Connect
supporting student participation

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& Incorporating the PASTA Newsletter #4

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This Issue

Well, here we are back again, somehow concluding one year (belatedly) while welcoming in another. Connect has had a bit of a break, but has returned with a renewed commitment to supporting student voices, agency and action.

These issues will be a vital part of the Youth '98 Symposium in Melbourne this April. One whole day is devoted to panels, papers and workshops around the theme of 'Youth Agency and Action'. There's further contact information on page 39, and a brochure enclosed.

Also in this issue, Peter King (Principal at Ungarie Central School) reflects on efforts to support the SRC to be a vital part of the school's decision making - to move beyond token fund-raising. Colin Ellis writes about the Student Parliament at Granville South Primary School. We also reprint some fascinating accounts of student community research projects around a 'justice and democracy' theme at seven Brigidine Colleges in Victoria and South Australia. (We were to include Steve Wilson's article on 'Students Theorising', but this has now been held over to a future issue.)

The PASTA Newsletter will also be a regular feature of Connect, linking all readers with their work in supporting student participation, representation and leadership. We urge you to join and take an active role in this professional association.

And, as always, we'd like to hear from you about your on-going work. The 'NASPAC ... and after' (p 11) articles begin a process of asking students and teachers who have attended workshops, conferences and similar events, to share the impact of their attendance with us all. A few pleasant days' discussion is not enough! We are interested to hear of commitments to on-going action.

Roger Holdsworth

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Deadline for material: end of March

Front Cover

Warming Up to NASPAC 4, July 1997; Photo by Lucinda Bartram

Connect

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MOVING THE SRC ALONG

When I arrived at Ungarie Central School, the SRC was primarily a fund-raising body with no interest in any school governance issues. There were no student representatives on the School Council, or on any other school governance body or committee. The SRC was not valued or consulted by anyone. The profile of the SRC was low, as it had very little impact on anything that happened at school. There was no opportunity for members of the SRC to plan, act and reflect. They were not challenged by the issues that were given to them to deal with. The students were given every fundraising activity at school and were consigned to working only in this area. At the first staff meeting of the year, no staff member wanted the job of SRC Adviser.

I felt that there was a real need to empower students in this school. They had been confined to the role of passive and powerless pawns in the life of the school.

Therefore, I set my first goal to maximise student participation and involvement in school governance at my school. I hoped that later I could have some influence in the area of building leadership skills and developing citizenship.

The Starting Point

In my first meeting with the SRC on Tuesday 18th February we discussed some plans for the year. What would students like to achieve this year? Most of the plans that students thought of were activity-based fundraisers (eg Clean Up Australia, Jump Rope for Heart, Junior Red Cross, Jeans for Genes) or purchasing items for the school (eg CD player, sports equipment). In general, they reacted to the information that was sent to them by charities and organisations requesting support. They had a very limited view of their potential role in the school and their job as representatives of the student body. I asked two questions at that first meeting to provoke some discussion: “Why were there no Captain’s Boards to honour the School Captains?” and “Do we have student representatives on the School Council?” They instantly liked the idea of an honour board, but were lukewarm about the membership of the School Council.

At our next meeting on 4th March, I asked again if students would be interested in representing on the School Council. I explained the very important role of the School Council in School Strategic Planning and decision making. Senior members of the SRC could see the benefits of their involvement, so they requested that I ask the School Council to include them. One member of the SRC had attended the State SRC Conference and his influence and support of this issue was important. I explained that it would mean a change in the School Council’s constitution and could take some time. This was the only business for the meeting that dealt with a school governance issue. The majority of time was used to organise a car wash.

At the first School Council meeting on 10th March, I placed a notice of motion on the books requesting a change in the constitution to include student representatives in the membership of the School Council. This was the last meeting of the outgoing Council and they were happy to support the idea but knew that the newly elected Council would have to decide the issue.

The next SRC meeting took place on 20th March. I informed them that the new School Council would decide the issue of their membership. In an attempt to move the students’ thinking away from fundraising and disco organisation, I posed them two questions: “What do students in this school want?” and “How can we help to make this school a better place?”

Research consistently shows that increased participation leads to high morale, commitment to the organisation and its values, improved quality of decision making, reduced absenteeism and increased productivity and learning.” (Taylor, 1987)

“Recognising an active role for students in defining the culture and organisation of the institution of schooling, has been a major omission which has long-term consequences for schools as institutions and the kinds of messages they give to students about citizenship.” (Brennan, 1995)

“The student role in not a role of taking action and experiencing consequences... It is a relatively passive role, always in preparation for action, but never acting... They are shielded from responsibility, and they become irresponsible; they are held in a dependent status and they come to act as dependants; they are kept away from productive work and they become unproductive.” (Coleman, 1972)

“Education for citizenship in its minimal interpretation requires only induction into basic knowledge of institutionalised rules concerning rights and obligations. Maximal interpretations require education which develops critical and reflective abilities and capacities for self determination and autonomy.” (Evans, 1995)

“The active participation of students can be reflected in the organisational structure of the school: are students represented and valued in the school's decision-making structures?” (Holdsworth, 1997a)
The two main ideas that arose to answer each question were: “Create a multipurpose basketball/netball/tennis court at school” and “Plant trees around the school”.

The first of these ideas was taken up by the P&C at their April meeting in term 2. They decided to make the court their major fundraising initiative for 1997. This was a classic case of parents and students wanting the same thing. I assume that some students had been discussing the issue with their parents. The idea had been proposed two years previously and had lapsed.

The second idea was easy to implement. The SRC purchased about 60 trees from a nearby school. Students organised an afternoon on 16th May to plant half the trees in an area they had already chosen as needing re-vegetation. They followed this up with another day to plant the rest on 4th June, around some new play equipment. The tree planting had an impact around the school in that it showed the SRC working for and improving the school. Anecdotal comments from staff and parents all showed that everyone thought it was “a great idea”. In contrast to the car wash in term 1, the feedback was much more beneficial. Staff had allocated $1500 in the school’s Management Plan for school beautification, but had not made any progress. They were goaded into action by the students! Robotom and Hart (1995) have argued that environmental education is highly successful because it engages students in active citizenship. It is something they can do and the results are tangible. The commitment of the young to environmental issues is also evidence of their potential for civic participation. I believe it was a highly successful activity and one which laid the groundwork for further projects to take place.

The SRC meeting on 11th April organised the purchase of the trees for planting and also responded to an idea brought to them from the South West Brain Injury Group. The group delivers presentations to students about the risks and consequences of brain injury. I informed the students that these presenters had delivered an address to a Riverina SRC Conference last year. The SRC felt that other students would enjoy listening to such a presentation. The students organised for the whole of the secondary student population to attend the session at school on 30th April. It was a very successful activity and we received a letter from the group thanking the students for their involvement. All the students enjoyed the presentation, but it is difficult to ascertain if they related the presence of the speakers back to the organisation of the SRC. The SRC certainly felt that the exercise was valuable and that they had made a significant contribution in a curriculum area. Perhaps now they were starting to see some of the potential for the scope of their involvement in the school.

The first meeting of the new School Council took place on 28th April. The notice of motion regarding students on the School Council was warmly received and the vote was unanimous supporting the students’ inclusion. The School Council could see that parents, students and staff all needed their forums (P&C, SRC, Staff meetings) to discuss issues and that the opinions of all these groups were important at a School Council level. They did request that the constitution reflect that the students be “senior students elected from the student body”.

At our next SRC meeting on 13th May, I passed on the good news and we had an election from our senior students for the two representatives and two back-ups. The two School Captains were elected to the School Council, with a year 10 boy and a year 11 girl as alternates. It was felt by the students that the Captains were the best people for the job because the issues were important and sometimes ‘heavy’. The decision was not taken lightly. At this meeting, we also elected two representatives to attend an SRC training day in Griffith being organised by the District SRC Committee. This was significant because it demonstrated a willingness for students to be involved at the next level, to see beyond the school and to, perhaps, learn from others.

The District SRC training day took place on 20th May. I attended and presented a session to about 40 students on the role of SRCs, in which I attempted to impress upon them the importance of their role in school governance. A latter part of my session allowed all students to complete a written evaluation of their own SRC. The evaluation of my own SRC by students who attended was as follows:

**Areas that were weak:**
- all members did not understand the goals of the SRC or know their responsibilities;
- all members did not receive proper training;
- meetings were not interesting, orderly or well planned;
- the SRC did not communicate with SRCs in other schools.

**Areas that could be improved:**
- the SRC could be more respected by students, parents and staff;
- communication between the SRC and other students could be improved;
- communication between the SRC and staff could be improved;
- the SRC needs to check to ensure they are meeting the needs of the student body;
• the SRC needs to set goals more regularly and measure its own achievement.

Areas that we were doing well:
• elections for all members were fair;
• all activities and projects were well planned;
• the Principal supports and is interested in the SRC;
• the staff adviser is interested and does not dominate the Council;
• there is enough time for meetings;
• the activities of the SRC benefit the school;
• SRC activities are fun to be involved in.

I thought their evaluation of the SRC was very accurate.

Another part of my session was to identify what they believed were the most important roles for SRCs. The answers from members of my SRC were that SRCs should:
• represent student feelings, opinions and interests;
• give students a share in decision making on school committees;
• encourage students to participate in school activities;
• take pride in the condition and appearance of the school buildings and grounds;
• organise social and recreational activities;
• promote school loyalty and school spirit.

I was most impressed with their list. A fact that I was particularly pleased with was that the option ‘coordinate fundraising’ was notably absent from their list. Whether they actually believed it or simply knew that I disapproved of that option remains to be seen.

Our next SRC meeting took place on 28th May. It provided a great opportunity to test my progress. Two completely different issues were on the agenda: Jelly Cup Day; and the school’s Strategic Plan.

We dealt with the Jelly Cup Day quickly and ensured our organisation of the day was ready to go. We spent the majority of our time working through the results of the Strategic Plan survey. This was in contrast to earlier meetings in which the majority of time was spent organising a car wash.

Two weeks earlier, I had published three focus questions in the school newsletter and had requested staff, students and parents to respond. These responses were going to begin the process of the school’s Strategic Plan. The questions were:
• How would you like Ungarie Central School to be in the year 2002?
• What particular areas of excellence should we as a school pursue in the next five years?
• What should our students be proficient at when they leave our school?

No student had responded individually to the survey. Other responses had been collated and I presented them to the students. The students reinforced many of the issues parents felt were important e.g. support for low achievers, fair discipline code, competence using technology, vocational education options, promoting the school etc. They also suggested that academic excellence needed to be further encouraged at school. When I questioned them, they felt that sporting achievement was very highly regarded at school but that academic achievement was less prestigious. Point taken. They did not feel that it was the school’s role to develop them morally, which was in contrast to parents’ views. While a free ranging discussion was taking place, two supplementary ideas about installing blinds in some rooms and lowering the wall at the front of the school were brought up. They were not for the Strategic Plan, but were good ideas nevertheless. It showed that they were thinking of ways to improve the school and of their responsibility in being involved in that process. I felt that the students had taken their responsibilities in this instance very seriously. They were enjoying having a say in the future of the school. They felt that they were able to have an impact on what was going to happen at their school. When one junior student interrupted the discussion saying that we had better get the jellys outside before recess, another student replied, “This is more important than that.”

We had our first student attendance at the School Council meeting on 4th June. After some preliminary business, the majority of the meeting discussed and worked on the school’s Strategic Plan. In both the group discussion and the open forum, the students’ comments were perceptive and clearly understood. Their opinions were valued and accepted. In some cases, the students knew more about how the school operated than the parents did, which I suppose is perfectly understandable but often overlooked. When I questioned one student about the meeting later in the week, he said that he had ‘enjoyed it’ and that it was ‘interesting’.

Clean Up Australia Day, Ungarie Style

Summary of the First Semester

I believe some definite progress had been made. We had achieved our goal of representation on the School Council and had even shown that representation was valuable. We had
involved ourselves in activities other than fundraising and had also found these to be worthwhile. Students had begun to think about wider involvement in the life of the school and the potential and reward for action. Areas that needed to be improved were still in raising the profile of the SRC with staff and students, and also the development of leadership skills in students through training and activity. Citizenship is not something that suddenly happens after a student leaves school. It is learnt through a student’s active experiences (McKay, 1994).

The Second Semester

Our first meeting for the second semester was on 18th July. At this meeting students were confronted with requests from five different organisations to conduct fundraisers on their behalf (Red Nose Day, Daffodil Day, Pyjama Day, Canteen and Jeans for Genes – all very worthy charities). The students decided that they could not support all of these activities and so chose two of these charities: Canteen and Pyjama Day. This was a wise choice because they were also organising a disco for 24th July and were quite busy. Pyjama Day is an activity we have not had at the school before and sounded like a lot of fun. It would also have an impact on the school as students had to wear their pyjamas to school.

At the same meeting, I asked if students were keen to represent on the school’s Welfare Committee. The response was positive and we elected one student to attend those meetings on behalf of the student body. There was a precedent for this as years ago there had been students on a discipline committee. This was an important step in the students’ eyes. They knew the committee dealt with sensitive information about student behaviour and made important decisions.

There was another School Council meeting on 23rd July. Again the student participation in the school’s Strategic Planning was very valuable.

Our next SRC meeting was delayed until 11th August due to my absences from school. The SRC dealt with the timing and organisation of sandpit for Primary students. We chose a site and set a date for the SRC to begin work in the next week. I was away on the day we arranged to begin the project, so work started a week late on 22nd August. We constructed a boat shape out of sleepers, excavated sawdust from the inside and partly filled the centre with sand. We negotiated with a parent to bring in a truck load of sand from their property to fill the remains. The team worked enthusiastically and were watched by the rest of the Primary school who were on sport. The result was a real interest in our project, for they were the beneficiaries.

Our last meeting for the year was on 2nd September and we organised the elections for the new 1998 SRC to be held on 17th September. The number of nominations for positions demonstrates the increased profile of the SRC.

Two students volunteered to attend the combined districts SRC conference to be held early in term 4. This is a leadership training conference which will provide skills for those students to share with all the SRC. I am also attending the conference for one day. Last year there were no volunteers to attend this conference. I passed on my
congratulations to the SRC for their commitment and enthusiasm. I said that I was proud to be part of their team. We are having a party to celebrate our year on 17th September.

Conclusions

From my perspective, we have created a team that has been both highly successful and enjoyable to be involved with. We have achieved our goal of representing and working for the students of this school. We have seen the value of being involved in the many roles that students are able to perform in the governance of the school. We have given ourselves the opportunity to plan, act and reflect on our role and function within the school. We have raised the profile of the SRC so that it is recognised and considered worthy by students and staff. I must admit that we have not yet done enough in the area of leadership training. However, I take heart from the following information:

"Just released in Australia is a quite remarkable study of 'civic voluntarism' in the United States that suggests, on the basis of some 15,000 preliminary interviews and a further 2,500 in-depth interviews, that while schools can have a very important role to play in the pathways to civic participation, the provision of actual civics courses does not (Verba et al, 1995). Rather the study showed that it was opportunities for participation (and therefore learning) in the process of school governance, together with opportunities to discuss contemporary issues of interest to students that were important... The US study suggests, very forcibly indeed, that it is how we run our schools, rather than what we teach in them that will determine levels of active citizenship." (Owen, 1996)

I look forward to continuing the research with the 1998 Ungarie Central School SRC.

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WALKING TALL:

TOWARDS A NON-VIOLENT SOCIETY

Just like Ghandi, Martin Luther King, and all those
who have fought over the centuries for the same ideals,
we have a dream: a dream that one day humanity will
find a way to walk tall - to live with dignity and honour.
But today we live in a world where people cruelly exclude,
taunt and abuse one another, a world dominated
by greed and hunger for power, where even sport and children’s
toys and journeys into cyberspace reflect the
brutality of it all and
insidiously lull us into
being blind to the
damage. The cost to
the individual human
spirit and to Society is
immeasurable. How
many more innocent
young children are
destined to be drawn
into this destructive
web, before we act to
make our dream a
reality?

The young
people from across
Australia who were
part of our national residential conference
‘Poverty - Some More Than Others!’ (1996),
and our national seminar on racism
‘Under Our Skin’ (1997), have shown
that the youth of Australia can make a
very real difference, now. The positive
initiatives and
programs they have
established back in their own communities, the support
networks which they have developed and the people they
have become, are all testimony to the positive and leading
role young people can play in shaping a better tomorrow.

It was these young participants who identified violence as the issue which is of the greatest concern to
young Australians. Imagine, therefore, what will be
achieved when young people of all backgrounds meet
together with outstanding experts in the field to make
history. Picture them in a historical university setting as
they discuss and reflect on the many faces of violence,
then inspire and empower one another to find and enact
creative and constructive solutions so that together we
build a society based on mutual respect and enduring
values, a world where we all walk tall!

We are delighted to present information about our
next major event, a
national residential conference for senior secondary students
between 29 June and 3
July, 1998, at Ormond
College, the University
of Melbourne. This is a
conference which must
not be missed!

We are very
honoured to have our
done by Sally Trench, coming from
London to be with us. Sally
wrote ‘Bury Me In
My Boots’ and
‘Somebody Else’s Children’ about her
work with homeless
and neglected children in England. She has
won international
acclaim for her lifetime of
dedication to the
children ‘no-one else
wants’ and for rescuing
so many children out of
the Bosnian conflict, at
the risk of her own life.
Sally will stay with the
participants at
Ormond. We are very
grateful to the Pratt
Foundation for making
her visit possible.

Other keynote speakers will include Basil Varghese,
of the Brotherhood of St Laurence, and Paul Prichard, of
‘Good Beginnings’, a national parenting program working
with young children and parents at risk.

For further enquiries, please contact:

Mrs Jenny Sharwood, National Secretary
1/4 Swyn Street, North Balwyn, VIC, 3104
Phone/fax: (03) 9816 3786
The ‘I’ Concept, East Gippsland, Vic

Young Leaders’ Forum

The idea to run programs to motivate and inspire young people to meet their potential, and to step out of their comfort zones, was born through my personal involvement in many projects and programs. Being involved in so many areas gave me the opportunity to work towards my potential, through developing my strengths and nurturing my weaknesses, so that they became my assets rather than my failings. I saw that many programs seemed to lack something that made them more outstanding and more profound in the lives of those young people that participated in them. This was how The ‘I’ Concept was developed.

The ‘I’ Concept

Although this organisation was only registered in October 1996, it has been in the planning for two years. As director and main coordinator, I have seen many successful group activities run to enhance the self-concept of young people.

The organisation’s vision is to: “Re-Ignite the Passion for Life in Young People Through Programs of Leadership, Inspiration and Hope”. The ‘I’ Concept has been developed with the idea of empowering young people to follow their aspirations and dreams: to allow them to realise and develop their potential so that they may have the courage to stand up and say, “this is who I am, and what I believe in is important”.

We believe in young people and the roles that they play in their communities, because they need to believe in themselves, to develop their originality instead of fearing it and trying to crush it.

The Project

After attending two prestigious events (the 1996 Juliette Low Seminar in Switzerland and the 1996 Johnson and Johnson New Leaders Forum in Canberra) I decided that many programs were developed and aimed at the twenty to thirty age group, while there was a definite gap in the twelve to twenty bracket. With the depletion of training schemes, I felt there was a prominent need for a program that would allow the participants to develop their self-image, and become motivated to work towards their potential. I consulted experts in this area, including Dr Linda Wilkinson (Australian Youth Adviser for Guiding Australia) and found that there is a real need for programs such as this.

To date, we - a team of four young people and myself - have run one youth forum, which is described in more detail below. As a lead-up to this event, we spent nine months contacting schools, service clubs, churches and community groups to gain support. Some community groups offered financial support while others were sceptical, due to the fact that this was a not a program that was ‘proven’. The lack of financial support almost deterred the committed group of young leaders from being enthusiastic about the enormous task in front of us, but after selling many boxes of fund-raising chocolates and numerous raffles, we found ourselves able to start advertising the 1997 National Young Leaders Forum in June.

Pilot Program:

22nd - 26th September 1997
Raymond Island, East Gippsland

The 1997 Young Leaders Forum was designed as a pilot project that had the vision of “re-igniting the power of leadership amongst young people”. It allowed the participants to discover where their talents and aspirations lie, as well as having the opportunity to develop their dreams and visions and work through issues that are pulling them down.

Participants were from various financial, cultural and value-based backgrounds and were aged from twelve to seventeen years. Funding for the Forum came from community donations and participants’ registrations.

The program was especially designed over many months so that the participants could examine themselves and their values, so that they could be inspired by what they learnt and take this inspiration back to their homes and communities. So often young people are ‘cut down’ by being told that average is OK, so we challenged the ‘fall poppy syndrome’ in the hope that the participants went away knowing that what they believe in and who they are is important. Gordon Jackson, General Manager of the Johnson and Johnson New Leaders Forum, says this about the young of our communities: “You are the future of the planet, the future of its people, the future of its beauty and its peace is in your hands.” We wanted the participants to understand that leadership is not just about who can draw a crowd when they stand up to speak, but it is about setting the visions and the destiny. While based around leadership and self-esteem, it wasn’t a training course, but an opportunity to understand the values of leadership, and about finding the passion and conviction to pursue your vision. A true leader starts from the inside with the capacity to project their dreams and for self-reflection.

The speakers and activities were carefully chosen because of their ability to stimulate those that are involved. The program consisted of topics based around: goal setting, self esteem and values; local, national and international issues; reconciliation; youth suicide; employment and study skills; taking responsibility for your actions and your future; stepping out of your comfort zones; and realising your potential. By exposing young people to a program such as this, they gained not only a better understanding of themselves, but a clearer picture of the role that they play in today’s society.

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When you run a program such as this, you need to be aware of the issues that young people will bring with them. This is why we plan to have time to run a session that will deal with issues that many of these young people may never have spoken about before. During the early part of the week’s program, it became quickly evident to all of the adults involved that we needed to address the area of youth suicide. Because all of us are trained professionals in these types of areas, we did this with the skill that allowed the young people to feel safe in the environment. We also have the resources to give the young people the follow-up referrals and counselling when needed, so it isn’t a case for letting the young people step out of their comfort zone and talk about themselves, and then after the forum, that support disappears.

Participants have also been invited to speak to community groups and organisations, to demonstrate what they have learned and to promote the aspirations of Australian young people.

Participants’ Comments

The forum is one of the best things that has ever happened to me - on every level. I feel as if I have so many people that care about what I feel and think. All put together, I am a different person.

Rachel, 16

Thank you for organising this forum; the bonding that has happened over the past week is incredible. I have never met people like this before.

Melanie, 15

This has been a great experience for me.

Colton, 14

You have given me the opportunity to get away from my problems for a while as well as letting me tell about my problems and making them not so bad.

Emma, 16

Thank you for the chance to change so much.

Andrew, 17

And Now ...

The feedback in the weeks since the forum has been unbelievable. Parents and young people have contacted me to find out when the next program is so that friends, brothers and sisters can attend. I have also been interviewed by a local newspaper about the program, and community groups are asking me to come and talk to them about the program. Many people now want a piece of this cake that has the potential for many more layers.

The initial program was such a success that it has been decided that there will be another program planned for September of this year. This will be held from 21st to 25th September at Raymond Island, East Gippsland, Victoria. If you are interested in being involved as a participant, sponsor or leader, call Liesel Collings on:

phone: (03) 5155 7217; fax: (03) 5152 6488;
e-mail: liesel@b150.aone.net.au

In July 1997, the Fourth National Student Participation Conference (NASPAC 4) was held at the University of Sydney. Approximately 75 students, teachers, administrators, parents and others took part in three days of discussions, talks, debates and celebrations.

But was this 'just another conference' for participants? What was the impact when participants returned to their schools?

This issue of Connect presents some of the images from NASPAC 4, courtesy of Lucinda Bartram, and begins to chronicle some of the impact that NASPAC 4 had upon students and their on-going participation.
I would like to start this follow-up to NASPAC 4 by letting you know that this wasn't 'just another conference' for me. Last year was my first year on the school SRC, and NASPAC 4 was my first conference. Being a first-timer on the SRC, I wanted to know what it was all about, so the Conference seemed to be a great opportunity to learn and to get involved.

Being at the Conference and going to different committees was a big shock to me at first because grown-ups - teachers and older people in general - really listened to you and cared about what you had to say. Out of all the things I learned, that was my far the most important.

When I got back to school, what I had learned at the Conference took effect immediately. Being on College Council, the strength that I had got from the Conference really made a difference. Before the Conference, being on Council was scary; I wished at times that I were invisible. But when I got home from the Conference, I spoke up more for what I truly believed in, and I wanted more than anything else to be noticed. Being this way, I noticed that I got more respect from people.

From then on, I have tried to take a more leading role in my SRC and can't wait for the SRC camp at the start of the 1998 school year to share my experiences with the SRC of 1998.

I was also presented with the SRC gold award at my school for my work within the SRC. On top of that, I was accepted to represent Australia at the National Association of Student Councils Conference in America, but have had to decline because of family matters.

I'm going to finish this follow-up by saying that I have had a very successful first year on the SRC. Without being at NASPAC 4, the outcome of my year may have been very different. I hope that for everyone who attended NASPAC 4, it helped them just as much as it helped me. I wish them all a successful 1998.

Steven Phillips
Karingal Park SC, Vic

continued page 22...
Active Democracy
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Connect, 12 Brooke Street, Northcote 3070 Vic

Enquiries:
Phone: (03) 9489 9052; (03) 9344 9637; Fax: (03) 9344 9632; E-mail: r.holdsworth@edfac.unimelb.edu.au
PASTA NEWSLETTER
# 4 - January/February 1998

PASTA is the acronym of the Professional Association of Student Representative Council Teacher/Advisors. Founded in New South Wales, Australia, in February 1995, our Association exists to support in whatever ways possible those who work with and support programs of student participation, representation and leadership.

SEE OUR MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION AND APPLICATION FORM IN THIS ISSUE

THE TEAM ...... (OUR CURRENT PASTA COMMITTEE)

Committee Members:

• Jean Bow - Editorial Team and Special Projects (Kogarah High, Sydney)
• Michael Selway - NASPAC IV Co-ordinator and ACSA Liaison (Sydney Boys High)
• Peter King - Internet Co-ordinator (Uningarie Central, NSW)
• Kadir Gunduz - NSW SRC Student Representative

Vacant Positions:

• Vice President, Independent Schools

PASS THE PASTA

The Community Service Certificate (CSC) Awards Project was first announced at the International Principals' Conference in July 1995 at Darling Harbour. David Jones (Narrabeen High School), a NSW State SRC representative, announced to the conference that this project was in the planning stage and I am pleased to inform you that a two-year pilot program was commenced during term four 1997.

The CSC Awards Project is jointly sponsored by the Central Coast Campus of the University of Newcastle and our newly established (1995) PASTA Inc (Professional Association of Student Representative Council Teacher Advisers). PASTA has been established to promote student participation, representation and leadership and to help resource and support all SRC/Student Leadership Teacher Advisers working within these areas, in all schools and across all the States of Australia.

The CSC Awards program aims to lift the profile of SRCS and the dedicated work of our school communities by accrediting awards for the voluntary hours of service freely given by our staff, students and parents in support of their schools and local communities. The CSC Awards program is to be overseen by a CSC Awards Accreditation Committee of nine members from the University of Newcastle Central Coast Campus and the local Community. Members will include Les Eastcott (Director and Pro-Vice Chancellor), Frank Clarke (Dean of Studies), Chris Holstein (Mayor, Gosford City Council), Fay Brennan (Mayor, Wyong Shire Council), Ralph Murray (CSC Awards founder and President PASTA Inc), Ken Page (PASTA Representative and PASTA Treasurer - Gorokan High), and two student SRC representatives - one from the Central Coast Campus and the other from the Central Coast District SRC Network.

The 2-year trial, whilst initially focused on three Districts (Central Coast, Bathurst, and Kogarah) has already expanded to Frankston and East Gippsland in Victoria and to Rosny and several other districts in Tasmania. All interested schools and community organisations are welcome to join the trial and share the task of workingshop the CSC Award materials and refining the various CSC institutional guidelines over the two year trial period.

All schools (both state and private) are invited to join and become part of the national 2 year trial CSC Awards Program. For more information concerning this important community based national initiative contact the CSC Awards Project Manager Ralph Murray.

All correspondence should be directed to:
Ralph Murray
Manager CSC Awards Program
Fax: (02) 43484005;
Work Phone: (02) 4348 4342
Home Phone: (02) 4385 1888
COMMUNITY SERVICE CERTIFICATE
CSC AWARDS PROJECT

The Central Coast Campus of the University of Newcastle has an historic opportunity to both host and co-sponsor the Community Service Certificate (CSC) Project. The CSC Project is designed to create within the wider community a parallel “active community service” public accreditation comparable to that of the HSC and one that in time all employer groups have suggested will be required as part of all future applications for employment.

The CSC Project awards certificates to people, including the unemployed, who do voluntary work, and aims to develop citizenship through the active recording of all voluntary service freely given to our community. Two programs drive the CSC Project: YOUTH AT WORK and CITIZEN AT WORK.

Students who are YOUTH AT WORK from the age of 5 to 18 will record all their school achievement and extra school and wider community voluntary participation in a PASS BOOK which records the 400 hours of community service needed for their first CSC Award. Citizens over 18 will record their voluntary community work and future employment training in their CITIZEN AT WORK Pass Book. Community Service Certificates and medals are presented at the 1,000 hour (Bronze Medal), 5,000 hour (Silver Medal) and 10,000 hour (Gold Medal) levels and all presentations of both Certificates and CSC Medals will be awarded as part of Australia Day Ceremonies across Australia.

The CSC Project, whilst a ‘grass roots’ initiative from the Central Coast, is in itself a National Program with the potential to be readily marketed to the world. The University that hosts and co-sponsors this worthy project, along with PASTA Inc, will become a household name as all students and citizens across our country and eventually throughout the world embrace the CSC Project and its accrediting CSC Community Service Certificates and CSC Bronze, Silver and Gold medals.

To date no other community based project comes near to the enormous contribution and potential impact that the CSC Project offers. All community bodies approached have shown both enthusiasm and commitment towards the Project and the two year trial which was to initially be restricted to the Central Coast Area is being continually widened as interested community groups and utilities ask to be included in the 2 year trial of CSC Awards.

SPECIAL CSC NOTE
CSC Medals are determined by the total accumulated hours of community service voluntarily given. For those actively involved in their communities, this includes all unpaid time given after hours in training, excursions, coaching and managing teams, choirs, musicals, debating, tutoring, P&C activities, etc, as well as all other hours freely given to any other voluntary community service activities, blood donations (10 hours/donation), committee memberships, refereeing, charity work, voluntary church service, training courses, etc.

CSC AWARD MEDALS

BRONZE  SILVER  GOLD

OZ YOUTH SPEAKS TO THE WORLD

That’s the title of the collection of student speeches, media articles and photos from the 2nd International Conference of Principals held at Darling Harbour in Sydney in August 1995 which featured student leaders from NSW.

This publication is now available for distribution. PASTA members will be getting their own copy free as part of their membership. (See the membership details in this edition if you would like to join us.) Otherwise, the booklet can be obtained (postage included) for Aus$7.50 or US$10 (if you live overseas). Contact our President, Ralph Murray (c/o PASTA) or PASTA Vice President, National/International Affairs (Charles Kingston) at 1 Gladstone St, Bathurst 2795 NSW. Enquiries can also be made c/o the Joint Council of Professional Associations in Leichhardt, Sydney.

The student speeches deal with the following themes:
• Partnerships in the Learning Environment;
• Student Leadership;
• Making Student Councils More Effective;
• Curriculum and Student Leadership;
• An International Perspective - Effective Executive Structures;
• School Councils, Management Teams and Student Leadership Courses; and
• Taking an Active Part.

There is also coverage as printed in various metropolitan and rural newspapers at the time, and photos of both the speakers and the very successful Student Participation Display stall involving 18 students from Year 6 Primary through to Year 12 HSC.
“Challenging the Status Quo”

PLANS PROGRESSING FOR SRC
INTERNATIONAL 2000 CONFERENCE IN SYDNEY

“SRCs have reached the cross-roads, so to speak, in their quest for increased student leadership. We believe it is time for SRCs to ‘challenge the status quo’ and work towards increasing their involvement in real decision-making within their schools, districts, states and countries.”

So says Anna Samson, student of Penrith High School, former member of the NSW SRC and NASPAC IV Organising Committee, currently a PASTA student member and on the Steering Committee for the PASTA-organised First International SRC Conference in Sydney around the time of the 2000 Olympics.

The forward planning for this exciting Conference is well underway. Anna’s suggested theme - “Challenging the Status Quo” - and her sister’s accompanying logo (in essence, students working together to build a wall, which is in fact a globe) - are two of the many ideas currently being circulated. More ideas - and willing workers, of whatever age - are welcome to join the Steering Committee. Contact PASTA Vice-President for National and International Affairs, Charles Kingston and/or Bathurst High student Greg Arrow at “central command headquarters”:

1 Gladstone St, BATHURST NSW 2795
Ph: (02) 6332 2603 or Fax: (02) 6332 2302
e-mail: jarroO1@postoffice.csu.edu.au

For those in Victoria, you can also contact Liesel Collings at:
e-mail: liesel@bl50.aone.net.au

As announced in the Connect double issue of August last year, the goal is to have in attendance up to 2000 students and advisers from many countries, and from all states and territories of Australia. Not all areas of Australia have student council structures which function at all, let alone in similar ways. Thus, the invitations soon to be sent are open to anyone with a keen interest in the field of student participation, representation and leadership.

Listed as a major event on the Sydney City Council 2000 calendar, we are negotiating with SOCOC (Sydney Organising Committee for the Olympic Games) to enable the SRC Conference to be recognised as part of the cultural activities during the Olympic year.

The current draft program calls for three days in Sydney proper, two or three days in the Central Coast area around Gosford, where a major floral and cultural festival will be on, and time set aside for sightseeing. In addition, it is expected that visitors to Sydney may take part in either the Olympics or the Paralympics being staged on either side of the SRC Conference or wish to travel further afield in Australia after its conclusion.

The trip to America this June-July (see article in this issue) is, in part, designed to give many students and advisers the chance to promote this Conference. Future trips - to the NASC National Conferences in Minnesota in 1999 and California in 2000 - will hopefully include side visits to European, African and Asian countries to encourage them to come.

As Anna says about ‘Challenging the Status Quo’:

“... The other positive aspect of this theme is its wide application to a whole range of youth issues. Recently we have seen an increased emphasis on what governments believe to be the problems faced and posed by young people in society. And yet there has been little or no collaboration with young people to develop effective solutions to these ‘problems’. The media hasn’t helped, instead placing undue emphasis on and sensationalising negative but nevertheless isolated incidents as well as boycotting or offering flawed coverage of those positive endeavours undertaken by young people. This has helped to foster an incorrect image of young people as uncaring, non-contributing members of society. However, this is not a purely ‘Australian’ phenomenon and I think it is up to student leaders around the world to challenge this counter-productive view of the youth in our global community... this should be one of the major goals of this Conference - ie to inspire our delegates into action.”

Expressions of interest in presenting workshops or exhibits at the 2000 Conference or attending as delegate representative of your student participation group will be called for in the next issue of Connect.

The 1998 leadership tour to the United States has generated so much interest that we have approached the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) to see if they would be prepared to have a group of up to 50 Australian students attend their conference and camps in future years. Their response has been very favourable and so we are going to make this an annual event.

If you will be in Years 9, 10 or 11 and between the ages of 15 and 17 by the middle of 1999, you could apply to join the group that will be going to the Student Leadership Conference to be held in Roseville, Minneapolis, while the group in the year 2000 will go to the Conference to be held in Cupertino, California.

If you or your students are interested in obtaining further information about either these or the current tour to Derby, Kansas, contact the tour organiser (Ken Page) on (02) 4396 6485 or by fax on (02) 4393 1137.
SRC AMERICAN TOUR 1999

Plans for the USA tour are now starting to become more concrete. Of the 43 students who have so far applied, 33 have been accepted:

Tamara Anderson (15, Moorebank HS, NSW)
Carrie Aushburn (16, Narara Valley HS, NSW)
Brooke Bayliss (16, Narara Valley HS, NSW)
Luke Berman (14, Wollongong HS, NSW)
Aida Bunyan (14, Kogarah HS, NSW)
Shane Butcher (14, Bidwill HS, NSW)
David Carter (16, Bairnsdale SC, VIC)
Tracey Dovey (15, Gorokan HS, NSW)
Carlin Drew (15, Karingal Park SC, VIC)
Monique Field (14, Bathurst HS, NSW)
Michelle Fillipig (16, Warrawong HS, NSW)
Mellissa Forbes (15, Karingal Park SC, VIC)
Rebecca Fry (14, Bathurst HS, NSW)
Heidi Gleeson (16, Ballina HS, NSW)
Hollie Gravener (15, Bairnsdale SC, VIC)
Paul Habashy (16, Hurstville Boys HS, NSW)
Belal Hamdan (15, Granville Boys HS, NSW)
Jody Hart (16, Kelvin Grove State HS, QLD)
April Helliwell (15, Karingal Park SC, VIC)
Chau Le (15, Moorfield Girls HS, NSW)
Naomi Lincoln (15, Narara Valley HS, NSW)
Fiona Mates (15, Seven Hills HS, NSW)
Kate McKeown (15, Bathurst HS, NSW)
Michael McQueen (15, Figtree HS, NSW)
Hayley McRae (15, Quakers Hill HS, NSW)
Tammie Mowday (16, Narara Valley HS, NSW)
Sarah Perry (16, Lake Macquarie HS, NSW)
Ashleigh Sheehan (15, Asquith Girls HS, NSW)
Catherine Suitter (15, Bathurst HS, NSW)
Kylie Vassallo (15, Seven Hills HS, NSW)
Melissa Vuong (15, Moorfield Girls HS, NSW)
Jessica Williamson (15, Karingal Park SC, VIC)
Stephanie Young (15, Bathurst HS, NSW)

JUNE 26 (Friday) - Family outings with their American Host Family to see the sights of Wichita and Derby, the Host Region for the 62nd SRC National Association of School Councils (NASC) Conference.

NASC CONFERENCE:
JUNE 27 (Saturday)
Day 1/62nd NASC CONFERENCE - Registration and setting up of exhibits to promote our own proud history of student leadership in Australia, workshop leaders first meetings and the Official Opening and Welcoming ceremony before joining host families for more ‘good old’ Kansas hospitality.

JUNE 28 (Sunday)
Day 2/62nd NASC CONFERENCE - Inspirational service and exhibit tours, Small Group Workshops which some of our students and staff will be presenting. Afternoon hosted by USA Boeing Corporation with a tour and air show followed by a special delegates dinner and concert complete with laser light show and presentations.

JUNE 29 (Monday)
Day 3/62nd NASC CONFERENCE - General Session with Leadership Keynote speakers (high national and international profiles), visit to and tour of Wichita University followed by a Parade and evening Candlelight procession held at Derby Stadium.

JUNE 30 (Tuesday)
Day 4/62nd NASC CONFERENCE - Workshops and ideas exchange with presentations by our students and staff and an invitation for the USA delegates and those from other countries to join us in Sydney for the 2000 Olympics and the first International SRC Conference, then it’s ‘Prom Night USA’ with a social at Derby High School.

JULY 1 (Wednesday)
Day 5/62nd NASC CONFERENCE - General Farewell and exchange of addresses, etc with our new friends and host families before our afternoon departure by motorcoach for Santa Fe, founded in 1610 and capital of the Spanish colony in New Mexico. We travel over the

The itinerary is also in the final stages of completion. Depending on total costs, the proposed tour is:

JUNE 24 (Wednesday) - The inaugural 1998 SRC-USA tour commences at Sydney International Airport where students accompanied by Ken Page (Tour Organiser) and his staff will board their flight to Los Angeles, connecting with an internal flight to Wichita Airport in Kansas.

JUNE 25 (Thursday) - Students will meet their HOST FAMILIES and enjoy the sights of modern day and frontier Wichita as they settle into the lifestyle of the American West.

Connect 108-109:
famous 'Santa Fe trail' through the mountains and deserts of New Mexico and experience life on the old American Western frontier.

JULY 2 (Thursday) - We travel into the vast vistas of Arizona on our way to Flagstaff and our three day stay at one of the seven wonders of the world - the breath taking Grand Canyon.

JULY 3 (Friday) - Tours of the Grand Canyon's vistas on the South Rim and the spectacular Colorado River and our first opportunity to enjoy the sun setting on the Grand Canyon.

JULY 4 (Saturday) - Exploring the sights of the Grand Canyon National Park for a close look at the magnificent work of nature from the Desert View Tower and a further Canyon sunset.

JULY 5 (Sunday) - Our Motorcoach descends the high Coconino Plateau into the Mojave Desert. En route we will visit one of the greatest marvels of human engineering, the Hoover Dam, before arriving in Las Vegas.

JULY 6 (Monday) - We see the sights of Las Vegas' famous Sunset Strip and tour the city that never sleeps, departing next day to attend one of the 1998 National SRC Leadership Camps.

National SRC Leadership Camps:

NOTE: Our tour party will divide in Las Vegas with one half heading for the National SRC Leadership Camp held at the Outlaw Ranch near Mount Rushmore in South Dakota and the other half flying to Reno to attend the National SRC Leadership Camp at Lake Tahoe, Nevada.

JULY 7-JULY 12 (Tuesday-Sunday) - Students attend one of the two available 5-day NATIONAL SRC LEADERSHIP CAMPS held in July.

JULY 12 (Sunday) - Students fly from Reno in Nevada and from Rapid City in South Dakota and join up once more in Anaheim, California, the home of Disneyland.

JULY 13 (Monday) - Tour of Disneyland incorporating more than 60 world class attractions such as Space Mountain, Slash Mountain, the Pirates of the Caribbean, and the many famous Theme 'Lands', Adventureland, Fantasyland, Frontierland, etc, with the magic of the colourful Disneyland night time parade.

JULY 14 (Tuesday) - Our visit today is to America's 'Wonderland' Knotts Berry Farm for a theme park day with a difference, 150 acres of rides, shows and family attractions in six theme areas.

JULY 15 (Wednesday) - We travel down the scenic coast of California to Mexico to visit the border shopping town of Tijuana before returning to Anaheim.

JULY 16 (Thursday) - Today we tour the city of Los Angeles and the homes of the Movie Stars with an afternoon visit to the world famous Venice Beach.

JULY 17 (Friday) - Trip to Universal Studios in Hollywood to tour the backlots by tram and visit the sets of past and present TV Shows and Movies, as well as the many shows and rides, including the new Jurassic Park Ride.

JULY 18 (Saturday) - Transfer from Anaheim to Los Angeles Airport for our flight to Honolulu in Hawaii and our stay at Waikiki.

JULY 19 (Sunday) - A rest day to enjoy the pleasures of the Hawaiian way of life and the pleasures of the lifestyle and the night life on beautiful Waikiki beach.

JULY 20 (Saturday) - Tour of the Island of Oahu with visits to Pearl Harbor and the northern side surfing beaches such as 'Pipeline' and the famous Diamond Head lookout.

JULY 21 (Sunday) - Tour of the city and major shopping centres both in Honolulu and Waikiki before packing for home and our late evening/early morning flight home to Sydney, with connecting flights to respective State destinations.

Congratulations to all those who will be joining us on this historical SRC tour.

---

**TIPS FOR FUNDING NETWORK ACTIVITIES**

The problem of finding money to do all the good things students and SRC Teacher Advisers dream about is always with us. Hollow logs with money in them are hard to find. Fund raising activities are very time consuming and detract from the main agenda of providing meaningful opportunities for student participation in educational activities. It’s helpful to remember, however, that for every good idea that’s put into practice, someone pays.

The good news is that sometimes money is available from the Departments of School Education through their various tentacles, for example: Student Welfare, Training and Development, or for special initiatives such as Drug Awareness Education.

If you are advised by your education support team that money is available for SRC network activities, training and development, or student welfare initiatives in your area, then be prepared to fill out the forms and put in a proposal for funding. If they don’t tell you - ask what is available. If you are fortunate enough to have your proposal accepted, congratulations! You may be able to pay for teacher relief days, resources, conference registrations, or guest speakers amongst other things.

But remember to keep track of what your network does with the money you receive together with your achievements, so that you can report back to all who wish to hear about your good work. There are usually some time deadlines to be met but for the rest, it’s all about publicity and accountability. No one has access to unlimited funds, so be realistic, prepare a budget for your project and try hard not to blow it! All of us need some friends.

Jeanne Bow
PASTA Special Projects
CITIZENSHIP/COMMUNITY
RECOGNISING VOLUNTARY EFFORT
A Two Year Trial of the CSC in the Bathurst Rural Area

Bathurst in New South Wales has been chosen as a trial area for the Community Service Certificate project. This exciting new program rewards the efforts of volunteers in the community and in the schools.

Bathurst High School, as one of the earliest supporters of the CSC, now has the coveted 'No. 3' stamp, preceded only by the two co-sponsors of the scheme, the University of Newcastle, Central Coast and PASTA. In 1998 the school will be concentrating on Year 7 and 8 and on leadership programs like Peer Support and SRC in an effort to encourage students to keep the necessary records to obtain their CSC Certificates and medallions.

The CSC program is also being initiated in the Central Coast of NSW and at Kogarah in Sydney. These regional and city-based two-year trials will, like the more rural Bathurst development, establish local CSC Committees which will then assist schools and community groups in implementing their own programs. At the end of the two years, these communities will be in a position to assist others who may wish to take up the program.

The project is the most pro-active 'citizen of tomorrow' building concept to date and will help address the needs of the present and give direction for the future. PASTA Vice President Charles Kingston, who is looking after the Bathurst area project, is most impressed by the opportunity the CSC offers to encourage participation amongst citizens of all ages.

The CSC awards have been designed to promote active citizenship, recognise involvement in community activities, encourage the pursuit of merit and equity and develop participation in community-based problem solving and decision-making.

The Bathurst trial project, spearheaded by Bathurst High, will be having a major launch of the program at a public ceremony once a few more schools and adult volunteer community groups have signed on. Long-serving volunteers will receive official recognition for their efforts at that ceremony.

PASTA: A Victorian Perspective

Happy New Year everyone! I write this whilst overlooking the ocean at Norah Head (Central Coast, NSW) whilst on my well-earned summer break. Actually, I'm still working, not only writing this, but today I attended my first PASTA meeting at the University of Newcastle.

It's been good re-acquainting myself with the dynamos from NSW and getting the latest information on what's happening north of the border. It has been especially useful to be here to contribute to discussions and planning for the USA Trip to be held later this year. At this stage, Victoria is very well represented in this tour, having nine (9) students accepted. I would hope that more students from Victoria will 'bite the bullet' and apply before the end of February. There are two students from Bairnsdale Secondary College and seven students from Karingal Park Secondary College in Frankston coming. Where are all our other Victorian schools' representatives? If you haven't heard about the trip, there are details in this edition. As PASTA's Victorian representative, I would be delighted to hear from Victorian SRC advisers or students. You can contact me anytime on my answering service at Karingal Park Secondary College: 97767268, or fax me on 97765878.

Things are beginning to move in Victoria as far as SRCs are concerned. I learned in November
CSC AWARDS START-UP KIT

How do you determine Long Service Credit hours?

By consulting the CSC Award Guidelines it is possible for a participant to first work out any long service Community involvement for which s/he can be given credit. If you are a blood donor (say for 10 years at 4 times a year = 40 donations) then you simply multiply the number of donations by 10 hours giving you already 400 hours and the first CSC Award. NB: The CSC Guidelines awards all donations of blood with a 10 hour credit due to the importance of encouraging everyone to help save lives by becoming a regular blood donor.

<table>
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<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>HOURS/WEEK MONTH or YEAR</th>
<th>YEARS</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blood Donations</td>
<td>4 x 10 credit hours = 40</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>400</td>
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Participants might also be actively involved in some voluntary community-based cultural or sporting organisation, say as a coach or manager, and thereby be able to claim long service credit for all hours given in their own time to support this worthwhile activity. During the (say) 15 week season they may give 10 hours/week to organising training sessions and competition matches, giving them a further 150 hours credit which is then multiplied by the number of years that they have been involved, for our example 5 years equalling a further 750 hours.

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<th>YEARS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blood Donations</td>
<td>4 x 10 credit hours = 40</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager Sporting Team</td>
<td>10 x 15 credit hours = 150</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>750</td>
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</table>

As well as major activities like helping with meals on wheels or working as a volunteer life saver, small one-off occasions such as helping clean-up on Clean-Up Australia Day or helping at a school fete or working bee, can be recorded and presented as part of your long service record to help determine your CSC Award starting level. All hours freely given count.

<table>
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<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>HOURS/WEEK MONTH or YEAR</th>
<th>YEARS</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clean up; fete etc</td>
<td>6 + 6 + 8 = 20</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>80</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meals on Wheels</td>
<td>4 x 50 weeks = 200</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surf Patrols and Training</td>
<td>4 x 15 = 60</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>900</td>
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| Tot all:             |                         |       | 3450  |

If this was the final total of active community service then the participant would qualify for the BRONZE CSC 1,000 hour award and have the remaining 2,450 hours credited in their organisation's CSC Register towards their SILVER CSC 5,000 hour Award.

that I had been asked to head a DoE pilot project to investigate the formation of a state-wide SRC organisation. I will be seconded to the DoE one day a week from the first week of term for twelve months. My immediate aim will be to contact all state secondary colleges and inform them of my new position and some of our plans for 1998. I will also be setting up a pilot project of some Victorian regional schools, setting up a Softweb page for the DoE, and establishing a column in Ed News. At this stage, I do not have details of my direct contact number, but I can be contacted at the DoE via the School Community Support Branch, 2nd Floor, 33 St Andrew’s Place, East Melbourne 3002, telephone: (03) 9637 2342, fax: (03) 96372180. In the next issue of Connect, I will have more details of the project and contact details.

If you or your school would like to be a part of the pilot SRC project, please contact me on any of the numbers above. Maybe you are a student in a school trying to get things moving; possibly you are a teacher trying to gather support for more proactive SRC/student participation programs; you might be a part of the principal team in a school whose aim is to improve student leadership. Whoever you are, wherever you are, I would like to hear from you. Let’s get Victoria moving!

Ross Appleby
Victorian Co-ordinator
PASTA

December 1997 - February 1998
What does membership of PASTA offer you?

I wish to apply to join/renew my membership for the year ending 30th June, 1999.
Starting a Student Parliament in a Primary School

"AAAH! - They Will Take Over The School."

This is the reaction I frequently receive whilst discussing the setting up of Student Parliaments or Councils in Primary Schools. However, this is proving to not be the case with so many Primary Schools establishing and operating very successful Parliaments or Councils. So in this article I’m going to make some suggestions to schools contemplating setting up Parliaments or Councils.

Parliament to the school. Keep reminding participants in the Parliament or Executive that they REPRESENT OTHER STUDENTS and are not attending on their own behalf. Don’t get frustrated because it takes students a while to get used to meeting procedures and to understand that they can have a say in the running of their school.

Then, set the ground rules on things which can be discussed and rules which have to be followed.

- Set your meeting procedures (I use the same procedures used at Parent and Public meetings because it is good training for the students) and behaviours which are acceptable during meetings.
- Make it a rule that teachers, students, parents and community members cannot be discussed within the Council or Parliament. Most schools have avenues to discuss problems within these areas.
- Students soon learn that all schools have to operate under certain Departmental rules. These are reflected in School Policies.

Firstly start slowly. Talk to others who are running successful Parliaments or Councils. These may be local schools, your local Departmental Office or a professional organisation such as PASTA. People who are running Councils or Parliaments are prepared to share. If possible, visit a successful Council or Parliament (don’t forget to take some students) at a neighbouring school. Then have these people visit your school to talk to staff, parents and students. I know some schools which will visit and show a mock Council meeting to teachers, parents and students. Decide on the model you wish to use and then go slow-ly. Train your executive then gradually introduce aspects of the Council or

Report back to the Principal, Teachers, Students and Parents. Have students report back to their classes and attend meetings of parents and teachers to tell them what is going on. Use school newsletters to communicate the plans and achievements of the Council or Parliament. You will find that if you are achieving things and tell people then you will receive greater support.

Share with neighbouring schools your successes, your problems and your solutions. So often we all operate in isolation. We need to share more and to network. Good Luck. More in the next issue of Connect.

Colin Ellis
Vice President (Primary) of PASTA
Assistant Principal, Granville South Primary School (NSW)
The St George District SRC Anti-Violence Kit was presented at the NASPAC 4 Conference in Sydney in 1997. Since then, further action has been taken in preventing bullying amongst students by the students at Kogarah High School.

Members of the SRC have taken bullying as a serious problem amongst students, especially in a multi-cultural school. Therefore, students from years 7 to 12 were informed about bullying and its effects. Furthermore, the SRC presented a short role-play on both negative and positive approaches for students in the classroom and in the playground. The SRC adviser lectured students concerning the forms of bullying: physical, psychological, social and verbal.

The success of the program will be evaluated during 1998.

Aida Bunyan
Kogarah HS, NSW

All photos of NASPAC 4 courtesy Lucinda Bartram.
STRENGTH & GENTleness

THE BRIGIDINE SCHOOLS JUSTICE AND DEMOCRACY PROJECT

One often hears the phrase ‘Generation X’ bandied about in reference to young people today. The phrase is supposed to characterise them as the products of a materialistic, consumer society which finds interest only in the new and transient, passively absorbing a constant stream of entertainment, and whose popular culture is based on personal gratification essentially grounded in a sense of hopelessness. This is not a terribly flattering, or justified, view of young people today, but many of us as teachers are guilty at times of thinking in this way. We’re most likely at some time joined in muttered staffroom conversations about how self-absorbed young people are, not really caring enough about the environment and what goes on in society. And yet we probably utter these comments with a pretty distorted sense of our own political and social awareness at the age of fifteen or sixteen.

Get a class of students talking about unemployment, landmines, human rights issues or Pauline Hanson and a broad range of views is soon evident, many couched in values of fairness, justice, tolerance and equity. It’s precisely this range of views that the Brigidine Justice and Democracy Project hopes to tap into, challenge and nurture. The project was initiated to offer students an opportunity to take part in a deliberative exercise about democracy, welfare and justice and to reflect on these issues within a scriptural context.

ORIGINS OF THE PROJECT

The Justice and Democracy Project developed within the context of a growing concern felt by many about the society in which we live. It seems that what were once regarded as decent ‘Australian’ values of fairness, equity and a fair go for all, are being challenged in quite fundamental ways by the paradigm of economic rationalism. There has been a concerted move over the last ten years or so to minimise the role of government, so that the private rather than the public sector is identified as the one which can best meet society’s social and economic objectives in a context of competition and efficiency. Financial and labour markets have been deregulated, public assets are disposed of to the private sector, and education, health and welfare provision are modelled to reflect market forces and increasingly recast according to the ‘user pays’ principles. Furthermore, this has been going on in an environment in which public protest seems largely absent or futile, and in any case is glibly dismissed as ‘political correctness’ when it is made.

Mary Crooks, formerly director of The Victorian Foundation and now director of The Victorian Women’s Trust, was one public commentator who has expressed concerns about the prevailing political dogma and the dilution of basic principles of justice and democracy, and has developed a sustained critique of these. Following a speaking engagement at the Brigidine social justice group towards the end of 1996, a working group (Mary Crooks, Anne Boyd, Brigid Arthur and Catherine Kelly along with three representatives from schools) set about planning the general outlines of the Project.

The Project was designed to involve Year 10 or 11 students from each of the Brigidine schools, who would be supported by one or two teachers from their school. Each group would choose to study an issue of relevance to them and undertake a period of research and data gathering followed by thoughtful reflection on their findings, based on clearly defined beliefs and values. The groups would then prepare their material for dissemination within the school community and for publication. The emphasis of the project is on students communicating their findings to a range of audiences within the school community and beyond, as well as documenting the process undertaken by the group.

The Project was launched at a Plenary Day in March at Clonard College in Geelong. Some 130 students and teachers from all seven Brigidine schools gathered to listen to keynote speakers, John Cain (former Victorian Premier) and Morag Fraser (editor of Eureka Street), who shared stories of their involvement in public life and gave students a valuable insight into how individuals can, and indeed have a responsibility to, become fully active members of their democratic society.
Morag Fraser’s challenge to the young people was to have a say (having defined one’s values and reflected on them), hold a line and organise with others to do something about the issues which are seen as important.

An interesting range of issues was tackled by students from the seven schools, a selection of issues demonstrating how students in the various schools have been able to make the Project relevant and appropriate to their particular concerns.

**SCHOOL PRESENTATIONS**

On Friday 12th September students from the seven participating schools used dramatic, multi-media and oral means to present the results of their research at Marian College, West Sunshine; presentations which were testimony to the skills and Endeavours, the enthusiasm and optimism of these young people, who had found their voice and spoken out loudly and clearly on a range of significant issues.

Anecdotal evidence from some of the teachers involved in the project suggests that the project has already had many valuable and sometimes unexpected outcomes. Students have developed confidence and great skill in running meetings and have taken on the responsibilities of data collection through interviews, research and surveys in a very competent manner. Indeed, for some students, the Justice Project has become a major reason for coming to school.

The Justice and Democracy Project is an exciting initiative which offers students and teachers an opportunity to clarify their beliefs and values before examining their implications in relation to a specific issue. The Project is basically about giving students the opportunity to develop a voice, a view and a perspective on a significant issue of relevance to their lives which is couched within values of justice and democracy. It’s about enabling them to understand that they are important stakeholders in our society, and that they have a significant role to play in the way our society develops. Involvement in the Project should contribute to students’ repertoire of skills through which they can effectively critique and be engaged in their society. The Project presents teachers with the challenge to review the way they see young people in society as well as their own role in facilitating the development of students’ research and communication skills.

_Vicki Myers_

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**The impact of HECS on the plans for further study of secondary and tertiary students**

**CLONARD COLLEGE, GEELONG**

We investigated the changes made to tertiary education funding and the HECS payment in particular. Surveys which we conducted at secondary schools in the Geelong area indicated that many students were not aware of the total costs of tertiary education and that students from lower socio-economic areas were much more concerned about costs involved than those from wealthy private schools. The fact that the majority of people said that they would do a course no matter what the cost, suggests that the government and universities should charge whatever they like and many people would struggle to pay it. We think that this is unjust, particularly to the poorer members of society.

We organised a forum and invited people involved in the decision-making process, at which our Liberal MHR and State Labor MLA were asked to present their party’s policy on tertiary education. There were quite distinctly different values and attitudes coming through what these men said about education, and in some instances the politicians were not particularly well-informed about the realities of their policies as implemented by universities. Following the forum, we organised a parent-student information evening and devised a petition which we plan to pass onto our Federal Member of Parliament for tabling in the Senate.

We feel that the tertiary education system is not working for all Australians. Before any further changes are made to HECS, upfront fees and other University fees, the government should consult young people, because after all their futures are at stake, and they vote too. We feel that for a democracy to work properly everyone should have their say. In an ideal world, the politicians would listen to young people who would in turn trust them. Unfortunately we don’t live in an ideal world. There are structural injustices which occur when a nation, race, class or gender has undue or even unchecked, power, and is therefore in a position to take advantage over others.

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**The decline of rural towns**

**MARIAN COLLEGE, ARARAT**

The Marian Justice and Democracy group became interested in the plight of rural areas as typified by the Rural City of Ararat. They saw that there was much which made them feel very pessimistic about the future, such as the empty shops, the decreasing incentive to farm land that their families had farmed for generations, and the decrease in employment opportunities brought about by the closure of several industrial enterprises.

However, as time went on, the students were able to recognise that all was not negative. They agreed that many people were taking steps to reverse the trend, and concluded that what is needed is a genuine commitment by the entire community to work together to secure the future.

The students organised a public meeting for the wider community of the Rural City of Ararat to air their concerns about the future. The students presented their findings to about 60 people from a wide cross-section of district organisations and challenged them to outline their vision and ways in which it might be implemented. Fourteen speakers, including the Mayor of the Rural City of Ararat, the Member for Rion, Mr Stephen Elder, and representatives of many groups such as service clubs, political parties, the Ararat Regional Development Board, the Consultative Committee of the Greater Green Triangle, the Ararat Ratepayers’ and Residents’ Association and others, accepted the invitation to address the meeting.

The culmination of the night was the collation of a list of Ararat’s strengths, which is to be developed by the group into a set of priorities for presentation to the Council of the Rural City for their consideration.
Causes of family breakdown and services in the community to support families

KILBREDA COLLEGE, MENTONE

It is true. Lots of us like stories that shock. Include enough horrifying details and your audience will gasp and hang on your every word. When three teachers returned from their trip to Cambodia to tell the year 11 group about the horrors of that ravaged country, they held the attention of every girl in the room. Then they challenged us to fight social injustice and undemocratic regimes ourselves. I don't know how many they expected, but I like to think they were pleasantly surprised that almost 25 girls expressed interest.

Of course, we wanted to fight the big issues. We were convinced we could end world hunger, bring peace to all nations and spread the wealth evenly within six months. Eventually the teachers talked us into approaching the project on a slightly smaller scale. We tried to find a problem that encompassed many of the social injustices we found in our community.

The impact of peer group pressure

KILDARE COLLEGE, ADELAIDE

Backstage at the auditorium, the atmosphere was enthusiastic, with a hint of nervousness. The Kildare College Justice and Democracy group were at Marian College to perform a play, delivering the message that it's OK to say no to peer group pressure, demonstrating the steps taken and difficulties experienced in seeking to install, in a democratic manner, a more just society.

Kildare College is a secondary Girls' Brigidine Catholic School in Adelaide, then only non-Victorian school participating in the project. Early this year, all year 11s at Kildare were given the opportunity to participate in the project, and within weeks 14 students were involved.

The first task was selecting a topic. Initially there was contention and disagreement about this, but without perhaps being aware of it, the group acted out some of the everyday democratic decision making that takes place in Australian society, and consensus was eventually reached. The focus would be 'peer group pressure'.

Finally we decided on family breakdown. We had to break the subject down. We also had to break the group down, because no one was getting an equal say and meetings could be quite frustrating. So we split into three investigative groups: Communication breakdown, unemployment and substance abuse - all things we believed contributed to family breakdown.

Now the research began in earnest. We talked to members of parliament, went to youth services groups, unemployment offices, listened to members of Alcoholics Anonymous, spoke with family counsellors and talked to people whose families had broken down, trying to work out why. If we could find out why families broke down, we might be able to prevent further breakdowns. Through this research we came to the conclusion that it was the breakdown of communication that caused families to break down, and while unemployment or substance abuse could lead to communication breakdown, they acted as catalysts, and weren't the fundamental problems. Our research also indicated that domestic violence was a strong impetus to communication breakdown.

In addition to all this work, we spent two days coming to grips with social injustice in a very practical way. We spent a night driving around the streets of St Kilda and Fitzroy, then walked around Flinders Street station in twos and threes. We spent a night sleeping on the floor in a refuge and a day working in places like St Kilda City Mission. There was an entire new world opened to us to consider.

After spending a number of months researching, we organised an information evening titled 'Communication Not Conflict', which was also a huge task, especially in the midst of work requirements, and assessment tasks. It was only through the contributions of the entire group that we were able to pull the evening off.

The program began with discussion about the project, the work we had done and the retreat we had been on, followed by role plays depicting the sort of scenes we were trying to avoid. Our guest for the evening was Mr Andrew Fuller, a clinical psychologist, who talked to the audience about effective communication.

The general opinion at the end of the night was that six months had come together very well. We hadn't changed the world, but we had planted seeds to grow in the future. In a small way, we had taken steps forward. Now, we are ready to go end world hunger, bring world peace and fight cuts to Austudy; just give us six months.

As a clearer picture began to emerge of what peer pressure was really all about, the primary aim of the project came to be about empowering students to say no when pressured to conform to the ideal body image, to drink alcohol or take drugs. A survey was designed and distributed to Year 11 students at ten neighbouring schools. As the results began to filter in, the students quickly realised that a detailed statistical analysis would be inappropriate and a waste of time and energy. However the results did establish clearly a number of points:

- Students felt they were most susceptible to peer pressure when in years 8 and 9
- Students felt they were most pressured into consuming legal and illegal substances, and in fitting into certain groups.

Wanting to communicate a message about peer pressure it was agreed by the team that the most effective means of doing so was to stage an original piece of theatre titled 'Welcome To Our Party', to show classes at Kildare College that we, and therefore they, could and did choose to say no to certain pressures. We hoped to empower the audience to make a decision not to be influenced negatively by their peers, and to make choices that were beneficial to them as individuals. Perhaps more importantly the 14 Kildare students were themselves speaking out and taking action in a democratic manner.

The quest by the students for a more just and democratic society is perhaps just beginning though. After returning from Marian College in Melbourne, a summary of the project's findings and process was presented at a special assembly of the Kildare College Community.

Energy, fun and empowerment best describe the whole experience for the Kildare Justice and Democracy group, an experience which they will treasure as challenging and rewarding. Through initiative, committee, voluntary action and cooperation, the team have empowered others to say no, and demonstrated to themselves that it is OK to stand up and speak out against injustice in society.

The students involved were: Tania Wadell, Andrea Gill, Adeline Ho, Megan O'Toole, Nicole Anderson, Kristie Ceravolo, Kelly Tronnolone, Giulia Iannelli, Diana Hermann, Emma Jacobs, Allison Goss, Elizabeth Nicholas, Amanda Wyatt and Leila Hallack, supported and encouraged by staff including Wayne Gladigau, Jacinta Poskey, Karen Sheldon, Barbara Madonna and Ben Stairs.
The pressure of VCE on rural students

ST JOSEPHS COLLEGE, ECHUCA

The St Josephs group believed, but decided to verify, whether rural students were disadvantaged by the demands of VCE. The surveyed VCE students from five secondary schools in the Echuca, Rochester and Cohuna areas, ex-VCE students, parents and teachers of current VCE students. They learnt some hard and unexpected lessons, including the difficulty of gathering information from young Australians and of collating the answers and dealing with a wide range of responses so patterns emerged, which took weeks. They also learnt about the philosophy behind VCE and the processes of assessment and allocating of tertiary places.

The group had chosen this topic because they felt the expectations on them to gain unspeakably high TER scores to pursue their chosen tertiary courses was unfair. Their belief that every VCE subject, despite the combination they chose, should be available to them on demand, was another cause of resentment.

The surveys revealed that approximately half of the VCE students surveyed felt their parents and teachers were the source of stress. The other half owned up to the fact that they created stress for themselves. Many country students perceived that their distance from resources, expert help and small classes did disadvantage them. Financial disadvantage, especially for students from farming families, meant there was a need for part-time jobs but most chose this added pressure because the money increased the quality of their lives.

This was all measurable, but what fellow teacher, Kirrilee Phillips and I realised, long before the students did, was that their stress was created out of uncertainty. In a country where we can all map out our lives with the increasing certainty that we are in control, or so we think at 16 or 17, the control for these students seemed to have been handed over to the Board of Studies and VTAC (Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre).

The voyage of self-discovery was one of learning that for the first time in their lives they maybe couldn’t have exactly what they wanted just because they wanted it. But you can’t have the TER you want without hard work, talent and well thought out choices.

We laughed together, stressed together, and learnt that dreams are worth pursuing but that they change even while you’re dreaming. Our students won’t change the world or even feel they need to change the world with this research, but they do know that although there is no certainty, they can find answers, finish a job and do it really well. If they need to make a difference, they now know they can do it because they know how.

Judith O’Farrell, Teacher

Substance abuse among young people

MARIAN COLLEGE, SUNSHINE

The students at Marian College decided to expose the truth behind the stereotypes and perceptions about the western suburbs concerning the issue of substance abuse and possibly find a way of dealing with the problem.

The motivation and influence came from the media and the local community. The aim was to tackle issues that affect girls within Marian College and other young people within the community, to help us focus on other issues that perhaps affect the wider community.

We sought to find the different interpretations of substance abuse from students in Years 9 and 10, comparing perceptions of this abuse in eastern and western suburban schools.

To research this, many different avenues were explored. It was agreed to conduct a written survey to obtain a brief picture of students’ opinions and perceptions about substance abuse in specific areas of Melbourne. The purpose of the survey was not to find out who used what drugs and where, but to find out what people perceived to be the reality of substance abuse in the western suburbs.

A major part of the inquiry was learning about media portrayal of the west. Articles relating to drugs were collected and scrutinised. Students looked for stereotypes presented by the media, in print and on television. They found some interesting results that diminished the theory that only people in the western suburbs were drug abusers.

The students discovered that most of the respondents were aware of drugs and of people who used these regularly and had witnessed the effects of substance abuse. The range of substances included prescription drugs, socially acceptable substances such as alcohol and tobacco, as well as marijuana, heroin and cocaine. Respondents from each of the locality groups classified their own area as a high drug area and also singled out the centre of Melbourne.

The research showed that substance abuse does exist but is not as rampant or as isolated to certain areas in the western suburbs, as the media would have us believe. Unemployment and family breakdown are connected to the problem and not isolated to any one area. Generally, youth want to make a positive contribution and change the way people consider young people, substance abuse and other existing stereotypes. This project has helped our students realise that they can make a difference.

Within our own school community, the project members will assist in the development and implementation of a drug education program. The Justice and Democracy Project has provided a practical response for young people to the diminishing sense of community and growing sense of society as a marketplace. The students who have completed the project have demonstrated to us that they have a much broader sense of community than the current ideology would have us believe.

We hope that through this project we have engendered within the participants, and the school community, greater hope in being able to utilise current democratic structures to address issues of justice.
Making Springvale a clean and safe city

KILLESTER COLLEGE, SPRINGVALE

The Justice and Democracy Group at Killester College, Springvale chose to look at the issue of 'Springvale: A Clean and Safe Place to Live' because we've seen and heard all the negative attitudes towards our suburb. We divided into groups and interviewed, wrote and spoke to people who thought would assist us in completing each of our tasks successfully, including a local member of parliament, local police officers, shop traders, council members, school principals, shoppers and youth workers.

Our feeling at the outset that many people were concerned about this issue was confirmed by our interviews with various groups. Surprising however, were the differences in opinion and the fact that many groups seem to have their own ideas on how to tackle the problems, some of which are listed below.

- The police concerns about the needle exchange are opposite to what the youth workers and parliamentarians think.

- The youth workers believe that there should be people working with addicts on the streets, whereas there have been cutbacks in the funding for community services. The State Government, through the 'Turning the Tide' project is emphasising educational and preventative programs within schools but not the problems on the streets.

- The police want to focus more on the drug dealers - with the laws for arresting drug users to be easier - whereas the shoppers want the users off the streets and tougher laws.

- The shop traders believe it is the responsibility of the council and shoppers to keep the streets clean, but do not consider themselves to be responsible to contribute to the cleanliness of the area.

On reflection, we believe that in order to make any successful changes, the various groups need to work from a unified stance and that this issue should not become a political or economic one.

Recommendations

It is clear that a majority of the community perceive the problem to be an issue regarding youth. As such, we would like an opportunity to state our views:

1. We believe the 'Turning the Tide' project is essential to education school students of the physical and social consequences of substance abuse. We agree with the focus on harm minimisation in education. It is important that the youth know about the harmful effects of drugs and be able to be resilient and make informed choices.

2. As members of the Springvale community, we regularly see drug activity on the streets. We often wonder what makes us different from these young people and why they became users and we have not. We know the difficulties of living in two cultures, having language barriers or having family problems. There is also a growing sense of limited prospects for the future. We also know that boredom can sometimes be a problem and that for some young people, all they have to do on weekends is to 'hang out' with friends and get bored together because there is nothing else to do.

All of us have experienced negative peer pressure at some stage. Most of us can turn to family, friends or teachers to talk to when we are feeling down, but not everyone feels able to do this. This is where we feel that youth focused centres are essential. We are concerned that a large amount of money can go into a project like 'Turning the Tide' and yet there seems to be very little money available for youth centres and other facilities which youth and their families can access.

In the interests of the 'common good', resources have to be increased or distributed more fairly to help those young people on the streets who are either homeless and/or do not go to school. Youth centres need to be open for longer hours to offer after school, evening and weekend activities as this is when young people are most bored and at risk.

We have heard about the 'Springvale Sports Project' commencing in September this year, to offer sporting opportunities for young people and their families, with a focus on those from non-English speaking backgrounds. We believe that this is a step in the right direction, but we are still concerned about those young people who are already homeless or trapped in the drug cycle, and the resources and help available to them. There seems to be more emphasis on preventative measures rather than follow-up and support of those already hooked on drugs.

3. We believe the overall look of Springvale is the responsibility of everyone in the community. On a day-to-day basis, though, we believe the shop traders could play a bigger role, especially the larger ones where a lot of the drug activity seems to be centred. Security is a difficult problem for police to deal with alone, and in the spirit of good citizenship, perhaps the big businesses could contribute to the security of the area, perhaps by improving the lighting in the car parks at night, or employing and increasing private security to act as a presence. This may deter some of the drug activity and increase the sense of security for shoppers.
How Do You Do Democracy?

The educational system must to a higher degree recognise that students are capable of participating in school democracy, and that students should have a voice in the running of the school they attend. With this in mind, the Danish High School Students' National Organisation (GLO) has organised an international democracy project with the purpose of creating a more democratic school system, where pupils are not only taught vocational knowledge, but are educated for citizenship in a democratic society.

International conference

The project mainly aims at students at the age of 16-21. We find it fairly important that it is students' views that are illuminated, therefore an international conference for students is to be held from 16th-18th January, 1998. Though the conference will be held in Denmark, the main language of the conference will be English. At the conference, the participating students will discuss different aspects of democracy in education and we will try to reach a conclusion on how to create a more democratic upper secondary school and which form/structure of school democracy this requires.

Pilot project

The form of school democracy, which the international conference finds to be the ideal, will be tested in a pilot project in Denmark and abroad. This is necessary in order to know if the democracy form works in reality. The pilot project will last for a year, during which it will be observed. The outcome of the whole democracy project will be two reports about school democracy and the involvement of students. Both reports will be translated into English.

Binh Pham, aged 17, International Secretary, GLO (Danish School Students' Union)

from Education Now, Issue 18, Winter 1997/8

Ed: We have no further information about this project, but perhaps Education Now can help with queries. They are at:

113 Arundel Drive, Bramcote Hills, Nottingham NG9 3FQ, Britain

Inclusive Approaches to Student Participation

The Queensland Department of Education's Special Programs Schools Scheme (SPSS) supported a range of approaches to student participation over several years. A report of their work in this area is now available from the Department. Though not 'published' as such, copies are available on request from the Studies Directorate. As well as an overview and collection of resource articles, individual reports from schools are included: 'Activating the Voice of Youth', 'Peacemakers and Participation', 'Peer Support Program', 'Students Participation in Schools' Merger', 'Students Planning for the Future', 'Empowerment Through Youth Forum Action Research' and so on.

Contact:

SPSS, Level 18, Education House, 30 Mary Street, Brisbane QLD 4000.
Phone: (07) 3237 0834; fax: (07) 3237 1175

YOUTH '98 (16-19 APRIL, 1998)
UNIVERSITY of MELBOURNE
"Young people: Public Spaces; Public Voices"

For details and registration, contact:
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(03) 9344 9633
<yrc@edfac.unimelb.edu.au>

Australian Clearinghouse for Youth Studies
(03) 6226 2591
<NCYS@educ.utas.edu.au>

REGISTER NOW!
www.acys.utas.edu.au/ncys/youth98.htm

December 1997 - February 1998
National Youth Week Logo Competition

The Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs has announced a national competition, open to people aged 12 to 21 years, to design a logo for National Youth Week. First prize is $2000; runner-up - $750. Entries must be received by 31 March 1998 and must be accompanied by an entry form (on the back of the advertising poster). Copies of the information have been sent to secondary schools, TAFEs and other institutions.

For more information, contact DEETYA on (06) 240 8111 or see the LOUD website at: http://www.loud.org.au

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Civics, Citizenship and SRCs

Teachers - are you concerned about the way in which Civics and Citizenship is to be introduced into your school? Then why not attend the Civics, Citizenship and SRC Conference to be held at Sydney University, February 27 and 28. For details, contact Ralph Murray (fax 02 4348 4005).

Getting It Together - Workshop

"Empowerment for Young People"

(14 to 20 years old)

A weekend workshop, in June 1998, is being offered by Glen Ochr and Ed McKinley of Commonground Training Resources Inc. For more details contact them at PO Box 474, Seymour 3661 Vic. Phone: (03) 5793 8257; Fax: (03) 5793 8400.

UNESCO Round Tables Stress Need for Youth's Participation in Decision-Making

Appointing a youth representative to UNESCO's Executive Board, which examines the implementation of the decisions taken by the General Conference, was one idea suggested at a round table held on 31 October on "How young people can help spread the ideals of UNESCO'.

The round table was one of three on the subject of youth, a priority theme for the 29th Session of the General Conference. The other two covered "Youth in distress" and "Youth and tolerance". All three, which included expert panellists (among them French author Viviane Forrester) and participants from concerned non-governmental organisations, underlined the importance of actively involving young people in decision-making.

The debate on youth and UNESCO ideals aimed to propose specific strategies to encourage young people's active contribution to the Organisation's promotion of peace, justice, human rights, development, culture and science at the service of humanity, and "a better life for all" summarised Francine Fournier, Assistant Director General for the Social and Human Sciences.

Participants pointed out some of the problems faced. UNESCO is better known in developing countries than in the developed world, said delegates from Holland and Iceland, and UNESCO's message is so diffuse, said Australia's representative, "that it's hard to know what to put on the tee-shirt". Modern communication tools such as the internet or even fax machines are not available in many countries, pointed out the Kuwaiti delegate, and special efforts are needed to touch the hardest to reach groups, such as street children and those living in isolated rural areas, said the delegates from Sri Lanka and Uzbekistan.

Several lines of action were identified. The importance of government commitment, of school curricula and teacher training was stressed. UNESCO, said participants, must work closely with its National Commissions and, because youth relates to youth, with a diversity of young people's organisations. Existing networks must be supported and extended, including the Organisation's Network of Associated Schools (ASNET) of 4000 schools worldwide and UNESCO clubs, of which there are 6000.

Other suggestions evoked the benefits of inter-regional youth camps and other exchange programs, the possibility of training of young people as UNESCO ambassadors, the creation of a clearinghouse for ideas related to youth issues, and the addition of UNESCO hours to state radio programs.

In the related forum on 'Youth in distress', participants discussed the lack of jobs and the threat of social marginalisation facing many of the world's young people.

Viviane Forrester, French author of L'Horreur Economique, said that more needs to be done to help youth deal with the forces of globalisation which, she said, were less an economic system than unleashed speculative market forces. "Young people are told there is only one model for life. They are supposed to get a salaried job and there are fewer and fewer of them," she said.

Mamadou N'Doye, Senegal's Minister for Basic Education and Literacy, noted that education can play a role in helping young people but it must be restructured to move beyond the basics and teach them "how to organise and how to have their message heard".

The round table on 'Youth and tolerance' provided an opportunity to review the progress of reflection on the subject since 1995, the United Nations Year of Tolerance. All participants supported the idea that educating young people in tolerance can eradicate the problems of racism, xenophobia and extremism.

Flavio Fava de Moraes, rector of the University of Sao Paulo (Brazil), insisted on science education as the key to tolerance, as science "offers love of truth, a quest for knowledge and a sense of responsibility based on ethics and openness ... thus permitting cooperation and dialogue between different groups."

Mikko Cort's T'ilez, representing the Finnish Ministry of Education, noted that results of tolerance education initiatives in Finland, Sweden and Denmark are encouraging. Young people "are more open to differences" than their elders, and "they refuse organised xenophobia" - except if they are taught a different lesson at home, indicating the need for tolerance education also outside school.

Local and Overseas Publications Received

Connect receives many publications directly or indirectly relevant to youth and student participation. We can't lend or sell these, but if you want to look at or use them, contact us on: (03) 9489 9052

STUDENT PUBLICATIONS:

Australian:

The Observer (St Hilda's School, Qld)

OTHER PUBLICATIONS:

Australian:

Collective Notes (COSHG, Vic) Dec 1997; Feb 1998
Community Based Learning (Jim Cumming - discussion paper for Dussedorp Skills Forum, NSW) August '97
Curriculum Perspectives (ACSA, Deakin West, ACT) Vol 17 No 4; November 1997
Education Alternatives (Caulfield East, Vic) Vol 6 Nos 7, 8, 9, 10 (Sept, Oct, Nov, Dec 1997)
Impact (ACOSS, Darlinghurst, NSW) Sept 1997
"Inclusive Approaches to Student Participation" - Reports on Projects Funded Through SPSS (SPSS, Brisbane, Qld) September 1996
Network News (Network of Community Activities, Surry Hills, NSW) September, December 1997
Other Ways (Alternative Education Resource Group, Chirnside Park, Vic) Issues 73, 74, Sept, Dec 1997
"Oz Youth Speaks to the World" (Student Speeches at the 1995 International Principals' Conference, Sydney: PASTA) December 1997
Rights Now! (National Children's and Youth Law Centre, NSW) Vol 5 No 2, August 1997; January 1998
"Under Our Skin" - Racism Seminar Report (Shaping Tomorrow Today Association, Vic) August 1997

Youth Studies Australia (NCYS, Hobart, Tas) Vol 16 Numbers 3 and 4, September and December 1997

Overseas:

AERO-Gramme (AERO, New York, USA) #22, Fall 1997
Education Now (Education Now, Nottingham, UK) Nos 17, 18; Autumn, Winter 1997-8
Leadership (National Association of Secondary School Principals - Department of Student Activities, Reston, VA, USA) September, October, December 1997, January, February 1998
LibED (Bristol, UK) No 28; Summer 1997
National Coalition News (NCACS, New Mexico, USA) Vol 22, Nos 2, 3; Fall 1997, Winter 1998
Options in Learning (ALL PIE, NY, USA) No 17
'Blues & Boogie': The Summerhill Reunion Band (Summerhill Foundation, UK) - tape

Documents

The documents listed in this column are of general background value. A photocopy is available for research purposes. The length and cost (to cover copying and postage) is listed. Please order by code number.

A full, computerised index of these documents is now available from Connect for $3; this can be accessed and printed by topic, key-word etc or simply sequentially.

Code Description/Pages/Cost

445 "Under Our Skin" - Report of a Seminar on Racism (The Shaping Tomorrow Today Association, 10 August 1997) (53 pp; $5.30)

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• Cross-referenced index to contents of Connect back issues ($3) $ ........

Miscellaneous Resources:

• Students and Work - 1985 Connect reprint booklet #5 ($5) $ ........
• ‘Youth Radio’ issue of 3CR’s CRAM Guide (1985) ($1) $ ........
• Democratic Decision Making in Schools - Victorian PEP (1987) ($3) $ ........
• SRC Pamphlets Set (6 pamphlets; Youth Affairs Council of Vic) ($5) $ ........
• *** Democracy Starts Here! Junior School Councils at Work (1996) ($7) *** $ ........

Foxfire Resources:

• Sometimes a Shining Moment (Wigginton) ($25) $ ........
• Foxfire 9 (Doubleday Anchor) ($25) $ ........
• Foxfire: 25 Years (Doubleday) ($25) $ ........
• A Foxfire Christmas (Doubleday hardcover) ($25) $ ........
• Shining Moments - Foxfire video (1 hour) (loan for 1 week: $5) $ ........

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• Cross-referenced Index to photocopies of documents ($3) $ ........

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