This issue of Connect features reports from a number of Student Conferences around Australia at the end of 1985. There has been a recent trend to identify 'student participation' as the presence of students on committees and official councils. Student Participation, of course, is not that. Student participation applies centrally to learning activities, and most articles in Connect have dealt with that.

It is, however, important that student voices are heard in the forums where education decisions are being made and the development of student representation in such forums and the development of representative student organisations are important aspects of that process. Apart from anything else, such representation draws attention to the need for student participation in curriculum decision making.

The recent student conferences are also important elements in that large picture. As well as dealing with organisational questions or issues of 'rights', the conferences have debated the critical education questions facing us all. For example, representatives from schools in Victoria's South-Central Region recently met under the title: 'Who Owns the Curriculum?' (We hope to carry a report of this next issue.)

Such conferences are important, but must be seen within the context of student participation in learning. Without that context, conferences, representation, advocacy and committees become hollow excuses to sidetrack a few students into ineffective bureaucracy!

Roger Holdsworth

HELP!

Connect is finding it difficult to 'make ends meet'. After several brave and expensive issues, we are faced with something of a financial crisis. Your comments are appreciated on this proposition: should the subscription price rise? Perhaps:

* 1 year (normal): $10
* 1 year (concession): $5
* 1 year (institutional): $20

What do you think?

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We have carried a number of articles about 'Credit for Participation' in Connect over the past year or so. A detailed study Credit and Support will be published by West Education Centre and PSP in Victoria this year.

However, the whole issue is not simple:

PUTTING THE PARTICIPATION BACK INTO REPRESENTATION

Roger Holdsworth

Giving academic credit to representation contains some major traps. These are not organisational traps - the wealth of available material and the publication of Credit and Support will go a long way towards solution of such questions of process.

No, what I'm referring to are the educational traps.

After all, in Victoria we have a statement in Ministerial Paper 6 ("Curriculum Development and Planning in Victoria") that:

9.1 The Government intends that all students have access to educational experiences that are challenging, purposeful and comprehensive and that result in all students improving their educational achievement.

(my emphasis)

and this is further developed:

9.3 The task of ensuring effective access requires that schools ... design courses so that students may participate in each area of learning and are not prevented from continuing their learning as a result of school organisation ... (pp 12-13)

To put it bluntly, how can we justify giving time and formal credit within the school's curriculum to learning activities to which necessarily only a few students can gain access? Aren't we just establishing another elite, exclusive subject area (and potentially opening that area to already advantaged students)?

Let's look at how representation develops. Within a school of, say, 600 students, decisions of the type made by a School Council (school curriculum and discipline policies, resource allocation, forward planning and so on) are generally dealt with at some distance from the forums of the whole school body. A few small (alternative or community) schools have developed procedures by which the whole school community can meet as one to consider, argue, investigate and decide upon policy directions, but such an approach within a large institution is cumbersome and probably unmanageable. Thus forms of representation are developed.

Perhaps there are three students on the School Council and they, in turn, are drawn from and/or advised by a Student Representative Council (SRC) - consisting perhaps of two students from each home or class group. In the best of circumstances, the students on the School Council meet regularly with the SRC to report on issues facing the School Council and, where necessary, the representatives on the SRC return to their 'constituents' for discussion and advice. Perhaps both the SRC and the home/class meetings are regularly timetabled to allow this to happen and are recognised to that extent as important components of the school's curriculum or organisational structure.

It has been argued at some length that both time (to carry out the role of representative) and formal credit for learning are important. Not least among the reasons has been a desire to ensure that no-one is de-barred from becoming a representative.
But that's not enough. To repeat the dilemma – only a few can be representatives and how can we support credit for something to which only a few can gain access? In the approach we outlined above, the representatives on the bodies act essentially as individuals. Themselves active participants in the decision-making process and guided regularly by links with their constituents, they are still not affecting the educational passivity of the great body of students.

There is a way out of the dilemma but it is a difficult and challenging curriculum decision. Participation must be put back into representation.

An approach to representation that identifies it as primarily participative enables us to turn the question round by asking: how can we transform the nature of the issues under consideration and the participation process so that it is necessarily inclusive and common? That is, how can we build the issues into a curriculum that is open to all, important to all and through which, in various ways, all students can contribute to achieving commonly agreed goals? The issues of recognition through allocation of time, credit and support then become the 'normal' curriculum and administrative questions of the school – ones of goal setting and allocation of resources to their achievement – and student participation is essential to the ways in which the school's learning program is implemented.

In such participatory representation, the presence of representatives upon a decision-making body is only one part of a broader form of participation by all students in the issues under consideration. That will mean the development of regular forums (an SRC and class group meetings) for discussion of issues, in order to inform and draw direction. That's a necessary condition, but still not sufficient. Participatory representation can and should go beyond that, in directions that are educative rather than administrative.

An educative approach regards the many policy issues under consideration to be central to the curriculum processes of the school and thus relevant to active consideration and investigation within the teaching and learning strategies of the school. They are planned as part of the democratically determined curriculum of that school.

So, for example, development of a school policy on rights and responsibilities for the whole school community would involve, firstly, an understanding of why such a policy is an important part of the learning of the community and secondly, how development of that policy might involve the active participation of all students in investigation of the issue as part of their classroom practice. Various classroom groups might look at aspects of the issue, coordinating their interests through their SRC representatives. One group might decide to interview parents or to draw them into active participation on the policy determination; another group might investigate existing charters of rights at international level; another might collect examples of practices from other schools, together with processes of development and reactions from the school communities; still another might grapple with the political issues associated with an Australian Bill of Rights. A variety of activities, adopted with attention to age, interest, experience and abilities, would aim to have as many students as possible active participants in issues that affect both their behaviour in the school and the role of the school in its wider social context. Final decision making on such a policy and its implementation, monitoring and evaluation would follow as a natural consequence of this education process.

The process of participatory representation becomes concerned with providing a means for improving the learning experiences of all about significant issues, rather than either regarding representation as an external task or providing access to a learning experience only for a few representatives.

I can outline such an approach briefly, but of course I can't dismiss the difficulties involved in such massive curriculum re-orientation. Present practices of representation are a stage (and must be seen to be that) towards such a broader view of participation. Students are still working on these bodies and are still being advised and informed by student organisations. Representation is, in many circumstances, a legislative reality and requirement. It is important that, as part of the development of student participation in that curriculum re-orientation, representation of students continues, and continues to expose its needs and opportunities.

Such changes don't occur by waiting until the perfect scenario of student participation can be put into place wholesale or by solving questions of credit at classroom level and slowly
extending the bounds of participation into 'upper levels' only after processes are secure in the classroom.

Change is a more complex political process, that advances jerkily, seizing opportunities and developing in several directions at once. Hopefully such directions cohere - a major issue is to make sure they do. In such a view, student representation in its present (imperfect) form is one more step, an opportunity to be developed towards broader models of participation. And that brings us back to the immediate issues of credit and support.

It does, however, sound one enormous warning note. Not every form of representation and not every form of participation is deserving of credit and support. The measure must be: is such representation aimed at the maximisation of the participation of all in activities that lead to an improved learning experience for all?

(This article is adapted from sections of the forthcoming Schools Commission publication: Student Participation and the Participation and Equity Program.)

Friends of Connect

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

SUSTAINING SUBSCRIBER ($100; 2 years):
Disadvantaged Schools Program (West Melbourne, Vic)

PATRON SUBSCRIBER ($20 pa):
Andrew Ius (Williamstown, Vic)
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Ray Davis (Preston, Vic)
Lesley Thomas (Broadmeadows, Vic)
Keith Gove (East Malvern, Vic)
Welfare Coordinator, Mornington TS (Vic)
Robin Blackley (Sea Lake, Vic)
John Nash (St Lucia, Q)
Bruce Wilson (Carlton, Vic)
Bruce Riley (New Town, Tas)
Dr S D'Urso (St Lucia, Q)

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forms such as holding small group discussions on the agenda before meetings, increasing the number of student votes from 2 to 4 (2 each schools and TAFE), developing TAFE student networks, paying TAFE students sitting fees, approaching schools Principals about credit for stu-

I am attempting to collect products of oral history/cultural journalism projects which are being done at the 8th grade level or below. If you could send examples of younger students' work or inform me about how to obtain such work, I would appreciate it very much.

Brad Hogue, Professor of Elementary Education
Department of Curriculum and Instruction
Lamar University, PO Box 10034
Beaumont, Texas 77710 USA

In 1986, our school plans to run a Journalism elective at year 9 level. Our aim is to involve the students in a close examination of different newspaper and magazine styles, emphasising organisation, reader appeal and participation, function, gathering of information and production. Ultimately, it is intended that the students should produce the annual school magazine.

We would appreciate any help, suggestions, advice or curriculum resources.

Sally-Anne Blakka,
Warrnambool HS, Grafton Rd., Warrnambool 3280

Recently an organisation of secondary students called LASA (Liverpool Association of Student Activities) was formed in the Liverpool Region of NSW.

Michael Brown,
LASA, PO Box 225, Engadine 2233

Got some really useful articles last year ... Some of us are interested in getting kids accreditation for out of regular class activities of our school and used some of your material. Thanks.

Jim Boyce, Essendon Technical School, Vic

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students on committees etc ... One ACT College is handing over the running of the school to students for a day while staff are on an in-service .... The SA Education Department has declared 1986 'Year of the Parent and Student in Schools' ...

... The Schools Authority in the ACT is supporting circulation of a Draft Bill of Student Rights. (To Sue Rechter)
SASO - the State Association of Student Organisations in NSW - was formed at Kelso High School in Bathurst in early December.

The project was originally proposed at the Annual General Meeting of the Regional Association of Student Government (Western Region, NSW) attended by more than 100 students from Western and Liverpool Region schools and held as part of its annual senior leadership camp in April 1985. The project has since been pursued through negotiations with the Department of Education's Western Region Director, and through him to other educational regions of NSW and representatives of the Department of Education's Head Office.

Funding from the International Youth Year Secretariat in NSW enabled the conduct of a very successful workshop/meeting over the weekend of 7-8 December at Kelso High School.

The event was attended by over 60 students and more than 20 adults, representing five of the ten Department of Education Regions, the Youth Affairs Council of NSW (YACON), Youth Forum, Parents and Citizens Association of NSW, the Disadvantaged Schools Program, the Department of Education Head Office and the Inner City Education Centre.

The workshop and formal meeting was conceived, organised and run by experienced students involved in RASG, with the assistance of six teachers from different Western Region schools. The students involved in leadership capacities come from different and distant schools within the far-flung region, from Broken Hill to Bathurst.

As a result of the formal meeting held on Sunday, December 8 (and chaired by Kelso High School student Ross Miller with two other students, Liz Rapley and Kate Conlan acting as secretaries) the following resolutions and recommendations were adopted:

1. To establish a statewide organisation of students.
2. To call this organisation SASO (State Association of Student Organisations).
3. To set up a steering committee to further the recommendations of the workshop/meeting participants in regard to:
   - formal recognition by the Department of Education and other youth bodies;
   - activities of the organisation;
   - structure of the organisation;
   - funding;
   - other matters as suggested by regional groups.

The steering committee so formed consists of four student representatives from the already established associations - RASG and LASA (Liverpool Association of Student Activities) - and one from the other regions represented at the meeting - with the proviso that representatives from other regions may join once regional approval is achieved. Representatives from YACON and Youth Forum are also part of the steering committee.

The steering committee will hold its first meeting in Bathurst on the last weekend in February.

Charles Kingston, Bathurst
The Guidelines of the Participation and Equity Program emphasise the importance of student participation in creating education change, by being part of decision-making structures and finding new ways of learning and working with teachers, parents and Principals.

This is a report about a PEP student meeting at Katherine High School (in the Northern Territory) over the weekend of October 19-21, 1985. This meeting brought three groups together:

* the Northern Territory GABFEST;
* student PEP Committee members from State and Territory Government and Non-Government PEP Committees;
* students active in regional student networks from other States.

GABFEST

GABFEST is another name for a conference of Northern Territory students. There have now been three GABFESTS (December 1984, May 1985, October 1985). Issues at past GABFESTs have been drugs, juvenile crime, discipline in schools, strategies for using the media and education issues. A number of substantial recommendations have been made to the NT Department of Education. (See Study of Society, Vol 16 No 2, August 1985).

PEP STUDENTS

The student members of State and Territory Government and Non-Government PEP Committees have met four times since September 1984 to share experiences and information, to build up a support network and to develop skills to help them in their PEP and student participation work in their own schools, networks and Committees. The meetings have been made possible by the Schools Commission's support of the Youth Affairs Council of Australia's PEP Student Participation Project.

STATE AND REGIONAL NETWORKS

Most States now have their own student networks, either at a Regional or State level. GABFEST is one of these. Represented at this meeting were the Regional Association of Student Governments (RASG) from NSW, the State Council of Students from SA, the Southern Regional SRC from Tasmania, Northern and Western Metropolitan Regional networks from Victoria and the Youth Action Program network in Victoria.
AIMS OF THE MEETING

Because almost 100 students would be attending, with a diverse range of experience and knowledge (years 8 to 12), we wanted to arrange a program which could be useful to everybody. Rather than focus on PEP, education or policy issues with recommendations as outcomes, we settled on these aims:

* to enable participants to grasp, simply and directly, what participation means for them and how they can extend their participation in different areas of their lives;
* to provide skills and information which extend participants' ability to participate in practical and specific ways;
* to provide for particular skill needs which have been identified by participants;
* to offer the opportunity for information/experience sharing between students who are active in student participation in different systems;
* to produce concrete conference outcomes in the form of student statements and recommendations about education issues and particularly the role of students in education decision making.

We designed an experiential learning process which drew on our creativity in different ways. By the end of day one, we hoped all participants would have formed in their own way a positive sense of power and how to develop more of it.

SATURDAY

9.30-10.30 INTRODUCTION SESSION

The introduction session explained the aims of the meeting and the proposed format. It was explained that involvement in meeting sessions was voluntary and that those not wishing to give their best should withdraw.

It was emphasised that the meeting was about gaining skills to go away and use.

A broad context for participation was set by talking about all the decisions which are currently being taken about young people and about education and asking: 'can we leave it to the experts?' Student and youth participation was presented as part of a general desire of people to control their lives and to have more say in decisions which affect their lives.

Networks as vehicles for enhancing participation were discussed, and an invitation issued to the National Youth Council of Australia's 34th Council mee-
ting to be held in December at Rottnest Island.

Participants were reminded that the Federal Government had publicly stated a commitment to opening up access to and consultation with young people in particular.

Student leaders then conducted a series of warm-up exercises designed to build confidence and group interaction.

11.15-12.30 IMAGINEERING

The imagineering exercise used the method of guided fantasy to provide resources for each participant and the group to develop their understanding of power and participation.

Each exercise takes about 10-15 minutes and involves participants being guided into a state of relaxation and then slowly taken through a suggested scene or set of images by the group leader.

After each scene, participants quietly record (in pictures, writing, notes etc) what they had imagined.

a) The experience of strength:

Participants were firstly taken back in their lives to a scene where they had achieved something which was really important to them - perhaps where they had wanted to do something, had encountered difficulties and had overcome them. They were asked to relive that experience as vividly and completely as possible. They then recorded that image, had a brief break and relaxed back into the second 'journey'.

8
b) How will we be living 20 years on?

This second journey took participants into space and then back to earth in 20 years time. The intent here was to bring out uncensored, unpremeditated visions of the future. Again these were recorded and participants relaxed for the final section.

c) How do I want us to be living in 20 years time?

Discussion around these points lead to a picture of what we mean by power - not power over others, but power to do, to share.

2.00-2.30 CREATING A PRESENTATION

Each group was then asked to create a presentation of some form - a song, a dance, a mime, a play, a 'sculpture' or a talk etc - of about 3-minutes duration, which explains to the whole group where they saw they lacked power or exercised power. Each presentation also had to leave behind an artefact to remind all participants of the situation the group was presenting. It was hoped that the collection of artefacts would help us all to focus on an overall picture of power.

2.30-3.30 PRESENTATIONS

Here we are forced to try to describe highly visual and dramatic events with clumsy prose or fragmentary frozen photographs. The skits were uniformly excellent, imaginative and entertaining.

"Power we don't want" was depicted by one group as a besieged bureaucrat or politician. He sat at his desk surrounded by a group of angry constituents whose requests he had not fulfilled. The group started a 'war-dance' around him, drawing people from the audience into the dance, until he collapsed in a mass of red tape/toilet paper.

A group of students was trying to convince the Vice-Principal that the school could have a community barbecue to get the parents involved and the students should attend, instead of the usual report nights. They have a frustrating dialogue. The Vice-Principal cannot conceive that a student-initiated idea could be useful until the Principal enters and listens sympathetically to their well-argued case.

One group acted out a scene where a very large joint was being passed around and reluctant members were being pressed to try it (negative peer pressure).

Another depicted an organisational hierarchy by means of a graduated set of chairs. A piece of work was progressively approved by each level of the hierarchy until it reached the top, whereupon it was arbitrarily chucked in the waste-paper basket. The 'lower' levels of the hierarchy leave their chairs and confront the boss together - "hey, that was a good piece of work!"
Another group formed a human 'wall of apathy' confronted by a lone crusader - "don't you care? You can do something!" No response. "You idiots!" The wall stiffens and becomes a defensive wall. However, one by one they are persuaded to join the crusader until the last defiant person is carried along by the now motivated group.

Another approach was that of the group who divided into two and were each 'fed' (on pieces of paper) either nourishing or destructive ingredients. The half which were fed 'Lack of Communication', 'Dependency', 'Pain', 'No Power Over the Future', 'Depression', 'Death', 'Disaster', 'Destruction' etc, wilted and died before our eyes. The half fed 'Consideration', 'Guidance', 'Help' etc flourished and grew strong.

Still another idea drew on the results of the 'imagineering' exercises. A portrait of a bleak future and a desirable future were created as drawings and contrasted. Components of the bright future were written on paper and progressively revealed by the group in line: 'Togetherness', 'Respect', 'Skills', 'Goals', 'Confidence', 'Knowledge', 'Motivation', 'Achievement' and a prose/poem capped off the presentation - it ended: "But what was this: two humans natural, free and naked, in a world full of splendour, in a land full of fruit trees except one - the apple."

3.30-4.00 LARGE GROUP PICTURE

The over-riding message from almost all groups was: "Together we can do it" and "Unity is power". There was a clear conception of "power we don't want" (in the form of an obstructive politician, tyrannous Vice-Principal, a despotic boss, negative peer pressure, defensiveness and apathy). Power was basically understood as 'power to' rather than 'power over' or 'power against' - a positive regenerative, force. Power was shown as a function of the way people are related in organisations, as something which can be nurtured or destroyed by neglect and 'labelling'.

4.00 - 5.00 BLANKETY-BLANKS

The formal sessions finished with a fun version of 'participation blankety blanks', where groups responded to questions like: "To participate fully, I need to have/know/be ...." This was used to orient the participants to think about skill etc development needed to support and build their participation. It was an introduction to choosing workshops for the next day.
Sunday:

In a brief introduction session, a mixed student/adult group of facilitators reviewed with the participants what had been learnt from Saturday's program and reminded the meeting that the workshops were about gaining skills for participation. It was suggested that workshop groups might want to develop statements or recommendations for the whole meeting to consider, as a product of their sessions.

It was strongly emphasised that the best questions participants could leave with were: "How are we going to do things ourselves?" and "What do we expect of ourselves?"

Each participant was asked to nominate three workshops. These were then timetabled to give as many people as possible the chance to do the workshops of their choice.

The following are very brief descriptions of the timetabled workshops:

Self-Esteem Building

This workshop used a series of role plays to explore more effective ways of expressing our feelings and wants in situations where we might find ourselves lacking in confidence. (Helen Coburn)

Theatre in education

Participants took part in a number of games designed to help people understand power between people and in groups. (Tie-Dye Group)

Nutrition

This workshop looked at how power and food are related. Are healthy people more powerful? Is there such a thing as the Politics of Food? (Mandy Lee)

Aboriginal Culture

This workshop focussed on Aboriginal painting. Some of the meanings behind the paintings and materials used were explained. After a demonstration, participants tried their hand at their own paintings. (Benita Bennett, Jane Raunyu, Liz Fredericks, Jackie Robinson, Mandy Muir)

How to Set Up an SRC

Participants in this workshop shared problems and possible solutions about SRCs in their schools. A role play was used to explore ways of gaining support from students and others. (James McLachlan, Geoffrey Willing)

Planning, Organising and Fundraising

We explored why we should plan - so that we're not leaping from crisis to crisis, and because a plan gives us freedom to choose (rather than getting locked into one path). We looked at tools for planning: diaries/calendars, files, lists, work programs and using our energy wisely.

What's a work program? Just a way of asking: what do we want to do? Why? who's involved? details of the task? done by when (timelines)? how much? where do we go from here?
It's no coincidence that fundraising comes nearly last on the list: if we plan well, we'll work out how to do that too.

We looked at whether it's better to plan for others or with others. Planning together means we are accountable to each other and that we are all learning/developing in the task.

The exercise we did was a role play of the Katherine High School working out how to raise funds to hold a GAB-FEST. Gavin was a stunning 'SRC President' and got a run for his money from the other 'student representatives'. But we did manage to convince the 'Principal' that our plans for fundraising were good and deserved her support. (Jackie Ohlin)

Student Participation in the Classroom

This workshop looked at the different experiences in the group about how much say students have in the classroom. "How to approach teachers who won't listen?" was identified as a major problem. The workshop came up with some recommendations (see below). (Roger Holdsworth)

The Process of Change in Schools

"Who has the power of decision making in schools?" and "What are the fears and self-interests which people have in decision making?" were two questions explored through discussion and role play.

Communication Skills

This workshop also used a role play to explore communication within a group which has a particular task to achieve. Participants looked at ways of dealing with destructive behaviour and conflict and promoting constructive behaviour in order to "get the job done". (Sue Rechter)

Youth Policy Exposed

We explored "what is policy?" by doing a brainstorm of what we think it is and listing who makes policy. We could see that policy is also a process, not just an end product. The action we can take to influence and change policy is critical.

We looked at ways we can input to the content of policy - ourselves as 'experts', ourselves as 'innovators', and having set ourselves up, why we can't be wimps and not do the job.

Some ways are:

* getting organised: a few heads are better than one;
* realising it could take a while to achieve the goals we set, but not being diverted. (Jackie Ohlin)

Networking

Participants shared experiences about their membership of networks and looked at aims, structures, coordination and resources for networking and how to set one up. The workshop recommended the formation of a national student network.

Meeting procedures

We worked through some basic points about the roles of various people in formal meetings and the rules under which the meetings run. We tried out some approaches and had a look at the video "Seen and Heard". (Roger Holdsworth)

Student Rights

After a general discussion on 'what are rights?', students produced a list of student rights based on their own experiences in their schools. (see recommendations section below) (Sue Rechter)

Accreditation (Credit for Participation)

Participants in this workshop looked at 'what is accreditation?' and 'why is it important?' They looked at specific obstacles and problems, recognition for their activities and at specific ways this could be achieved in schools (see recommendations section) (Roger Holdsworth)

On all these workshops, guide-sheets are available from the Youth Affairs Council of Australia (PO Box 108, St Kilda South 3182).
Recommendations:

Although the meeting was not designed to produce policy statements or recommendations, several workshops generated statements. These were debated and agreed to as statements and recommendations from the whole meeting in the final plenary session on Sunday.

1. Student Rights

That the following be adopted as a statement of Student Rights from this Conference:

* Students should have the right of movement in the school grounds;
* Students should have the right to use sporting and educational facilities at lunchtime;
* Students should have the right to have comfortable surroundings;
* Students have the right to appropriate educational facilities for each subject;
* Students have the right to a free education;
* Students have the right to student concessions in travel and leisure activities;
* Students have a right to freedom from sexual, physical, verbal harassment and corporal punishment by staff and students;
* Students have the right to have friendship and respect between students and teachers;
* Students have the right to be treated with respect and without discrimination of any kind;
* Students have the right to be innocent until proven guilty;
* Students and parents should have the right to information about important developments before decisions are made;
* Students have the right to know things that happen at the school and are the concerns of everyone in the school;
* Students have the right to form our own opinions and have them respected;
* Students have a right to ask questions without fear of reprisal;
* Students should be able to protest and take action about issues that concern them;
* Students have a right to form an organisation or action group to present student interests;
* Students should have the right to have an SRC in every school;
* Students have a right to a say in course content;

* Students have a right to negotiate rules and a right to know those rules won't be bent by teachers for their benefit;
* Students and parents have a right to negotiate punishments;
* Students have a right to suggest alternative teaching methods;
* Students should be able to complain about bad behaviour of teachers;
* Students should have the right to negotiate homework policies;
* Students have the right to negotiate over learning hours;
* Students have the right to view our student records;
* Students have the right to discuss our assessment with our teachers.

2. Youth Policy

Policy vision: PEP student representative being paid for work on committees.

Reality: (i) other members are paid; (ii) idea was supported by PEP subcommittee; (iii) rejected by State Committee (SA); (iv) students do an equal amount of work; students' participation seen as a learning process.

Why? Missing out on school; students' input not matched with what they get from participation; compensation is needed for student expenditure, time and lost opportunities; lack of equality; we are thinking of all students who are on committees (who we represent); it's simply not fair!

How? (i) write your own policy; (ii) seek support from student networks/Youth Affairs Councils; (iii) approach subcommittee and talk to them; (iv) internal media (ie periodicals); (v) seek support from head of PEP; (vi) school back-up by way of Principal; (vii) go and see the Education Minister; (viii) lobby all members on the State Committee (particularly P&F); (ix) approach the media with a story about what and why; (x) student strike.

Who? Other schools who have an interest.

When? Draw up a time-line.

Resources? By this stage we will have built a case to help us fund them.

3. Classroom Participation

Students have the right at any time to approach the teacher for more help, as we pay for the teacher to teach. If the student doesn't understand, the teacher is failing in some way.

Tactics: If you have a teacher you cannot communicate with, it could be
an idea to approach another teacher
talk about the teacher and/or problem;
If your teacher refuses to listen to
you when you try to talk to him/her on
behalf of others, a class confrontation
may be the only solution so that the
teacher will understand that the problem
is widespread.

4. Networks

Aims: To link all student bodies
within the different states together.

How?
* Set up an organisation called the
    National Network of Secondary Student
    Bodies (NNSSSB) ie SRC and/or organi-
    sing student bodies and groups;
* Have a contact person from networks
    in each State or Territory;
* Government funding bodies (eg PEP);
* NYCA;
* Have an annual conference and others
   if needed;
* Rely on State/Territory networks;
* Get support from people like:
    - PEP consultants/coordinators;
    - Regional Directors;
    - YACA Student Participation Project.

Motion: That two students from each
state and territory be elected from
the participants at this Conference
to:
(a) gather information from organisa-
tions within their own states/
territories;
(b) contact the relevant State/Territ-
ory student body;
(c) maintain contact and work towards
formation of a national body.

5. Accreditation

The accreditation group acknowledges
the fact that all students are under
pressure in the school situation when
participating. Some of the pressures
we have uncovered in being involved in
student/youth groups are as follows:
* it has been found that there is
  little time to do homework which has
  been set;
* a lot of time is spent travelling
  for certain meetings and for diffe-
  rent events (eg GABFEST) and there-
  fore students find less and less time
  to do the work set in schools;
* students miss out on a lot of work
  from schools and are missing a lot
  of education and relevant knowledge.
  They are then forever catching up
  on the work they have missed and are
  therefore failing their subjects (de-
  pending on the teachers involved);

* many students devote a vast amount
  of time to these groups and usually
  begin to have troubles with peers who
  find their activities boring. Also,
  peers don't agree with their ambi-
  tions when student meetings interfere
  with other arrangements with friends.

The above points are the main factors
that are taking up a large amount of
students' spare time. These can eventu-
ally be enough to force a person to
abandon their interests in order to con-
centrate on their education. In order
to succeed in everything, a student
needs cooperation from teachers and the
public!

What limits us from getting credit
for our work?

- a set curriculum: we have to get
    through work, have to catch up work
    we miss out on;
- lack of publicity for what we do:
    the media don't want to have anything
    to do with us;
- travel: cost, time etc;
- lack of recognition by parents, tea-
    chers and other students that SRC
    (etc) work is as important as class-
    room work.

Possible forms of recognition:

a) Support: from headmaster/mistress,
teachers, parents etc; Secretary
to type up minutes of the meeting
which goes around to the home rooms;

b) Time: if we are doing the work for
the school, we should be given exten-
ded time to do our homework, and more
time to organise things for the SRC;

c) Reports: credit on reports for
achieving work within the SRC. This
could also help for going for a job
interview. Parents feel proud of
their child's achievements and sense
of responsibility;

d) From students: you need to let them
know about your groups because they
know you're there but they don't
realise that you're there to try and
help them; so therefore just using
us in a sufficient way would be great
for everyone;

e) Awards: people feel the need to be
rewarded for the work they have done
in the SRC or other relevant groups.

We believe that individual rewards
should be greater and more widespread.
Therefore, we are pushing for the fol-
lowing recommendation which we think
will publicise all of our efforts, reaping rewards for us and other people:
We propose that each State/Territory contingent under the umbrella of this Conference, write to the media in their respective States/Territories with the aim of getting ourselves noticed, whether in a big newspaper interview or a spot on radio or TV. We as individuals will gain and so will all the people who listen.

6. Rural/Isolated Students

That the interchange of geographically isolated/rural students with urban students take place on a regular basis to promote greater communication, understanding and appreciation between two distinct and culturally different lifestyles.

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

But, of course, not all the Conference was spent in formal discussions. There was plenty of time to talk informally and a busy social program was organised. As well as the morning swim/warm-up/breakfast at the pool, there was a Civic Reception at the Katherine Town Council Chambers, a community barbecue at the school, a barbecue at the low level nature reserve, a magical mystery bus tour and a smorgasbord formal dinner during the Conference. In the two days immediately following, Conference participants took part in a variety of activities: canoeing on the Katherine River, a trip up the Katherine Gorge, a visit to the Barunga School. Participants sadly departed on the Tuesday for the various corners of Australia.

KATHERINE AND THE ORGANISATION

We should note the brilliant task of organising the Conference carried out by students and staff of Katherine High School. Accommodation, transport and catering were provided with precision, and that enabled the whole Conference to run smoothly.

Katherine High School has been nominated as a national 'light-house' school. "We are attempting to encompass the true spirit of PEP by using the Program as a vehicle for achieving whole school change. We feel that the fundamental objectives of PEP cannot be accomplished unless whole school change takes place. The cornerstone of this process is democratisation; by implication: shared decision making. We want to involve all members of our community in this process, not as a token gesture, but as a challenging, meaningful and long-term enterprise."

"As students, teachers and members of the community become more experienced in this process, the school is guaranteed to become a more responsive and dynamic place."

This report is adapted from the Report of the PEP Student Meeting/RT GATHER, October 1985 by Sue Rechter, Youth Affairs Council of Australia.

The original report is available from Sue, at YACA PO Box 108, St Kilda South 3182
The Victorian Student Conference? Many people - students, teachers and parents - may ask what it is.

The Victorian Student Conference was organised as part of International Youth Year in association with the Participation and Equity Program and held at the Institute of Educational Administration from October 27th to 29th. Five elected representatives from each of the twelve education regions in Victoria attended, along with one adult consultant from each region.

The Conference, the first of its kind in Victoria, was mainly organised by ten students (two from each of five regions) with the help of four adult consultants. It dealt mainly with issues that concerned student participation. Recommendations from the Conference could be forwarded to the Director General of Education and the Minister for Education, Mr Cathie.

Information about the conference was sent to each Region and those that had student networks selected the two members to participate in the planning of the first VSC.

The adults on the planning committee helped the students keep their sense of purpose and responsibility. At all times these marvellous people reminded students that it was their conference and they made a vitally strong link in the chain.

The Planning Committee continued to inform regions of the progress being made and asked for any relevant issues or topics they would like to see discussed at the Conference. A very encouraging response was received, which was gratefully appreciated by the Planning Committee.

To speak at the Conference, we invited the Hon Mr Ian Cathie (Minister for Education), Dr Norman Curry (Director General), Mr Kevin Collins (Deputy Director-General and Chairman of the State PEP Committee), Dr Ray Maddocks (IYY Committee) and Mr Hayden Rainsmith (Chief Executive Officer, Youth Affairs Bureau).

The consultants we invited to run or help run workshops were Lesley Portsea, Bert Van Halen, Pamela Ward and Margaret Ellis.
DAY 1:

At approximately ten o'clock, the participants arrived (well, most of them anyway) at the IEA, ready to take part in the first State Student Conference for Victorian Secondary School students.

A lot of the students arrived at the Conference totally confused, seeing all these unfamiliar faces, and being responsible for representing thousands of students. Apart from these rather grave thoughts, we were thrust into the beautiful surroundings of the IEA.

After we arranged ourselves, we all met in the conference room where we were welcomed by Dr Keith Andrews (Deputy Director of the IEA) and the students on the planning committee who organised the Conference. They explained to us how the Conference came about, the different areas we would be discussing and the guests who would be talking to us.

Then we had the first alteration to our program: we had to postpone our warm-up session. We split into groups to discuss what was happening in our own particular region, in comparison with others. When comparing the regions, we found that there were many that were quite advanced in student participation (such as Western Region) and there were others (such as some of the country Regions) that were at the very beginning of their development. We also learned of different programs going on in Regions.

Then we broke for lunch.

After lunch, we were addressed by the Minister for Education, Mr Ian Cathie. The main announcement by the Minister was the formation of a Ministerial Working Party on Student Participation. This Working Party would look into all facets of student participation, investigating current practices and making recommendations to the Minister, the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Board (VCAB) and other bodies where appropriate.

Extracts from Speech of Minister for Education

This Conference provides you with an opportunity to come together as a group of representatives to identify and represent the views and concerns of post-primary students in Victorian State Schools.

In contrast to earlier times, the decisions about curriculum and how schools are to be organised are made locally by a representative group of parents, teachers and in post-primary schools, students of that school community. Each School Council, providing they are operating within Government guidelines and State education goals, are expected to establish policies and plans for the school that will best suit the learning operations of all the students involved.

The school principal has the important task to work with staff to ensure that these policies and plans are put into practice and that all students experience being part of a caring school environment. An effective student representative council can be a vital force towards the achievement of such an environment.

Without genuine participation by those affected, changes as to the ways schools are organised will be unlikely to succeed. As a Government, we are committed to providing a State education system in which people affected can become partners in the decision-making processes. Schools should encourage you to develop knowledge, skills and understanding of your world and of the wider society that will enable you to control your own affairs and participate in the management of our society.

I am firmly convinced that student participation in school decision making is a powerful means of assisting schools to become more relevant in preparing students for the challenges facing our society. This is why we have accepted the recommendation of the Review (of Post-Compulsory Schooling) that school practices and curriculum be directed towards the demands of adulthood. Students will contract voluntarily into courses and accept the requirements associated with assuming active responsibility for their own learning.
As a consequence of these developments, the earlier years of schooling will need to encourage students to gain the ability and confidence to take an increasing level of responsibility for decision making in preparation for such an approach to learning. Like all learning, participation skills and knowledge improves with practice and increasing opportunity. The experience that you are gaining by your participation in the council or committees at your school, region and here at this student conference, will stand you in good stead.

I note that one of the issues that you will be exploring together is the question of gaining accreditation for your student participation activities... Your school should have assessment policies and report procedures that focus on what you have achieved, your developing talents and competencies. The growing experience of schools who have introduced negotiated curricula through STC or T12 courses would suggest that it is possible for schools to recognise and credit learning associated with participation in school decision making. It is hoped that before too long such activities that are now regarded as extra-curricular activities will become valued, recognised, and integrated into regular classroom subjects and practices.

Your recommendations on how students can obtain credit for their work on SRCs, School Councils, Regional Boards and other committees will provide ideas that your own and other school councils can consider when drawing up their school assessment and reporting policies. I recognise that accreditation for student participation is one of the major issues needing to be addressed if students are to be supported in carrying out their role as partners in education decision making.

Student rights is another issue I see that you are addressing. I must remind you that rights of any groups in our society carry with them obligations and responsibilities.

Schools, like any institution, are reliant on a great deal of goodwill and mutual trust being maintained by all involved. As post-primary students you do, along with parents, teachers, administrators and others, have the right and opportunity to participate in helping to shape what happens in your school and region. We know that for such effective involvement and participation to occur, students, parents and teachers all need to have access to stimulating ideas, accurate information and the support of the system.

The recommendations you make from this first Victorian student conference can contribute towards shaping policies and practices and the issues of concern to students at school or at Regional or central level committees. What happens in the classroom is rightly the major area of concern for most students. However, students like you who have accepted the opportunity to represent the interests and concerns of students on decision-making bodies, need to have your efforts recognised and valued as being an integral part of your educational learning.

Government policy, as stated in Ministerial Paper No. 6, says:

"Schools are charged with the responsibility of providing all young people with experiences that cannot be readily or universally gained through other life experiences and that are necessary for them to become effective adults."

This is clearly our greatest challenge. Student Participation is fundamental to the achievement of this objective.

(A full text of the Minister's speech is available from Connect, document 234A: 60%.)

In his speech, Mr Cathie announced the formation of a Ministerial Working Party on Student Participation:

"As a result of representation around these and other issues of concern about student participation by departmental committees and from parent and school council organisations, I have decided to establish a Ministerial Working Party which will give advice to me on strategies to improve the participation of students in decision-making structures and processes as outlined in Ministerial Papers, in schools and TAFE."
Ministerial Working Party

The specific tasks of the Ministerial Working Party include:

1. To provide an overview of the current implementation of the Ministerial Policy on Student Participation by:
   * consulting with a wide variety of groups with an interest in the area in order to facilitate broadly-based discussion and development; and
   * collecting and consolidating data from existing projects.

2. To clarify and further develop the notion of student participation as outlined in the Ministerial Papers.

3. To examine the relationship between student participation in decision-making process and structures and
   * improved learning outcomes for all students;
   * the role of students in curriculum development;
   * the extent to which schools and TAFE colleges are able to establish an environment which encourages these processes and structures.

4. To identify the existing barriers to the implementation of Government policy, and promote examples of current practices which provide for effective student participation.

5. To provide advice to the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Board (VCAB) and other relevant authorities on methods whereby the proposed Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) and other means of assessment provide accreditation for the work and learning undertaken by students participating in decision-making and other educational participation.

6. To provide advice on ways in which the VCAB and other relevant bodies can play a positive role in the encouragement of curriculum development and practices which empower all students in a variety of ways, only one of which will be formal student representation in decision-making bodies.

7. To recommend to the Minister appropriate strategies for the implementation of policies on student participation.

The Minister continued:

"I intend to establish this working party in the immediate future and I will ensure that there is strong representation of students in schools on this working party. I will eagerly await a report of the findings of the working party during 1986 and look forward to developing strategies across the total education ministry to further develop and support student participation in decision making."

After elaborating on the Working Party, the floor was opened for questions. Some of the questions asked were:

Is there any room in the Blackburn Report (VCE) for student input in deciding the modules? eg Student Government/SRC into a compulsory module?

Is there any thought of funding country regions to allow them to set up reliable communication systems?

What is going to happen after PEP has been scratched in respect to student participation? Where does it leave schools already scratched?

Would you consider having a State Student Advisory Council that should be directly under you, or a student body/council to take problems directly to a state level?
The Conference responded to the Ministerial Working Party by adopting the following recommendations. These were presented to the first meeting of the Working Party in December 1985:

Recommendation 1:

That a State Student Reference Group to the Ministerial Working Party (MWP) be established, consisting of two students elected from each Education Region through a representative Regional student network.

The role of the Reference Group will be:

(a) to support and advise student members of the MWP;

(b) to act as a medium between the Reference Group, regional networks and schools by disseminating and receiving information;

(c) to participate in the deliberations of the MWP;

(d) to encourage links between the Reference Group, TAFE, Registered Schools and other groups involved in the student participation area eg YACVIC, Youth Affairs Bureau, Express Australia etc;

(e) to involve as many students as possible; the Reference Group would establish subcommittees to carry out the following functions:

(i) Publicity: would be involved in promoting greater awareness of Government policy on student participation as outlined in the Ministerial Papers;

(ii) Communication: would be involved in a two-way exchange of issues and ideas relating to student participation as outlined in MWP Terms of Reference 1;

(iii) Research: would be included in researching issues relevant to the MWP's deliberations.

That the MWP be requested to seek funding to allow for the effective operation of the Student Reference Group eg communication materials, travel and consultation meetings.

It is recommended that the Student Reference Group be recognised as the most appropriate student group to provide State student representatives eg PEP and Supplementary Grants Committees.

Recommendation 2: Student Membership of MWP:

(a) That the student membership of the MWP on Student Participation be equal to the adult membership;

(b) That the student membership on the MWP be in proportion to the enrolment ratios of each sector eg TAFE, Registered and State school sectors;

(c) That the Minister nominate the State school sector members of the MWP from within the Student Reference Group;

(d) That the student members of the MWP be permitted a proxy to be in attendance at, and contribute to, all meetings.

Recommendation 3: Support:

That all students working with the MWP and the Student Reference Group be accredited by their school for their participation.
Monday October 28th

DAY 2:

While this was going on, the other participants who weren't involved in the video, went to a session on communication run by Lesley Podesta (School Council Liaison Officer in South Central Region). We started off by brainstorming on the different forms of communication. We managed to fill a whole white-board with different forms of communication - everything from posters to blimps. Then we split up into three groups (school, regional and state level) to design posters to advertise different meetings and other student participation activities.

After a reporting-back session, it was time to have dinner and we indulged in a luscious BBQ poolside. This gave us time to all have a chat about the day's activities and find out what other people thought of them. People were really positive, saying things like:

"Everyone got a say."
"They were interesting and well run."
"Good to hear about other Regions; gives some ideas to other Regions who are not as advanced in student participation."

"It was good that there were people who knew a bit about the topics being discussed because they could tell us in 'simple language' and encourage the less confident people to participate in the discussion."

"Opinions and ideas were given. Everyone participated."

"Both input and output good. Enthusiasm created. Workshops relevant."

"A lot of information to take back to school."
"It helped to find out about all the other regions in Victoria and compare them to how our region is going."

In the evening, we broke up into Regional groups and talked about the day's happenings and also how we could relate the information given to our particular Region.

After that, we proceeded to dance the night away in the conference room.

After being dragged out of bed at some early hour of the morning (ie 7 am) we went down to breakfast to psych ourselves up for the long day ahead.

At 8.30 am (and still asleep!), we all moved into the conference room to have those long-awaited warm-up sessions and also evaluate the previous day's activities. All the feedback from Sunday was very positive and everybody was enthusiastic to learn and impart knowledge.

The first workshop of the day was run by Pamela Ward (of Student Action) on the theme of students' rights. She explained to us the importance of student rights and how to go about writing a Bill of Rights. We were then split up into groups to formulate a Bill of Rights for each group. This is an example of one of those Bills:

**Bill of Rights**

- The right to equality
- The right to gain credit for work done
- The right of expression
- The right to be an individual
- The right to take part in decision making
- The right to have a say in disciplining members
- The right to access to facilities, resources and information
- The right to enjoy your studies
- The right to appeal
- The right to remain silent
- The right to form a group and make recommendations
- The right to make peaceful protest
All the small groups then came together to formulate a big Conference Bill of Rights:

**RIGHTS:**

1. The right to have access to your rights.
2. The right of access to information:
   - school files (your own personal file);
   - government files (but not those exempt under the act).
3. The right to question school/regional/state policies.
4. The right to request attendance at meetings as an observer.
5. The right to be members on school committees.
6. The right to appeal regarding your own punishment.
7. The right to gain feedback (ie minutes etc) from meetings.
8. The right to hold meetings.
9. The right to have input to curriculum decisions through school communities.
10. The right not to be physically, emotionally and/or mentally abused (Discipline Procedures 1985).
11. The right to be silent.
12. The right to listen to each other.
13. The right to voice opinions.
14. The right to respect - equal status.
15. The right to have a receipt for confiscated articles.
16. The right to have facilities for participation and representation; the right to communicate with representatives (includes adequate time and resources).
17. The right to decent and pleasant surroundings.
18. The right to gain credit for your work.
19. The right to have mail opened by addressee(s) only:
   - notification/distribution of mail;
   - notification of phone calls.
20. The right to private counselling/guidance; respect for personal space (privacy).
21. The right to have an SRC bank account and have students as signatories.
22. The right to your own sexual preference, religion, political beliefs, and to be pregnant and at school.
23. The right to an education regardless of sexual preference, religion, political beliefs, race, sex, and any physical and/or mental disabilities.

**RESPONSIBILITIES:**

1. To regularly check bulletins, notice-boards, mail etc.
2. Not to abuse your rights.
3. To inform others.
4. Not to be offensive.
5. For your actions.
6. To represent views fairly.
7. To accept criticism (constructive).
8. To participate if needed.
9. To encourage minority groups.
10. To be unobtrusive.
11. To clean up.
12. To be tolerant.
13. To be moral, ethical and humane.
14. To help others.
15. To keep promises and commitments.

Next, we had a workshop on accreditation run by Margaret Ellis (PEP, Loddon Campaspe-Mallee), Bert Van Halen (PEP, Western), Peter Mildenhall (PEP, Northern) and Roger Holdsworth (Connect) in the form of an 'accreditation dinner menu'. We looked at 'appetisers' (the things that schools value), 'entrée' (what you do as an active, participating student), 'main course' (nine approaches to extending credit), 'dessert' (strategies to use) and 'coffee' (taking action).

In the afternoon, we had a workshop on role playing. We split up into different groups and were given two particular characters in two different situations and we had to work out how these particular characters were to act. Whether they were a teacher, parent, student or Principal, the groups had to choose a person and work out how they would act in each particular situation.

Then we all got together to act out the situations under the direction of Lesley Podesta and Ray Davis (Council Services Unit). They explained that the characters in these situations would be seated in a circle with one chair left spare so any other participant could intervene in the situation. This method was called the 'fishbowl' and was enjoyed by all.
Here we took real life school situations, acted them out, then analysed them. This activity was extremely exciting because it not only gave participants a time to laugh and relieve tension, but also highlighted how over-ruling senior students, teachers and the Principal are, how important junior students are to schools and how important SRGs are to us.

Wendy Piliti and Greg Porte
North Geelong High School

Yeah, I know, you all thought that this workshop would be held in the swimming pool! No? OK then, well I can bet that half of you didn't know what it was about.

Nevertheless, we all do agree that Ray Davis and Lesley Podesta did a great job explaining and conducting the workshop.

Discussion and role playing are, as we found out, two different processes. We can all talk and talk but taking the situation a step further and actually acting things out is a bit more difficult.

So, what did we learn or realise? Firstly, that it was apparent that meeting procedures greatly affect the formation of ideas and decisions - democracy is the only way to go! Secondly, we saw how a variety of 'attack' and 'defence' strategies can be employed in getting the message across - it's better to be assertive than aggressive. Finally, 'blocking supply' is not the way to reach a solution. Consensus is the result ultimately sought by any decision-making body.

Wendy Piliti and Greg Porte
North Geelong High School

from the Conference magazine
We then broke for a bit of a cuppa and chat (or swim) before dinner and then moved into the dining room for a lovely meal.

Straight after dinner, we moved into two groups in different parts of the building to receive Mr Kevin Collins (then Deputy Director General of Education) and Hayden Raysmith (Youth Affairs Chief Executive). Here we have a view from one of the Conference participants on the discussions:

Personally I really enjoyed the session with Hayden Raysmith. Finally we have someone who can actually answer a question in less than fifteen minutes and without using words with more than ten letters in it. And not once did he say 'it will be considered as long as it is within resources' or something along those lines. Haydn went straight to the point behind the question. He didn't use any mumble-jumble or beat around the bush never answering the question anyway.

He wasn't afraid to tell students their rights or to mention strikes and the processes that should follow along with them. It was fantastic to have the opportunity to have the chance to speak with someone on the outside who is actually on the students' side. Someone who is not only for student participation, but is actually trying to find ways to support these students.

I am sure I speak for everyone at the Conference when I say last night's workshop was eventful! Mr Kevin Collins held two rather interesting discussions with two halves of our concerned and well-mannered group.

The first group only held praise for Mr Collins' speech. He asked questions of students, listened, took notes of our recommendations and answered most questions honestly and directly, without beating about the bush. Overall, most people thought it very rewarding.

The second group, however, due to a misunderstanding, weren't pleased with the result. It was unfortunate that such a good opportunity to have a say and be heard by a person in such a position was missed.

But I believe overall that the workshop was very successful.

Alex Stamenkovic
Fawkner High School

We then all went to bed after a long day (not likely!).

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Tuesday 29th October  DAY 3:

After breakfast, we made our way to the conference room to evaluate the workshops etc from Monday as we had done for Sunday.

Then we broke into groups with representatives from an established Region and two developing Regions. The role of the established Region was to offer advice to the other Regions to help them develop student networks.

We then moved back to the conference room for a reporting-back session to find out what had been happening in the various groups.

We discussed about setting a network up in our Region. We talked to other regions who already have a network and they explained how their network was set up. Our Region decided that maybe we could set up sub-regional groups. We also thought of getting SRC committees together with other schools.

Danni Cattanasch
Matthew Flinders Girls High School

For the Barwon South-Western Region this was not as confidence building as we might have hoped. A lot of the other Regions (especially Melbourne Metro) have really got their act together and their systems are working incredibly well. There is just no end of possibilities as to what might happen in this region in the near future - newspapers, bulletins, videos, any number of meetings, networks, support people etc. They are all possible and will all have to be looked into if this Region is to do anything significant.

Craig Moore
Queenscliff High School
Stuart Dobson
Coomerdown High School

The issue of how to establish and maintain Regional groups was also examined.

It was felt that the way students can effectively have a say on educational issues affected the State was if every single school in the state has input, if every Region has an effective regional network and if every school has an effective SRC or Student Union.

For a change, students are being taken seriously at a State level - here there is no doubt. But our greatest battle will be at the school level to get all students to support their SRCs or Student Unions, to get all teachers and administrators to support student participation and get a three-way, equal balance of parents, students and teachers on all decision-making bodies.

Alex Stamenvikov
Fawkner High School

Dr Norman Curry (then Director-General of Education) spoke on the Blackburn Report and its implications. As with the Minister, he asked for questions from the participants. Dr Curry answered all the questions well, getting straight to the point.

After lunch, Dr Ray Maddocks (Chairperson, Education Department IYY Committee) talked about the International Youth Year, which proved to be most informative to all participants.

We then got together and formulated the final recommendations from the Conference. These have now been finalised and have been forwarded to the Minister and the Working Party on Student Participation.
Conference Recommendations:

1. That a summary of this Conference be prepared and mailed out to every post primary school and be made available to primary schools on request. We should request funding at a State or Regional level to produce and distribute this summary.

2. That effective communication networks be established at school, regional and state levels for all students in the schooling system. For example: computer modem link-ups, newsletters, reports, student networks.

3. Regional and School Level:
   a) That all Regions have Student Networks established;
   b) That all schools have an SRC operating within the schools as soon as possible;
   c) That all elected student representatives on any decision-making committee be representative of their particular regional student body through their network.

4. State Level:
   a) That a State-wide Student Advisory Group be established;
   b) That a State-wide information exchange be established as a State-wide student participation newspaper that would be distributed to every student in the schooling system. We also request funds to finance this.

5. That students are concerned about the continual use of technical language that is not easily understandable in educational policy documents. The participants of the Victorian Student Conference suggest that a Student Interpretation Group be used to de-jargonise papers and construct summaries prior to the distribution.

6. That the results of the Post Compulsory Schooling (Blackburn) Review be made readily available to all students within the schooling system. Of particular concern is the need to know what subjects are to be made compulsory.

7. That students be advised about resources and personnel available to them at State, Regional and School levels (e.g. as contained in the South Central Region Student Support Manual).

8. That in-service opportunities provide for students as well as staff and parents, funds will be needed to provide for student in-services.

9. That adequate funding for student participation and student networks (Statewide and Regional) be provided after PEP has finished.

10. That students be members of the Blackburn Committee and all other State Committees (e.g. State Board).

11. That the Bill of Rights drafted at this Conference be distributed. We request funding for this.

12. That there be a State Student Equal Opportunity Board.

13. That students be given time release from school (one year) to become effective representatives on State Committees.

14. That there be an equal ratio of students to adults on Committees.

15. That a Victorian Student Conference be held annually.

16. That students on the State Reference/Advisory Group organise the next Victorian Student Conference.

17. That Regional Board student representatives be elected on to the Board by the student networks and not necessarily be members of School Councils.

18. Regional Boards:
   a) That more support be given to student members of Regional Boards.
   b) That the mechanism for students to be on Regional Boards be changed from 'co-opted' to 'elected'.
   c) That there are more student members on Boards, that student participation officers be available to maintain contacts, advise and support student members. That Boards be encouraged to provide support for student participation, particularly through in-service activities.
   d) That ideas for accreditation be collated, distributed and incorporated into Regional policies.
   e) All student members of Regional Boards should report back to their Regional networks.

"Informative, welcoming, good activities."
"The Conference has been a major leap for participation in Victoria."
"Students are now more important."

Finally, I would like to thank the IYY Committee, the IEA, the Planning Committee, guests and last but not least the participants without whom the Conference would not have been a reality.
As a direct result of the Conference, we decided it would be a good opportunity for the (Barwon South Western) Region to establish an SRC communication network. No details have been finalised but it would seem from the last Regional Forum, this would be a fairly popular suggestion. It is contemplated that there will be another major Regional Forum in 1996 to discuss and hopefully construct this network...

Greg Porte
Barwon South-Western Region

In brief, this means that student participation is considered very important by the Government and that they are concerned about ways to encourage it and improve the school environment. Suggestions for this will be made by the Ministerial Working Party, so if you want to say something about the school, the teachers, the work, the curriculum etc, but don't get a chance, your problem is what this MWP is here to solve. Firstly they have to hear about it. Voice your opinion, tell a Student Union Representative your problem, tell a teacher. The only way your problem can be solved is if people know about it and to know about it, you have to tell them.

It is up to us; if you have a problem, say it out loud! If it is of real concern, something will be done about it.

Alex Stamenkovic
Fawkner High School

At first I was really terrifried about coming here. I didn't know quite what to expect as I hadn't had much experience with things like this. As soon as I got here, I was surprised, everybody was friendly and willing to help me if I didn't understand anything or needed help. Through being here I feel that I've learnt a lot and feel much more confident about many more issues. I'd just like to thank everybody concerned with the conference.

Trudi Newton
Newlands High School

Thankyou for the opportunity of coming to this wonderful place. This people, food, facililies are

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Overall, the Victorian Student Conference was a fantastic experience which helped everyone to feel more comfortable about speaking in front of a group and to gain a greater awareness of the system of education in Victoria.

Muhammed Ali
Sydney Road Community School

Many tearful goodbyes, but the VSC will continue and student participation is now a voice and a reality, not just a dark whisper!

Andrew Laird
Rosanna East High School

This report has been largely put together from accounts written by Grant Cooper (Macleod High School), Andrew Laird (Rosanna East High School), Alex Stamenkovic (Fawkner High School) and Greg Porte (North Geelong High School).

Cartoons and illustrations by Mark Ryan (Broadmeadows Technical School). Photographs courtesy of the Institute of Educational Administration.
EASTERN REGION NON-GOVERNMENT STUDENT CONFERENCE

When the day comes (and it will, I promise) that your days at school are fewer than you realise, it begins to seem a safe place to be. Suddenly you may wish you had done more for your school, improved your image a bit so that one day a teacher might comment, "Well that Jane [or Joe] Blo did a lot for this place!" What can you realistically do to improve things? How can your views be heard on student participation? We are here to tell you that you can be heard and this is how we did it.

"We" are twelve dedicated and involved (sounds impressive, doesn't it?) students and a couple of wonderful (ugh!) teachers. We form the Eastern Regional Student Participation Council. It sounds like a mouthful but it is quite simple. Six local non-Government schools (in Melbourne's eastern suburbs) became a pilot group just after the PAVCSS (Catholic Principals) Conference last year when we saw the need to encourage and stimulate student participation. As a pilot group, we spent much of last year gathering ideas and formulating a constitution and our aims. Some of these aims include promoting schools' SRCs and encouraging more interaction between schools. We decided how to run our meetings, what constituted a proper meeting, prepared agendas and tried to be as efficient as possible in running a properly organised group.

Being an ambitious lot, we wanted to put some of our plans into action as quickly as possible because we had ideas about helping other schools as well as organising our own. We wanted to bring together students and let them see there were other schools facing the same problems as their own. There was also the hope that the Regional SRC would be recognised as a basis for helping other schools to encourage participation in their schools and strengthen the role of the SRC. We wanted to hold a day to which many schools would be invited to share and exchange ideas about student participation and the roles of students in the school.

We had to find funding for a venture such as this and we turned to the Non-Government Participation and Equity Program (PEP) Committee who had funded the needs of the Regional SRC. So after deciding our priorities we presented the PEP Committee with our list of needs (ie budget, venue, date etc) and we were fortunate enough to receive a grant. There our troubles began. There were little things such as letters to send,
agendas to prepare and people to cater for. After a number of meetings and a lot of hard work, it all came together on Friday October 18th 1985.

Many students and teachers seemed delighted at the prospect of expressing their views and learning about how the different schools functioned. Our agenda for the day included speakers from many sections of the school community, group discussions and workshops to help stimulate and encourage responses from our participants.

"I think the day was very worthwhile. It gave me an insight into how other schools' SRC committees function. It made me realise that the students are capable of doing things and the problems we experience with participation etc. are mutual problems amongst the various schools."

After receiving such evaluations from the participants from the many independent schools which attended, I can safely say the day would have been perfect if we could have controlled the weather - it rained!

Everyone felt they learnt a lot:
"I was really challenged by what the first four speakers spoke about. It made me want to go back to school and get everything straightened out! I have decided to make a report to the Principal, teachers, Board members and parents about this fantastic seminar!"

"I learnt about the SRC system which is not at our school."

"Useful to hear other schools' points of view, what difficulties they're having with SRGs, and most informative to hear Principals', teachers' and parents' points of view on student participation. Should be more days like this."

Some thought we could have been more organised in our approach, but I think we can be forgiven. After all, we were learning too.

"The day was very worthwhile, as the seminar was run by students and students were communicating with students. No one was shy or was scared to get up and speak. This is so as everyone was on the one WAVELENGTH and no one felt intimidated by anyone else. The only bad point of the day was it was a bit unorganised and the program wasn't to schedule."

I can highly recommend anyone to devote some of his or her time to student participation. If you are motivated, anything is possible. Being the secretary, I found it was a lot of hard work but it was definitely worthwhile. Once I had sorted out the meeting times, agendas, transport and the many other tasks that a secretary has to do, I sat back and enjoyed it. It has provided me with memories that will last forever.

"What topics would you be interested in pursuing in future seminar days?"

"How to involve parents."

"How to start a SRC and keep it alive."

"The SRC thing."

"Overcoming bureaucracies; Principals and teachers not listening to or taking an interest in students' suggestions."

"We talked a lot about what the problems were and I feel you then have to concentrate on definite moves to overcome them!"

Alison Carthew
Our Lady of Sion College, Box Hill, Vic
GEELONG/BALLARAT REGIONAL
NON-GOVERNMENT STUDENT CONFERENCE

On October 22nd, 1985, 60 students from the non-Government PEP targeted schools in the Geelong/Ballarat Region met at St Mary’s Monastery, Ballarat under the sponsorship of the Victorian Non-Government Schools Participation and Equity Program Committee.

This conference was organised by students in the region with the assistance of Mrs Meryl White, resource teacher seconded by the Victorian Non-Government Schools PEP Committee to support student participation in the Geelong/Ballarat/ Maryborough Region.

Participating schools were St Paul’s Technical and Sacred Heart Colleges in Ballarat, Geelong Christian School, St Mary’s Technical School and Goold College in Geelong and Maryborough Community Christian School.

After preminaries, students presented their individual PEP school programs to the group. According to the students the following projects have been undertaken with PEP funding:

1. St Mary’s Technical School: student PEP meeting and the computer program in the school;
2. St Paul’s Technical College: reading program at years 7 and 8, public speaking and debating in years 9 to 11, and live theatre;
3. Geelong Christian School: experience program, camps and excursions;
4. Maryborough Christian Community School: recreation room for students, year 10 and 11 social activities, gymnastic centre;
5. Goold College: School Improvement Plan Committee and 10 peripheral committees involving parents, staff and students to improve all areas of the school curriculum;
6. Sacred Heart: survey of study habits and skills and quality of school life; Student Counsellor (Pastoral Care Program).

All students felt there should be more student involvement, meaningful dialogue throughout the school, more student representatives at meetings and better communication amongst students.

WHERE DO WE GO?

After lunch the students broke into groups and discussed the questions: What is the future of PEP? Where do we go from here? They were asked to think in terms of the local area and in terms of state and national levels. The following is a summary of responses:

Local areas: Better communication through school communities; visits to other schools; sharing of information; opportunity to try projects from other schools; create task forces for putting ideas into practice; get support from greater community outside the immediate school; opinion polls on issues concerning the school community; shared facilities; involve more and younger students; find out about curriculum in other schools; explore school standards and common reporting system so employers know what is what; make learning relevant; improve career education – provide wider options; continued meetings as we have been doing; input on decision making; input on various styles of teaching such as negotiated curriculum, group learning, goal-based learning so we know what could be done in our classrooms.

State and National levels: Newsletters; meetings – discussion, sharing, guest speakers; videos of what is being done, to be shared; meetings of all interested parties ie students, teachers, parents; more sponsorship by private enterprise for PEP projects.

The students then formed individual school workshops to discuss: How would you like to see our school PEP program develop? Here are the ideas:

Goold College: more participation from younger students; inservice younger students by older students; be sure to communicate with them and include them – an investment for the future.

St Mary’s: more genuine people involved – increased teacher/student communication; school management committee with fixed representatives; suggestion box.
Sacred Heart: the structure of reports changed - more descriptive - should be clearly stated on report what level of work the student has done. This would overcome the anomaly of 'slow' and 'bright' students both getting A and prospective employers not knowing the difference.

Maryborough: Suggestion box for each year level - issues to be taken up by combined PEP/SRC committee; extra curricular activities timetabled and credit given.

St Pauls: better career education: 1. greater access to information (not necessarily work experience or literature) eg guest speakers who are employers, parents who work in specific fields; 2. teacher/student relationships - create an opportunity for students to discuss any problems on a person basis; make students aware that there is an opportunity for discussion on issues of concern to them.

Geelong Christian School: more opportunity to discuss issues on shared decision making; would like opportunity to have input regarding camps, excursions; more student/parent involvement.

**SHARED DECISION MAKING**

After an overview of State and Federal directives concerning student participation, the students formed mixed groups to discuss: Can students really take part in shared decision making regarding their own learning and its outcomes?

The response was an overwhelming YES, with the following qualifications:

Yes, if:
- parents, teachers and students are willing to listen to each others' views;
- students are really interested in their own learning;
- students are willing to make the commitment;
- a genuine positive attitude is present;
- students are in the older year levels;
- students are mature about their decisions.

Possible drawbacks:
- students may make outlandish suggestions;
- students and teachers may disagree;
- immature suggestions from younger students;
- poor support from fellow students;
- too many ideas and not enough action;
- domination by teachers;
- not enough money available to support implementation.

Ways to overcome drawbacks:
- stick to your goals;
- get people interested;
- educate students properly so they can make informed decisions;
- emphasise the importance of students making a suitable and mature decision on the future;
- get sensible and enthusiastic students;
- make sure that genuine grievances dealt with.

Pauline De Goldi, a year 10 student from Goold College, wrote:

"I thought the meeting at Ballarat on Tuesday was very good. It gave us a chance to mix with many different school groups. I found that when we had to get into discussion groups, most of the schools mixed, but when we had breaks or free time, the schools stayed in their own little groups. The schools from Geelong mixed with each other during the breaks and the schools from Ballarat did the same, but the Geelong schools didn't really mix with the Ballarat schools.

"The meeting was very successful though, because we learnt that some of the schools have less than what we have and also how to go about improving things in our own school. The way it was run was very enjoyable and relaxing and it was very easy to communicate with other people. It wasn't run too seriously so we could have a bit of fun while still learning about PEP."

For more information, contact:
Meryl White, Goold College, 27 Penwick St., Geelong 3220

"The consequences of the expansion of the student role, and the action-poverty it implies for the young, has been an increased restiveness among the young. They are shielded from responsibility, and they become irresponsible; they are held in a dependent status, and they come to act as dependents; they are kept away from productive work, and they become unproductive."

James Coleman, *How Do The Young Become Adults?* Baltimore, 1972, p 8
The following article was carried in the November 1985 issue of National PYT Talk. Attention is also drawn to Angelique Smith's article in Connect 35 (p 24).

**SCOFS...**

Secondary students in South Australia have formed a statewide student council. The council aims to become a forum in which young people's views can be sought and discussed and through which action can be planned and undertaken.

The decision to form the council was made at a youth forum which as an IYI initiative sponsored by the Participation and Equity Program, the South Australian Institute of Teachers and the Children's Interest Bureau.

Four students have been appointed by the council to the State PEP Committee and the council hopes to appoint student representatives to other bodies.

Vivienne Bradtke is the co-ordinator of the State Council of Students (SCOFS) and she writes:

At the moment SCOFS is organising a camp (18-20 October) so that we can really get down to business and tackle the big problems which are currently facing us. These include writing our constitution and gathering ideas for a display during Youth Week. We will also be discussing ways of improving communication between Area Councils and the local schools. This is to ensure that our state wide SRC network will function with efficiency and strength. We want to be recognised as an important incorporation with power and influence.

Currently we are involved with the running of a campaign for an entertainment centre in Adelaide. We have done this by distributing petitions throughout as many schools as possible in our state. Hopefully we will gain at least twenty thousand signatures, which we will then present to the Premier during Youth Week. This should get us a lot of publicity, considering entertainment will be a major issue around election time, which is fast approaching.

The Minister of Education, Mr Lyn Arnold has given us his support and a donation of $1000. This we believe is a first for any Minister of the Government. The Government has also stressed interest in seeking the views of the council. Mr Arnold has given the council its first challenge to examine the concept of homework centres at schools. A management committee has been established to discuss and provide the students' view on this concept. If our involvement in this project is successful, hopefully we will be asked to have a say in future decision-making on a state level.'

Vivienne has also provided the following information about the State Council of Students:

**HOW IT ALL BEGAN:**

The State Council of Students (SCOFS) was formed on July 29, 1985. It has an interesting history...

In April 1985, the United Nations Youth Association held a conference called "IYI - Students Respond". The students there wanted two things to happen: they wanted another conference to be run, and they wanted a network of student representative bodies to be set up.

After that Conference, a group of students got together and, with the support of several organisations, organised another conference. That was the first thing achieved. The aim, and the outcome, of the second conference was the establishment of the ScoFS. That was the second thing achieved.

The State Council of Students is the first state-wide network of student representatives which includes Catholic, Independent and Public schools.

The other things that are special about ScoFS are that it was set up in response to a call from students, and that it was set up by students. That makes it different to a lot of other organisations that work with secondary school students. So the State Council of Students is an organisation that is run by students and does what students want it to do - the first chance that students in South Australia have had to organise and represent themselves in this way.

**WHAT WE TRY TO DO:**

The State Council of Students has been established to do the following things:

* Listen to students and pass on their opinions to the Government and other relevant people;
* Provide training for young people in areas such as management, organisational skills, communication, and much more;
* Support student involvement on Repre-
sentative Councils, prefect systems, and other forms of student government;
* Encourage better relationships between students, teachers and administrators;
* Support students who are taking action on issues that concern them within the community;
* Give students the opportunity to be involved in making decisions that affect their education.

All this work is done by the students working with other people within the community and the Education systems.

WHAT WE ARE DOING:

* Peace petition and petition for an Entertainment Centre circulated through all secondary schools in the state. It's the first time this has been done!
* Training in meetings and a training camp for the members of the SCoS Management Committee;
* Preparation of training packages to be used by the Area Councils and Student Representative Councils;
* Presentation of the Peace Petition to the Hon L Arnold, Minister for Education;
* Presentation of the Entertainment Centre petition to the Hon B Weise, Minister for Youth Affairs;
* Applying for funds for the State Council and the Area Councils, so we can keep up the good work;
* and much more coming up!

HOW IT WORKS:

The most important thing about the SCoS is students. It will only work if students are involved in it. This is how it all happens:

Every secondary school in the state can be a member of the State Council. They become members by sending a 'School Registration Form' to the State Council and then sending two representatives to Area Council meetings. These students act as representatives of all the students in their schools.

There are six Area Councils which cover the East, West, North, South, East Adelaide and West Adelaide parts of the state. These Councils work on issues of concern to the students in their Areas, in liaison with branches of the three school systems.

Each Area Council sends four representatives (1 Catholic, 1 Independent and 2 State students) to the SCoS Management Committee.

Their job is to represent the students in their Area. The SCoS Management Committee runs the State Council between full Council meetings.

The full State Council (two students from each high school in the state) meets once a year to elect office bearers and set directions for the Council for the next twelve months.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED:

To get involved in the State Council, the whole school needs to agree that it's a good idea. Then, send a 'School Registration Form' to the address below, elect two representatives of the students and send them off to the next Area Council meeting. Information on meetings can be obtained through the address listed below.

To contact the State Council of Students, write to:

State Council of Students,
C/o 11 Gregory Street,
Brahma Lodge SA 5109

Vivienne also updates this information by telling us:

At the moment SCoS hasn't done much because of the school holidays.

We have been meeting with the Director General of Education to negotiate for a full-time servicing officer. At the moment, our previous servicing officers have left us because their job has expired due to the end of IYY.

We hope to have our SRC training packages finished by the end of April. These packages will go to the Area Councils and then the area representatives will take them back to their schools. It will be a process of students training students.

Vivienne Bradtke
Let's Not Sell the Kids Short!

"How do you teach kids to write a successful radio play without it becoming the property of the teacher?"

This is the main question addressed in the publication Let’s Not Sell the Kids Short by Val Bland. It explains how one teacher (who has never written a play herself), was able to teach the grade 5 children at Bendigo East Primary School principles of literature as they wrote a play.

To ensure that the play would succeed, a carefully planned sequence of class discussions and decision-making sessions occurred. Some of these were as follows:

* the children told of interesting experiences they had had in their own lives;
* different types of stories were listed and then a spooky one chosen by the children because they thought it would be suitable for radio;
* an excursion to some of the old houses around Bendigo was arranged, but in particular the class visited 'Berie Gate' in Quarry Hill;
* different characters for the play were chosen;
* over many sessions a plot was outlined taking special care to choose a sequence of events which would build into a climax near the end of the play;
* on deciding on the ending, the children reviewed the events in the play to identify the theme which was emerging;
* the children suggested dialogue to match the plot. The teacher acted as a scribe to record these suggestions;
* at regular intervals the script was re-read to see if it was all 'making sense'.

Every part of the planning and the dialogue was suggested by the children themselves. The teacher's role was to ask questions which required the children to suggest alternatives. These alternatives were accepted, discussed and then voted on by the class. The teacher had to abide by the children's decisions as it was always to be regarded as 'their' play.

The result of these discussions was the audio play Nice Things in Creepy Places which was heard on 3CCC's Radio- culation program on October 22, 1985.

The success of the writing process and of the play itself is best illustrated by the response of other children. Two members of the 3CCC staff who were involved in the recording of the play took tapes home. They reported that their children listened to the play then replayed it for their friends.

A tape of this play will be available in a kit, including the publication Let’s Not Sell the Kids Short. On the second side of the tape is an interview with two of 3CCC's audio engineers describing how they made the sound effects for 'Nice Things in Creepy Places'. They also gave advice for other groups who may not have sophisticated recording equipment available to them, but would still like to record sound effects for their play.

The publication points out that the benefits of embarking on such a project are enormous. Writing a radio play encourages the children to think of what the audience is hearing and thinking. And the motivation for children to learn how to write and speak well is intensified by using radio.

The complete kit will be available from the Castlemaine Education Centre at the start of the 1986 school year, and orders will be accepted at any time from schools or other interested persons - Castlemaine Education Centre, 13-21 Mostyn St., Castlemaine 3450. Phone: (054) 72.2666.

3CCC would also welcome enquiries from schools who wish to participate in the 'Radiocation' program during 1986. Justin Shortal, our Education Officer, can be contacted at the station on (054) 74.2511.

from Radio Waves
Issue 30, Jan/Feb 1986
VICCSO Policy

The Victorian Council of School Organisations (VICCSO) passed the following resolution at its 1985 Annual Conference:

VICCSO recognises and encourages the rights of students to be equal partners in decision-making processes with parents, teachers and other Education Department personnel. VICCSO therefore urges that the Minister of Education and the Education Department take action that will:

1. provide the necessary resources to promote and encourage informed student participation at all levels;

2. encourage School Councils to be responsible for creating a supportive environment/attitudes which will increase the level of student participation each year;

3. encourage Primary Schools to be part of this process;

4. recognise students' programs as legitimate in-service education funding activities;

5. ensure that students are aware of their rights/responsibilities and roles as equal partners in the participative process - eg elections/reporting;

6. ensure that students are accredited for their participation;

7. ensure that students have their own organisation/s however designated at all levels - school, region, centre - with the appropriate support personnel to assist them;

8. ensure that students have access to all relevant material/information.

There was overwhelming support given to this policy item when it came up on the agenda. The response to those delegates who expressed some reservations about the section of the policy item related to primary student participation indicated that there were many examples of successful and active participation by primary school students and that school councillors in general were strongly in favour of supporting student participation in school decision making P-12! The section related to accreditation was strongly supported also.

The VICCSO Executive and State Committee are delighted to have had a successful nomination from a student school councillor to become a member of the Executive. She is Lorena Kennedy from Scoresby High School Council. Lorena is in year 11 and an active and enthusiastic contributor to her School Council. Her comments are included below.

In addition, VICCSO is represented by Cheryl Wilkinson on the Victorian Ministerial Working Party on Student Participation.

Hi,

My name is Lorena Kennedy. I am the first student ever to be on the VICCSO Executive. I have just done year 11 at Scoresby High School. My favourite subjects have been Music and Legal Studies.

I first became involved in the School Council because I was tired of just sitting back and letting the school be run the way the Council saw fit. My main aims were to put the students' point of view across to both the parents and staff at Scoresby High School and to improve the lack of communication between the staff and parents and students. I never really considered being on School Council until I was encouraged by our Principal, Mr Rex Thompson.

I am also involved in two sub-committees of the Council. One is the Education Committee, which involves reviewing courses for all year levels and discussing items which involve students and staff education. The other committee is the Student and Staff Welfare Committee. This involves looking into both student and staff opinions about the school, in order to improve the school.

We also look at how this will affect the school and the people within or connected with the school.

The hardest thing about being a representative of the School Council comes back to communication. Finding time to let all students know what I am doing for them is difficult, but I make a commitment to going to SRC meetings. I would like to stress that, although I was co-opted, I do represent the students and I do my best to represent them as a student body.

I am also involved in several other activities within the school. For example, I was president of the school fete committee and I'm largely involved in the music area of the school.

In conclusion, I would like to encourage students to participate in school activities and decision making in the school.

Lorena Kennedy
Scoresby High School

from School Bell Vol 40 No 1 Feb 1986
Student Action
Project Evaluation

The Student Action Project has been an invaluable and vital aspect of support for student participation, particularly in Melbourne's Western Metropolitan Region, but also more generally throughout the State and wider! The Project finished at the end of 1985 when its funding ran out.

West Education Centre's Education Exchange (No. 3, February 1986) contains the evaluation of the Project. It includes a history of the Project, a report of last December's 'Evaluation Event', a summary of outcomes - for Student Councils, for Regional Networks, for girls, for support teachers, for students and a view of emerging issues and of future developments. The booklet finishes with a guide to resources available.

For copies, contact West Education Centre, 34 Kingsville St., West Footscray 3012. Ph. (03) 314.3011.

Forthcoming Publications

Three support publications for student participation will be published in the near future:

(a) Take A Part is a student action resource handbook aimed particularly for students setting up SRCs, getting things done, needing contacts and advice etc. It will be available in April or May and distributed to all Victorian secondary schools. Further copies will be available from the Government Printer at $4.95.

(b) Credit and Support: Making Student Participation Work will be directed mainly to teachers and will provide an overview of issues, examples and case studies related to credit and support for student participation. It will also be available in April-May and distributed to all Victorian secondary schools. Further copies will then be available from West Education Centre.

(c) Students and School Governance is the Fourth in the Connect reprints series and consists of case studies of SRCs, students on School Councils and so on and a collection of original documents in this area. It will be available in the next few months (sorry to be a little vague) from PEP or Connect.
Recent Articles

Several publications have recently carried articles related to student/youth participation. We can note:

1. The Educational Magazine: The Victorian Education Department's magazine finished with a 'bang' and devoted Vol 42 Nos 5-6 (1985) to 'Student Participation'. Particular articles are: "Issues in student participation" (Roger Holdsworth); "Student Action Project" (Pamela Ward); "Pond life to prefects" (Rex Thompson); "Descriptive assessment" (Jan McVeity); "The Youth Action Project" (Geoff Emmett).

Enquiries to Materials Production, Curriculum Branch, Tower A, Rialto, 525 Collins Street, Melbourne 3000. Phone (03) 628.2030/2211.

2. Viewpoints: Issue 5 of this magazine from the Victorian Institute of Secondary Education is particularly directed to 'Participation'. While "Participation in context" (Dean Ashenden and Ray Costello) explores issues related to 'participation rates', other articles: "Participation: Theory, practice and practical suggestions for parents, students and teachers" (Jim Cumming); "Exploring the teacher/learner relationship: Some better activities for young people" (Peter White) - relate more directly to student participation.

Copies from VISET, 582 St Kilda Rd., Melbourne 3004. Ph: (03) 520.9555.

3. Ethos is the annual publication of the Victorian Association of Social Studies Teachers. The 1985 issue contains "Students and Decision-Making Structures in Schools" (Roger Holdsworth); "'It's Stupid Really': Students' Attitudes to their Secondary Schooling" (Rod Fawns), "Challenge to youth - it's their environment" (Tim Cox), "Youth Councils" (Suzanne Lechte) and "Shepparton Junior Council" (Joanne Church).

While looking at Ethos, we can draw attention to the 1983 issue with "A social action curriculum: education for a future" (Dr Tony Knight).

VASST can be contacted at PO Box 91, Balaclava 3183. Ph: (03) 520.7665.

Youth Radio Project Report

The Youth Radio Project operated from 3CR and 3RRR with funding from Victoria's 150th Celebration. A final report of the Project has been produced and consists of a booklet and a cassette tape. This provides a detailed account of the Project, a summary of issues emerging, evaluation comments and so on.

Copies of the 45 page booklet and tape are available from 3CR, 21 Smith Street, Fitzroy 3065. Phone (03) 419. 8377. Cost is $9.00 including postage and there's about a 3-week delay in getting copies together.

Anyone Can

Express Australia 1985 workshops have produced a handbook on how to use the media, based on their experiences over three years of working in all aspects of the media. Aimed at giving all young people who want to use the media the skills to do so, the book will be published early in 1986 and be made widely available.

Ring (03) 63.8364 to register your interest in the soon-to-be-off-the-press manual! Joyce will take your name and number and they will get back to you.

Department of Youth - Queensland

The Department of Youth (Queensland) wishes to ensure there is a continued commitment to the concept of IYY - a year where energy and resources are directed towards assisting young people to improve their opportunities.

To foster the development of the networking process commenced during IYY, it is intended to appoint a Youth Liaison Officer later this year. One of the roles of this officer will be to produce a regular newsletter for interested organisations and individuals.

Department of Youth, Queensland PO Box 339, North Quay 4000 Q

In Brief....

Anne Buckingham has been appointed as Student Participation Officer in South Australia. She can be contacted on (08) 256.8111. The State Council of Students met with the SA Minister of Education and have received an extra $4000 to employ a part-time Project Officer for the group. The Non-Government PEP Committee in the ACT is publishing a student newspaper. Contact the office on (062) 955.455. A

continued p 39
Student Information Kit is being produced with National PEP funding. Natalie Brown is working on this in NSW. Some ideas include: students' questions and answers on things like 'why stay on at school?', 'demystifying jargon', 'Getting Involved at School', how to hold year level assemblies, how to apply for student grants, explanation of principles and practices of participation and so on. Contact Natalie at PEP Publicity, Ministry of Education, GPO Box 33, Sydney 2001. Phone (02) 240.8036

... from page 38

... continued page 5 ....
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