.3366.
   Terry Brain, Regional Manager, SCEC. Phone: (058) 22.1255.

2. **Computers and Communications**. This publication by John Kerr and Paul Bennell is available from State Computer Education Centre, Moorabbin.

**PEP Communications - Apple** by Terry Brain is available from Goulburn North-East Computer Education Centre.

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**Your Comments**

I teach English at Prince Alfred College (SA) and also run the school's radio station SA-CR (Student Access Community Radio) each Wednesday lunch-time - 45 minutes of mostly talk, interviews, talk-back, information etc, with a little music too. It started in 1981.

David Allaway,
Prince Alfred College, PO Box 571, Norwood 5067

We are applying for funding and really need some concrete information. If you know of anything in the area of 'Youth Participation in Education' please let us know. We are also interested in compiling a list of alternative schools to contact in Victoria, with the aim of coming over to observe their educational processes. We would really appreciate any help you could offer.

Emily Di Cesarre, Roger Anderson, Sally Wagstaff,
Delta Annex, Mawson High School,
Colton Avenue, Hove 5048
Mooroopna Park Primary
Who Says It's Not Possible?

Student participation in Mooroopna Park Primary School is alive and well, as evidenced by the contribution of sixteen grade 5 and 6 Mooroopna Park students to their recent Curriculum Day. While many children would take this opportunity to revel in non-school activities, these children offered to take part in discussions on the plans for Mooroopna Park's 1987 Disadvantaged Schools Program.

They contributed personal suggestions and presented points from fellow students in their school (obviously there has been class discussions prior to the curriculum day). Several students took the reporting role after small group discussion by parents, teachers and students, giving a concise and accurate resume of points made.

At the end of a most successful session, ideas were publicly recorded, and individual record sheets were collected. Cory Brierly, a grade 5 student, recorded his ideas for making Mooroopna Park an even better place for learning for children:

1. Learn about sports all over the world.
2. Make harder Maths.
3. Learn about nature: plants, trees, birds, animals.
4. What happens all over the world — news.
5. Learn facts about your life.
7. How your body works.
8. Learn about the sun and moon.
9. Learn about space and the solar system.
10. How do they make vehicles?

11. How the army works?
12. NO gangs are better.
13. When I am in high school, I have to have the guts to say no to drugs.
14. Learn what happens if you're fat.
15. Not to be against other coloured people.

In terms of the development of programs, this morning was a great success, and the contribution of the students who attended enhanced that success. I have no doubt that all of the adults who attended recognise that we have only just touched the surface of one of our greatest resources — CHILDREN! Their willingness to contribute, and the quality of that contribution, must not be underestimated.

Denise Sheridan
DSP Consultant
Goulburn: North-Eastern Region

from Regional Focus Vol 4 No 10, July 1986

The SRC at McKinnon High

"McKinnon High School's student body, although still in its infancy, is finally on the road to success," said Mr Noel Donovan, the School Council President. Mr Donovan was guest speaker at an SRC in-service day held at Frank Tate House earlier this year.

In the past, the Student Representative Council at McKinnon High has struggled to bring forward the students' views. Plagued with numerous problems, such as presidents lacking leadership qualities, attempting to work under a system without a constitution, objectives or group policies, non-participation and the lack of commitment from members etc, led to the students of McKinnon High becoming most dissatisfied and annoyed with their council. All respect for the SRC was lost, its popularity and reputation went down.

The '86 year came and with it came change. The students were given new hope when the freshly elected President,
Bradley Newton, got up at assembly and promised them 'results'. The students roared when he said, "This is not a year for broken promises: this is a year for 'action'!" To this day, the council has done nothing but grow and progress.

The SRC basically consists of form captains who are automatically put onto the SRC to represent each form's views and ideas. Each form captain goes to a year level meeting where he/she writes down all the requests, suggestions and ideas that students in that year have brought up. They compile these into a year level report and their chairperson/executive member then presents this report to a meeting of the full SRC. This gathering is called the General SRC as it brings everyone in, or concerned with, the SRC together. Here, members discuss and vote on all legislation as well as listening to reports from School Council and the other committees within the school. Legislation that is passed is then processed or written up at a meeting of the executive (year level spokespersons) and the student school councillors then deliver the requests, ideas etc to the concerned individual, committee or council. Year level meetings occur every two weeks; executive meetings occur every week; the General SRC meets every three weeks. In this system, all legislation is brought forward, voted on, then written up and sent off to the appropriate place.

What have we accomplished?

All of our members have undergone extensive training, teaching them how to deal with all types of problems, how to fairly represent their form and what their role is as a student representative and a form captain.

This program concluded with an in-service day held at Frank Tate House which was basically teaching us method approach tactics and how to work through the system. It was run by Sue Fabian who has been a tremendous help. As well, the School Council President, Mr Noel Donovan, and the principal, Mr John Coulson, both have shown great interest in and support for the student body at McKinnon High School.

For the first time in our short history, we have established links with other student bodies, like Brighton and Elwood High Schools.

We all now have an SRC badge and a new SRC office has been allocated to us. Many vital policies have been implemented to assure the smooth running of the SRC and to keep us on target with our main objectives. Our main policy states that we must represent the views of the students, not our own. This puts a lot of responsibility on form captains and student school councillors, and so, to make sure they are performing well, we have introduced a system which observes their attendance and attitude.

In a bid to restore popularity and make the students aware of what we are doing and what we have done, it is now policy for the president and executive members to regularly address the assembly. This has already been put into action.

Some of our major accomplishments this year have been:

* We have set up a student radio station to broadcast over the speakers during lunchtimes and between periods.
* We expressed our concern in a student/teacher issue.
* We have set up sub-committees for various year level camps and are organising the year level dances.
* We are planning:
  * A walkathon to raise money to accomplish our major goals ie buy a BBC computer for the computer room.
  * To bring forward all of the students' requests, suggestions etc.

It has been quite a hard job, to say the least, to create a reformed SRC, but at last the students' voice is being heard. Although we are still in our infancy, the seeds have been sown and in years to come, the students will truly reap the benefits of our work.

Bradley Newton
SRC President, McKinnon HS

from The Bulletin, South Central Region, June 1986

from page 31:

The PEP Access Study (Julie Stephens) (PEP, Vic) 1986.
YACA Briefs (YACA, St Kilda, Vic)
Population Groups and Education Briefs (YACA, St Kilda, Vic)
Media Bulletin (European Institute for the Media, Manchester, UK) Vol 3 No 2, June 1986.
Fringe Magazine (Fringe Network; Vic) Issue 41, Aug-Sept., 1986.
Network News (Surry Hills, NSW) Aug. 86.
English B Production

My name is Silvia Pavano and I attend St Aloysius College, North Melbourne. I am, at present, doing my Higher School Certificate and English B is one of my five subjects.

English B is a goal-based internally assessed (alternative) English subject at year 12 level. One main goal is a major assignment which is called 'Production'. The 'Production' enables students to do two things: firstly, to follow through the process of developing a whole language task in a realistic manner, with a purpose and direction strictly modified by the demands of the nature of the task and the intended effect of an audience; secondly, to develop in a sophisticated fashion a project based on students' own interests.

My 'Production' was a personal interest on children who may have to spend a long period of time in hospital, and how they cope once they are back in school. I visited the school at the Royal Children's Hospital and found it very helpful for my 'Production'. The school is part of the Education Department. It is very similar to an ordinary department school - it has a principal, classrooms, books, boards and staff. The staff consists of sixteen teachers - fourteen primary and two secondary.

Many children attending the school are undergoing medical or surgical treatment, or a combination of psychiatric and medical treatment. The teachers at the school have considerable knowledge and experience in planning and implementing educational programs for emotionally disturbed children for all ages.

Teachers work with children from the following areas: adolescent unit, burns and plastic surgery unit, cardiac unit, medical wards, psychiatric treatment centre, surgical wards. The programs that are provided for the children are either at the child's bedside, in the ward or in the classrooms. Most of the students are in-patients who stay in the hospital for a long period of time but there are also patients who come in a few days a month or a year. They visit the hospital regularly - for example, asthmatics visit the hospital and stay there for a few days and then return to school.

The Royal Children's Hospital school is provided to help children feel part of their normal world when in hospital. At the same time, a child can be keeping up-to-date with school work, lessening the effects of interrupted schooling. In the strange environment of the hospital, children may find comfort in doing familiar things with teachers. The routines provided by the school help children maintain or regain a sense of skill and achievement.

The school aims to foster the growth and development of hospitalised children through a variety of educational activities. As well as providing formal schooling, teachers spend time talking with and helping parents, so as to help them cope with the problems surrounding them. The teacher to the students is the only non-medical member of staff, so it makes the student feel much more comfortable. The teachers also offer support, care and interest in the child's school life. The teachers don't demand anything from the students - the students cooperate willingly.

The school achieves its aims of providing a stimulating and interesting environment. It also attempts, when necessary, to foster and develop a positive attitude towards learning and to use appropriate materials, equipment, routines and structures. To implement programs that cater for the needs of the pupils who are educationally retarded, emotionally disturbed or socially deprived is also very important.

I would like to personally thank the principal of the Royal Children's Hospital School, Muriel McCoy. She informed me about the school, allowed me to participate in the classes and willingly came down to St Aloysius College to talk to my English class about the school.

She was a great assistance to me for my production.

Silvia Pavano
St Aloysius College, Brougham St., Mth Melbourne
Young writers, artists, photographers and communicators across the Central Highlands Wimmera Region are to be given the chance to get into print under a new publishing scheme just launched in Ballarat.

The Student Publishing Program has been established to give exposure to the wealth of student creative material being produced in the region's schools.

Operating as Loftset Press, the program plans to publish regular newspapers of student work and comment, circulating to all schools in the region. Separate papers will be published for secondary and primary students under the title Student Writes.

The group will also publish, in book form, collections of student stories, poems, artworks, photographs etc, as well as offering a service to teachers and school communities in preparing attractive reports, newsletters, teaching materials and the like.

The Student Publishing Program has been set up with a Community Employment Program grant to offer such services to the education community.

Its inspiration comes from the 1985 Student Press Project - a Victorian 150th Anniversary Scheme which last year published three major collections of student work titled Tharunka.

A total of 15,000 copies of Tharunka were circulated to all schools in the region and established a very solid interest in and demand for such publications.

Four unemployed people and a coordinator have been appointed to operate the program and they devised the trading name of Loftset Press.

The group now has a sophisticated desktop publishing system and have been working hard at acquiring the skills to exploit its full potential.

They are based at the Humffray Street Primary School in Ballarat in a top floor room which they had to paint and furnish before the program could begin.

"The major part of our activities will be the production of the student newspapers, Student Writes," coordinator Peter Baird said.

"We see ourselves as having a very broad service role to education in the region - getting the communication going between schools and seeing that some of the wonderful material that usually languishes in staff-room cupboards finally gets the audience it deserves."

"It really is an untapped area and the possibilities are enormous," Peter Baird said. "We're prepared to consider anything in this line and would be happy to listen to any enquiries."

Loftset Press is at 3rd Floor, Humffray Street Primary School, Ballarat 3350. Phone (053) 332.293.

The 1986 GABFEST was held in Darwin on August 6-7. The Gabfest was attended by two students from most of the secondary schools in the Northern Territory.

During the two days, the students considered a number of issues. Feedback was provided on a youth-oriented bicentennial video and a Theatre in Education production; four workshops discussed issues around topics of Unemployment, Drugs, Family Planning and Police Liaison.

On the second day, issues raised were refined to a small number of workshop topics and discussion proceeded in these areas. A range of recommendations were raised and passed (more details in the next issue hopefully) and decisions made on action arising.

Students were elected to the NT PEP Committee and the Education Advisory Council. Participants also decided to set up a continuing Gabfest Coordinating Committee to keep in touch with students and plan the next Gabfest. These representatives were also elected.

Gabfest has owed a great deal to the organising of Joy Irvine, but must now 'stand on its own feet' as Joy is off to teach in China.

Contact GABFEST, C/o Department of Education, GPO Box 529, Darwin NT 5794.
PUBLICATIONS

A range of recent publications have been of relevance to issues of youth/student participation. Some that have come to our notice are:

Articles:


This article provides a background to the Flying Fruit Fly Circus ("Ordinary kids doing extraordinary things!") and talks of moves towards establishment of a school around the circus - "the possibilities for an exciting curriculum and organisational structure provided by a Circus run by a group of students."

"Seeing kids acting responsibly" by Roger Holdsworth in Curriculum Moves (PEP Victoria) Vol 1 No 2, Term 1, 1986.

In 1985, Bacchus Marsh High School used a student team to carry out an evaluation of its 'unit system'. This case study looks at that project in the light of other moves at the school to support student participation and the work of the PEP Task Force.

"Language and learning: A school-based project" by Chris Reynolds in Viewprints (VISE) Number 7, June 1986.

Another 'students and evaluators' project, this time supported by the (now defunct) Victorian Institute of Secondary Education, is reported in the final issue of Viewprints. In this project, students produced a video documentary of their 'alternative' year 11 program. "The variety of tasks students had to undertake created contexts in which they became actively engaged in the management of their own learning."

Various articles under the overall title of "A Breath of Fresh Air" in Australian Society Vol 5 Nos 6 and 7, June and July 1986.

These two collections of articles by young people are the culmination of a project of Australian Society funded by the Victorian Bureau of Youth Affairs - "It is ironic that amidst this blaze of publicity, attributable to international Youth Year, young people themselves have missed out on their share of the action, with little opportunity to articulate their own thoughts, concerns and aspirations in the media."

Of particular relevance to education are "Outside the main stream" by Express Australia (an overview of young people active in media production) and "School skills" by Carol Satouros (discussing student participation in school decision making) - both in the July issue.

PEP Booklets:

Kensington Community High School: Workshops at Work - from the Innovative Patterns of School Organisation Schools Resource Program. This booklet provides a background to Kensington Community High School (Vic), reports from the 'workshops' that make up the school and writing from members of the school community. "KCCHS doesn't just make a commitment to student and parental involvement; it shows how it can be done. ... Teachers are brought up on the myth of value-free content yet KCCHS is unabashed about the political messages in its material. Readers of this material could consider whether frankness in these areas could lead to a more productive debate than the 'even-handed' approach which is often used to disguise real conflict."

Culture Cocktail: A Footscray High School Production by Hermione Parsons and Andrew Putnam - from the PEP Cultural Support Schools Resource Program.

A team of students at Footscray worked with teachers and others (including a video maker/technician) to produce a video documenting activities in the school which respond to the multicultural nature of Australian society. This involved student research and presentation of findings. Both the booklet and the video are available from PEP.

Human Rights: Deebey Park High School by Mary Pitsinis et al - from the Cultural Support Schools Resource Program. Within this documentation of the processes that established a school policy on Human Rights, modified the curriculum and developed teaching strategies "in order to create a school environment where everyone is treated equally and without prejudice", there are specific sections relating to formation of a cross-age tutoring program ('as a means of promoting positive inter-ethnic relations and developing self-esteem with-
in tutors at the same time as giving both tutors and students a successful learning experience”) and to the role of the SRE. Extensive appendices on
the cross-age tutoring program provide useful examples of how to create such a program.

The PEP Access Study: A Research Report
by Julie Stephens, PEP, 1986. This study was established with the express purpose of monitoring a group of students from non-traditional year 12 courses and admitted into tertiary courses in 1985. The majority of these students had completed the STC Course in which assessment methods "involve student participation in the negotiation and setting of goals".

In the conclusion, the report notes that "The selection experiences of this group of students challenge the proposition that current tertiary selection is a 'scientific' and 'fair' process... These students have been treated as 'irregularities' in the selection process... Selecting students into tertiary institutions by 'universal comparison', the rank ordering of an aggregate Group 1 HSC score, is held by the defenders of the present process to be the fairest method of selection available. It is also seen as a system which ensures that 'standards' are maintained by the selection of the 'best' students. Both of these propositions are challenged by this study which shows that Group 1 HSC is not the only satisfactory preparation for tertiary study, nor is it necessarily the best. The non-traditional year 12 courses taken by this group of students prepared them intellectually and personally for their transition into higher education and for academic success at that level."

STC Booklets:
We've previously mentioned the series of booklets on STC available from Victorian PEP, but the whole series of ten booklets is now available. These provide not only an overview of the STC Course and a discussion of what is meant by curriculum negotiation, but also practical examples in several subject areas. The series consists of an 'Introduction' and books in the areas of: Commerce, Mathematics, English, Studies in Work and Community, Social Education, Drama, Integrated Studies, Creative Arts and Practical Studies, and Science.

Enquiries to the PEP Clearinghouse, PEP, 416 King Street, West Melbourne 3003. Schools other than Victorian Government PEP schools should enquire about availability first: Marion Norbury: (03) 329.5677.

IYY:
Things Past, Things to Come. IYY and Beyond... by Helen Thomas. (Youth Affairs Division and the Media and Publicity Unit of the Department of Labour, 80 Collins Street, Melbourne 3000, 1986)
This colourful and glossy book (120 pp) presents an overview of some of the experiences of International Youth Year in Victoria - "through conversations with some young people, illustrations from others and photographs. It is not a definitive study of all that took place during IYY in Victoria; rather, an attempt to reflect what happened in 1985 to gain an insight into the impact of the specially designed period."

CAT Manual:
We mentioned in the last issue of Connect about the publication of the Let’s Go CATing Cross-Age Tutors' Manual from the Monterey Network. We've now received a copy and some more information.

The Manual comes in two parts - a bound manual for tutors and a stapled guide for teachers. There are tons of practical hints in both as well as some theoretical information.

The combined package is available for a cost of $5 plus $1.50 postage from Leonie Young, Monterey Technical School, Silvertop St., Frankston North 3200, Phone (03) 786.3655.
Do It Yourself Social Research

Do It Yourself Social Research by Yolanda Wadsworth, Victorian Council of Social Service and Melbourne Family Care Organisation, 290 Wellington St., Collingwood 3066; 1984. This book has been available for some time, but we just got round to putting it on our shelves. With more and more students becoming involved in carrying out 'real' research projects from schools, the need for a clear and comprehensive guide to what research means is essential. This book provides that. "We want this guide to make research understandable, especially as more and more people, often without past research experience, are now interested in doing some social research. Research is a process legitimated in our society as producing knowledge and therefore ought to be in the hands of those who want to use and benefit from it - particularly when it is information about our own lives."

The book covers areas of "What is social research?", "Why do you want to do it?", "How to tackle it", "Methods and techniques for 'finding out'", "Other resources around", "Working out what you found out" and "Saying what you found out". Language is extremely accessible and, though written principally for community groups, the approaches adapt easily to the classroom.

Diamond Valley Youth Action Group

Two seminars have recently been held in the Diamond Valley (outer-suburban Melbourne) by the Diamond Valley Youth Action Group around the theme: "School as part of the wider community - practical ways to get things happening in your local community by working in and out of your school classroom".

The Action Group was formed out of a large group of students who attended an IYY consultation in September 1984. Since then, core groups and numerous task groups have been actively involved in a wide range of exciting projects including two rock concerts, a youth festival and planning for a youth leisure centre. Various forums have been held to highlight youth issues. Many of these activities have been possible by students and teachers negotiating successful work experience placements and programs. Other students attended after school hours and on weekends.

Similarly, in Diamond Creek, a small group of students from local schools have started meeting with a committee of residents, police and workers with youth. This committee is addressing the lack of alternative activities and facilities for young people in the Diamond Creek area. They have decided to organise their responses to current community perception about local youth needs and, more importantly, present their own ideas on possible strategies for developing future services.

The Diamond Creek consultation provided a focal point, initiated by young people themselves, through which the Diamond Creek community had its first real say about what could and should be happening for its present and future youth population.

For more information, contact John Circosta, Consultant in Youth Services - Diamond Valley Area, Shop 21, Greensborough Centre, Greensborough 3088. Phone: (03) 435.3815.

Futures Education Project

The Futures Education Project aims to assist upper primary and secondary school students, their teachers and parents, to examine some of the key questions posed by social change and technological development.

Part of the project aims to encourage young people to express their ideas about the society they would like to live in and to produce works for local displays and for the Australian Bicentennial Authority's Travelling Exhibition and to publish a national record of the views of young people about the future during the Bicentennial year.

For further information, contact Gerry Tickell, Futures Education Project, Commission for the Future, PO Box 115, Carlton South 3053. Phone: (03) 663.3281.

I Dream of Meetings

I Dream of Meetings is a new video on how to run good SRC meetings. It has been produced, written, acted and directed by students in year 10 media at Brighton High School. It runs for approximately 10 minutes.

Copies are available on loan from Suzane Fabian at South Central Region, PO Box 88, Balaklava 3183. Phone: (03) 520.7666.
Articles:

- Code 269: PEPSCI - South Central Region, Vic
  - Report on Student Participation Workshop, July 1986
  - 4 pp; $0.50

- Code 270: 'An Investigation into Participation in PEP Decision-Making Groups in South Australia' - outline statement, research design, questionnaires.
  - 20 pp; $2.00

- Code 271: Report on Student Union Meeting, South Central Region, Vic.
  - 10.6.86
  - 11 pp; $1.10

- Code 272: 'Increasing the Effectiveness of Student Participation in Decision Making ... Some Ideas' from Tullamarine Region (Vic) Student Network.
  - 4 pp; $0.50

- Code 273: 'Credit and Support Conference' - Northern Region (Vic) Student Network - Action Booklet.
  - 12 pp; $1.20

  - 2 pp; $0.40

- Code 275: 'Moreland Girls' Group' booklet of group and day organised by group.
  - 20 pp; $2.00

- Code 276: 'From Representative Democracy to Participatory Democracy' from Megatrends.
  - 16 pp; $1.60

- Code 277: Curriculum and the World of Work Program (CDC) - A Sample of Current Projects; A Selection of Resource Material.
  - 20 pp; $2.00

  - 14 pp; $1.40

- Code 279: Diamond Valley Youth Action Group - Schools Consultation - outline.
  - 5 pp; $0.50

- Code 280: Northern Metropolitan Regional Student Network Report - 10.7.86.
  - 4 pp; $0.50

  - 29 pp; $2.90

  - 2 pp; $0.40

  - Including: RASG News #1, SASO News #1, RASG AGM and camp agendas, evaluation, action sheets, ideas for group leaders etc.
  - 83 pp; $8.30

Publications Received:

We wish to stress that the following publications received by Connect are not for sale. However, they are available for perusal by arrangement. Contact Connect on (03) 499.9052.

AUSTRALIAN STUDENT PUBLICATIONS:

- Communicate (Christ the King College, Braybrook, Vic) Vol 1 No 3, 1986.
- Focus (Albert Park HS, Vic) Issues 3,4,5 June, July, August 1986.

OVERSEAS STUDENT PUBLICATIONS:

- Noun (Edmunds Middle School, Burlington, Vermont, USA) Vol 9 No 1, Summer 1986.
- Foxfire (Rabun County HS, Georgia, USA) Vol 20 No 1, Spring 1986.

Other Sources:

- Things Past, Things to Come. IVY and Beyond (Department of Labour, Vic) book.
- Pepper (PEP, West Melbourne, Vic) June, July, August 1986.
- National PEP Talk (PEP, Canberra, ACT) Nos 3, 4, April, July 1986.
- PEP Issues Paper No. 1: 'PEP and School-Based Change - Task Forces' (PEP, Vic)
- NIE Update (Newspaper in Education, USA) Vol 12, Nos 5,6, June, July 1986.
- Curriculum Moves (PEP, West Melb, Vic) Vol 1 No 2, Term 1, 1986.
- Express Australia Newsletter (East Melbourne, Vic) April-May, June 1986.
- The Bulletin (South Central Region, Vic) June 1986.
- Culture Cocktail - Footscray HS (PEP, Vic) continued on page 25...
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* Ascolta Radio Group 1983 Report ($2) ................. $ ...........
* Ascolta Radio Group 1984 Report ($2) ................. $ ...........
* 'Youth Radio' issue of CRAM Guide (3CR) ($1) .... $ ...........
* Youth Advocacy Report ($2) - LaTrobe University $ ........

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