Opening the Conference ...  
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- NASPAC V & JSC Student Forum: Reports & Pictures
- Reports from SRCs, SLCs, JSCs, NY1 ...
- Victorian Youth & Student Participation Conference
- How Do We Know What We Have Achieved?
- Students on Committees: Inclusive Procedures
- Resources: Active Learner ... Web Site ... Parliamentary Education

& Incorporating the PASTA Newsletter #11

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Connect, 12 Brooke Street, Northcote 3070 Victoria Australia
As we gallop towards the millennium, the number of ‘youth conferences’ planned for 2000-2001 proliferate! Is this a genuine recognition of the importance of empowering young people into a new era? Or is it an occasion for appearing to listen, and really to pacify voices of concern and dissent?

A lot depends on answers to three critical questions:

1. "Which young people?" The mechanisms (explicit or implicit) for selecting young people to attend such conferences are of utmost importance. How are issues of equity and diversity in selection addressed? How do we make sure that it isn't just 'same' young people selected in order to tell organisers what they want to hear? How do we make sure that the most marginalised young people find out about such events and are supported (economically and socially) to attend and be heard?

2. Who runs the agenda? Decisions about what is to be discussed and what power the event has are also vital. Is it decided that certain topics are 'not on' (perhaps because organisers would lose sponsorship) or that some issues are 'youth issues'? (The ghettoisation of young people's voices is of enormous concern: we support all sorts of youth conferences on youth issues but seldom make provision for young people to discuss, debate and decide with others on broader social and economic futures for communities.) How can participants alter and develop their own agenda?

3. How are voices translated into action? It is all very well to encourage young people to 'speak out', but if no one is listening? And is anyone listening seriously with a commitment to engage young people in serious debate? But beyond that, how does such 'speaking out' change any of the power relationships if the participants remain excluded from the decision making process on issues of concern?

In reality, is the 'millennium youth exercise' simply a continuation of tokenism?

A further tokenistic approach of many such conferences and forums can be the mono-concentration on participants' individual feelings and skills. We need to be careful of approaches that identify the 'problem' as a need for young people to "become motivated" or to "develop self esteem". While some young people may well come away from such events feeling more personally empowered, such approaches and activities which start from an assumption of individual 'deficit' and fail to deal with system change - curriculum and governance issues - achieve little or nothing! Finally, 'empowered', 'motivated', 'resilient' young people become increasingly frustrated and angry with the 'games' being played.

The challenge for youth conferences and congresses (as always - this is NOT a millennium issue!!) is to deal seriously and realistically with issues of change and power - in ways that do enable participants to make a difference.

Roger Holdsworth
Going Beyond Tokenism?

The Fifth National Student Participation Conference, held in Hobart from 7th to 9th April, was attended by over 50 students and advisers from four states and territories - Tasmania, Victoria, NSW and the ACT. The Conference was organised by a committee of students and teachers from southern Tasmania, representing both Government and private schools and colleges.

The Conference program included presentations from speakers such as Jaimee Scala (Tasmanian State SRC), Lucas Rijswijk (Red Cross), Fran Bladel (Tasmanian Cabinet Secretary), Brenton Holmes and Jennet Cole-Adams (Parliamentary Education Office), Ken Page and Ralph Murray (PASTA), Dr Jacqui Trifitt, Robyn Moore (the voice of Blinky Bill) and Mat Durose (State College Chaplain) around issues such as ‘How to get people to listen’, ‘How to get motivated, stay motivated and achieve success’, ‘The Power of the Word in Being as Extraordinary as You Dare to Be’, ‘Achieving a Cool Image’, ‘SRC USA Trips’ etc. Many of these concentrated on the individual skills and approaches of active students. There were also exploration workshops that focused on school-level approaches to participation, and on the structures and initiatives needed for students to play a significant role in schools’ decision making. These workshops were designed and led by students, and took participants through an assessment of schools’ current positions, planning for change and sharing successes and problems.

A significant theme that continued to run through the three days (and which was commented on several times in the sum up session) was that of planning to go beyond having ‘token’ student representation and involvement, to develop and support real and meaningful participation. A panel of students, advisers and others led a lively discussion with the audience about current practices in schools that limit students’ participation, focusing on issues of limitations (imposed or self-imposed) on the topics that students...
consider, the need for student representation on school decision-making structures and the importance of authentic and meaningful tasks to be designed within the classroom.

Another workshop, led by Hobart College students, challenged participants to discuss and propose strategies for dealing with issues such as subject relevancy, different belief systems, stress management, teacher-student relations etc - and to consider how effective student participation would alter the ways in which such approaches were tackled within schools.

Some initial responses from participants at the final evaluation session were provided (below).

This was the first major conference organised by this group, and participants also fed back comments and suggestions at this final session about changes and improvements that could be made next time. And at the 'I promise' component of the final session, there was a public commitment from the group to the organisation of another state-level conference before the end of the year.

**Where to now?**

Well, that's up to us all. 2001? It's been suggested that, with this being the centenary of Federation, perhaps Canberra is a possible venue. Keep tuned.

"NASPAC: an experience to be had! It was a fabulous and recommendable experience. The confidence and knowledge on SRCS, stereotypes, self-esteem, goal-setting and 'lust for life' is indescribable."

"It's great to realise how much people care about SRCS and the student voice."

"I love to see inspired students with 'intentionality'!"

"The power of the unknown is so powerful it makes you soar."

"Confidence building... getting motivated... positive, inspiring and valuable."

"I'm brimming over with ideas I hardly knew could exist."

"The greatest way to strengthen student participation is to share and discuss our experience."

"I realised how much of a difference students can make... and this is now motivating me."

"A most valuable experience, both personally and educationally."

"I never knew I could learn so much, so quickly, about current issues and projects that I can put into practice for my school SRC as well as in my state SRC."

"I now realise the amount of power the SRC has to raise their voice and make a difference!"

"I'm going back to school inspired... and going to get others involved!"

"A true Connection."

(Further reports from participants in NASPAC are promised for the next issue of Connect.)
Junior School Council Network

First Student Forum Day for 1999

The Junior School Council (JSC) Network in the Preston and Reservoir area in Melbourne's northern suburbs held its first half-day training session for student councillors on 24th March at Findon Primary School. The Network is supported in 1999-2000 by a small grant from the Victorian Department of Education's Civics and Citizenship Education program. The ten schools in the Network will be exploring links between the active citizenship of students through their JSCs, and the schools' classroom programs in this area.

The first of four planned student forums brought together over 60 students from seven of the schools. Students had prepared displays about their JSCs and shared this information through a 'bingo' style game in which they had to identify schools with similar or specific JSC characteristics.

'How do we sell our JSC?' involved an on-the-spot challenge to come up with slogans to publicise why Councils exist and what they can do; students then showed and explained their slogans and posters.

After a break, the group discussed characteristics of good and bad representatives, and took activities back to school to write up job descriptions for JSC members.

And all of this was in a structure of games and activities that build cooperation and confidence.

Students said that the day had helped their JSC:
"by learning about each other" ... "to get ideas and how to cooperate"
"It helped us to understand how to be a good (great) JSC member."

"The games helped us mix with other schools."
"We had to think about the way our school is run."
"We have got some great ideas to take back to school."
"It helped us understand different problems that we might come across."

For information about the Network, contact Therese West at Preston South Primary School, Hotham Street, Preston 3072.

The Network has produced a book about the work of JSCs: 'Democracy Starts Here'. It is available through Connect.
enhancing effective
33 CURRICULUM APPROACHES
student participation

A: Peer Teaching and Support

Peer and cross-age tutoring or teaching

Arrange for students to teach or tutor other students as part of their subject work, or as an elective subject (eg Teaching Studies). It's relatively easy to arrange within the school, or with a neighbouring school, and there's a large body of research evidence of its benefits for both tutor and 'tutee'. Tutor selection can focus on students with need of responsibility, or of revision of more basic ideas, or with specific language skills that can be matched with tutees' needs.

Examples: see Connect #2 for examples at Brunswick Girls HS, Princes Hill HS, and Toomastown PS; #3 for programs at Ballam Park TS, Lalor Park PS, and Sunshine HS; and other examples at Princes Hill (#90), the Monterey network (#81), Marian College (#21, #22/3), Exhibition HS (#24), Princes Hill PS (#30) and in science (#85).

Peer information

Organise for school and community programs to commission students (and other non-student young people) to provide information to other young people. Programs could involve face-to-face or telephone advice or the production of written information for other young people. This has frequently occurred in health-related areas, including smoking, alcohol and other drugs, sexuality etc, but has sometimes extended into areas such as science or vocational education.

Examples: see Connect #76 (HIV/AIDS); #84 and #85 (Science shows); #65/66 (smoking)

Peer mediation

Train students to be able to mediate in disputes around the school and in the community. This could occur around resolution of conflict generally, around sex or race based issues, or around instances of bullying or harassment. Some programs have used the phrase: "intervene to reconcile".

Examples: see Connect #71, #75 and #99; also see #83 for an example of mediation work in the area of harassment.

Peer support

Set up a 'buddy' system in which older students form groups to support younger students in the school and in the community. This can occur around discussion of specific issues and extend to more general 'connectedness' to the school, particularly for new students.

Examples: Peer Support Foundations have supported and trained students in these roles (see Connect #71, #99).

Community Education

Link with community organisations to develop opportunities for students to work as community educators around social and environmental issues. This might integrate with existing programs or set up new possibilities with 'city farms', 'heritage areas' etc.

Examples: In one example, primary school students organised regular environmental tours of a 'city farm' for other students and for older members of the community; see Connect #89 and #90.

Curriculum Organisation

Consult with students to establish structures and opportunities through which they can take responsibility for their own and others' learning. They could organise specific and special events to meet learning goals, or set up structures to address learning needs.

Examples: In a group of neighbouring schools, students with learning difficulties set up 'Literacy Committees' which communicated by fax and e-mail, organised an annual 'Literacy Camp' and wrote a 'How To' manual about their initiatives; see Connect #84.
B: Community Research
Researching Community Issues

Research skills are basic to many subject areas ... and there are important and vital research tasks to be carried out in all communities. Arrange for a community organisation or local government, for example, to commission a specific research study. This should involve the production of a report or results that can be presented to an 'outside audience'.

Examples: students have carried out real and purposeful community-based research on issues such as youth homelessness (Connect #73, #77), work (#82), use of railway stations (#35).

Researching Youth Needs

The research skills of students can be used within the wider community to carry out studies of youth needs - recreational, health, transport etc. If such a local youth needs survey is proposed, support a class to bid for the contract to carry out the research, either alone or in association with other consultants. Or initiate an approach to the local Youth Development worker to find out whether such a study would be useful.

Examples: such studies have been carried out by and with young people in various localities.

Physical Environment

Undertake local scientific and environmental studies to examine and report on the state of the local physical environment. These can be carried out with local or state-wide community groups. Student research can also extend to participation in international studies on topics such as water pollution or destruction of the ozone layer. The iEARN organisation has set up on-line conferences to support and share the results of such local research.

Examples: see Connect #84 for an example of a local Crustacean study; primary school students undertaking environmental research, education and action in Connect #65/6; information about iEARN in Connect #95.

Researching Education Issues

The school provides a valuable base for investigation of education issues. Organise a class to carry out a destination study of school leavers (following up students through informal contacts to look at movements over several years).

Examples: A group of students researched local education options and responses to these (Connect #56); another study, tracing students were employed to carry out research on truancy (Connect #24 and #91).

C: School Development
Review and Evaluation

Invite students to undertake a review and evaluation of aspects of the school's courses, learning approaches, or other areas of education. This can be conducted as a research project or as part of the quality assurance process.

Examples: students have carried out a review of a school's social science curriculum (Connect #93), have been included in Quality Assurance teams looking at professional development issues (see Connect #93), and have surveyed whole systems of education (see Connect #115).

Curriculum Organisation and Support

Request support from students with specific skills and interest to play a vital role in the organisation and maintenance of specialist school facilities such as computer networks.

Examples: Students have been central to the operation of Information Technology in several schools, where they have maintained equipment and worked as program support staff; see Connect #95 for two different models.

Curriculum and Governance

Student participation within schools must link curriculum and governance approaches. We can draw an analogy with the stability of a 'three-legged stool' or 'tripod', in which the legs are:

- student representation on school decision-making bodies;
- student-run organisational structures;
- participatory approaches within the curriculum and classroom.

Without any of these aspects, the model 'falls over'. This article suggests a range of those curriculum approaches; it must be linked with governance approaches that enable students to share in making these curriculum decisions, and with the support for structures within which students can discuss, debate and decide on issues of importance.

Curriculum Materials Production

Extend students' own studies in particular curriculum areas by supporting them to develop resources for use by other students. These can be training materials e.g the Anti-Violence Kit, curriculum packages such as a Plastics Materials kit for purchase and use by schools throughout the state, or reading materials for young students.

Examples: see Connect #105 and #110 for information about the Anti-Violence Kit; Connect #76 for details of the development of the Plastics Materials kit; Connect #83 for production of reading materials.

School Communications

Arrange for students, either individually or as a class group, to take responsibility for aspects of communication within the school or between schools. They can compile information from various sources, work out the most effective communication strategies, and implement them.

Examples: a group of students at one primary school produced a newsletter for a network of Junior School Councils (Connect #91); on some schools, students publish the school newsletter as class work; there are many examples of students use the school loudspeakers to run an in-school 'radio station' (see Connect #89); students have been contracted (paid) by a local Council to convey information to students within their school (see Connect #79).
School Facilities and Environment

Apply studies in various areas to the construction of useful resources around the school. Students' studies should look at need, design, materials, cost and implementation - and actually result in the production of a resource.

Examples: students have taken part in school landscaping (Connect #90); in shade areas (#85); in an interactive Music Garden (#84); in development of Seating Areas (#83).

D: Community Media Production
(often as a second step for presentation of results of above)

Newspaper in Community

Produce a community newspaper, dealing with community issues. Investigate current community papers, needs and gaps.

Examples: the student-run 5-language paper Ascolta operated from a group of schools for over 10 years (see Connect #1); in many other areas, the school provides a centre for production of community news (see Connect #1, #4, #8, #11).

Book production

Students collect student and community writing, either generally, or around a theme, and publish a book as a community profile and resource.

Examples: books such as The Golden Shaft (Connect #2, #90), As We See It (#8), Wind in the Wimmera (#26), What My Mother Told Me (#39), Momentum (#46/7), Writing from the Edge (#84), From the Edge (#112).

Radio

Approach local community radio for an occasional or regular time slot for presentation of a student program. Students carry out interviews in the school or community around themes and compile a radio program.

Examples: many schools (primary and secondary) have arranged their own programs; eg the Ascolta Radio Group (Connect #10, #21, #46/7) and the Goulburn Valley network (#89); have taken part in the 'Talk Back Classroom' project (#112, #113); or have set up their own radio studio or station (#6/7, #15, #113). Two special issues of Connect (#12, #13/14) focused on this topic.

Television/Video

The advent of community television provides a similar outlet for student video productions. Approach groups associated with community television to negotiate access for students both to broadcast of school-made videos and to involvement in overall production. Set up a 'video-magazine' with items from school and community groups - produced by students.

Examples: see Connect #68, #72 and #80 for documentation of early initiatives around Channel 31 in Melbourne.

Internet

Publication through the World Wide Web enables low-cost dissemination of useful student research, writing and projects. Negotiate with local organisations (eg Tourist Office) to produce, review or supplement web pages. Students would need to investigate local facilities, needs and gaps - and decide on the 'image' they wished to project.

Examples: see Connect #95 and #97 for students' e-learning publishing on gender roles and on alternative power sources.

Music/CD

Link with local musicians to write and publish a music CD. This can build on issues such as cultural diversity of the environment, and both present musical accomplishments within the school, and also provide a productive focus for consideration of pertinent topics.

Examples: see Connect #103 for a local example, and #104 for an international example.

E: Consultation and Advice

Youth Forums

Organise a local forum of young people (possibly from several schools) to discuss, debate and decide on issues affecting young people. Ensure that the outcomes of this forum are presented to appropriate local or state or federal authorities and followed up with action or on-going participation in decision-making structures.

Examples: see Connect #110 for information about the 'New Generation' forum; #112 for the 'Teen roar' forums; #114 for the Reconciliation forum.

School Governance

Have a Politics, Civics or SOSE class examine the decision-making structure of the school, and organise to set up structures or processes to increase student participation in this area.

Examples: the Politics class at one school established the Student Representative Council (see Connect #40); Civics and Citizenship Education initiatives provide many current examples and possibilities.

Conference Support

Arrange for students to attend an appropriate local or national conference in a support role. Students could take minutes, produce a conference newspaper, establish a conference web page, report on the conference for radio etc.

Examples: students have been involved in Australian Curriculum Studies Association Conferences as reporters; see Connect #94.
F: Local Service Development

Community Futures

Challenge students to consider and recommend on future directions for their communities. This would involve a class undertaking a local study: investigating, researching, interviewing; and then presenting results in a public forum, proposing and taking action; and monitoring outcomes.

Examples: see Connect #108, for a description of such processes as part of a 'Justice and Democracy Project' - particularly in Ararat.

Intergenerational support

Organise for students to spend regular time working within the community providing support for older or younger generations. For example, students could work in nursing homes, creches, child care, community centres. Such interaction can be developed to become 'two-way' with students both providing personal support, but also developing oral history documentation, reading resources etc.

Examples: the Student Community Involvement Program (SCIP) operates in various areas to support and train students for such involvement - see Connect #36, #56, #101.

Disability services

Organise for students to work within disability services to provide personal support and also develop resources.

Examples: through their Graphics and Manual Arts classes, students have been contracted to developed community resources to provide wheelchair access (see Connect #20, #22/3); students have written large print books for other students (#83).

G: Community Resource Production

Oral History Documentation

Collect local oral histories and publish them, either in a one-off publication (which can be sold, for example, through a Tourist Office) or through a regular publication. Alternatively, use community and oral history research to develop a mural portraying the community, or establish a local museum.

Examples: the Foxfire program in the US has provided an ongoing example of such a curriculum program (see Connect #54/1, #63 for substantial descriptions); other local examples have been documented at Apollo Bay (#57), Nathalia (#67, #71), and Bright (#77/8); a community mural using local history was painted in Lulor (#11) and at West Wyalong (#32).

Documentation

Remember that a project has not been finished until it has been reflected upon, evaluated and documented for use by others!

H: Job/Work Creation & Enterprise Education (can be linked with all the above)

Environment

Consider how meeting environmental needs can become an ongoing productive outcome of studies. In one example, students gathered seeds, grew native plants and sold these back to communities as part of re-forestation initiatives. This developed into an on-going school-based job creation program.

Examples: see Connect #5 and #17 for details of the Moreland School-Work Program.

Catering

Set up a small catering enterprise from the school. For example, deliver sandwiches to local factories and businesses. Programs such as 'Earn and Learn' build such initiatives into structured classroom approaches.

Examples: the Youth Action Program set up a restaurant (Connect #26); the Moreland School-Work Program catered for local education conferences (#17).

Art

Arrange for Art classes to lease painting to local businesses and community groups; provide art work for community newsletters and reports.

Examples: see Connect #80 for initiatives in Tasmania and #84 for a program at Mornington.

Industrial Arts

Look for real community productive outcomes for Manual and Industrial Arts classes - production of community resources, commercial applications.

Examples: see information about Youthcraft at Cobden Technical School in Connect #17, #20, #25, #30, #43 and #76; examples of enterprise education approaches generally in Connect #59 and #80.

Compiled by Roger Holdsworth
Inclusive Committee Procedures

The following ideas about changing committee procedures to encourage the active participation of students were first drafted in 1984. While they were particularly written about students on central Education Department committees, they have wider relevance to other representatives and other committees - both of student groups and where student representatives share decision making with others (eg School Councils).

**Before the Meeting**

1. A detailed agenda should be sent out, giving (where possible) recommendations to be moved.
2. Discussion meetings should be held before the main meeting, to go over the agenda and the main business. For example, students could meet with other students and with an advisor, to talk over what is likely to happen.
3. Meetings beforehand could be held with other committee members where they explain to students what they aim to do in the meeting and how they will do it.
4. In particular, experienced committee members who will act as in-committee ‘mentors’, should meet with students before the meeting.
5. Pre-meeting meetings should be seen as part of committee members’ commitments. In particular, accurate time commitment information should be given to students when approaches about committee membership are made.
6. A support person should be allocated to meet with students before the meeting and, where possible, to sit with students during at least the initial meetings.
7. The meeting should be held at a time when student representatives can attend with minimal disruption to their studies.

**At the Start of the Meeting**

1. An experienced committee member should be nominated as ‘mentor’ to each student member for each meeting. This role could rotate between members, with attention paid to positive gender role models.
2. All members should be introduced and identified, for example, with a place name. This should show both the name and the organisation/role represented.
3. All documents should have a face sheet summarising the main ideas and recommendations.

**Procedure of the Meeting**

1. The meeting should stop before decisions are made, to allow time for students to:
   - talk with each other;
   - talk with committee tutors/mentors;
   - talk with any support persons present; to make sure they understand the issues involved.
2. Motions should be written out and, where possible, copied for and circulated to all members of the Committee.
3. There should be a clear statement about the style of each part of the meeting, identifying ‘brainstorming’ and ‘formal’ times.
4. Arguments and discussion from subcommittee meetings should not be repeated in committee meetings.
5. At the end of each item of business, the chairperson should summarise the decisions on action to be taken and clearly indicate responsibility for action.

**Language**

1. All members should avoid forms of jargon:
   - initials should be avoided except where they’re explained in documents;
   - other groups, committees or individual roles should be explained fully;
   - an attempt should be made to put motions and discussion in direct and plain language.
2. Any member should be able to query the use of a name, word or phrase and have that query treated seriously.

**After the Meeting**

1. At the end of the meeting, the chairperson or Executive Officer should summarise the major decisions made, especially indicating what action is to be taken, by whom and by when.
2. The committee mentors and/or support person should meet with the students to talk over what happened in the meeting. This should also be regarded as part of the meeting commitment.

*Reprinted from Connect 27/28, June-August 1984*
PASTA NEWSLETTER
# 11 - April 1999

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

SEE OUR MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION AND APPLICATION FORM IN THIS ISSUE

PASS THE PASTA

PASTA’s focus for the month of April has been to support Kim Roberts and his team of SRC enthusiasts in Tasmania with their hosting of NASPAC V. The biennial National Student Participation Conference has become the vehicle for promoting SRCs throughout Australia, and the Hobart Conference has afforded SRC Advisers in Tasmania with the opportunity to both promote the work that we do as advisers as well as the value to student learning associated with being an active member of your school’s SRC.

NASPAC provides the opportunity for students and experts in various youth related fields to come together and to workshop issues of mutual concern. NASPAC V has continued this tradition with a wide resource pool of experts, authors, educators, student State SRC members, and representatives from PASTA. Politicians, both from the Federal and Tasmanian State Governments, will also be in attendance and working with the student presenters to provide a program rich in diversity. Practical approaches to promoting student participation, leadership and representation will also be explored.

PASTA congratulates Kim Roberts (Sorell School), Cathryn Beaton (Committee President) and all committee representatives from the organising schools: Rosny College, Elizabeth College, St. Michael’s Collegiate School, Guildford Young College, Emmanuel Christian School, Rokeby High School and the Sorell School. Congratulations once again for your dedication in helping to articulate and promote the voice of Australia’s youth.

NASPAC also provided us with an opportunity to promote our current PASTA projects and Ken Page and I were given the opportunity to present to the conference progress updates on the SRC-USA Tours for 1999 (Roseville/Minneapolis, Minnesota) and 2000 (San Francisco, California), the first International SRC Conference in Sydney in 2000, and the CSC Awards program.

The CSC Awards trial in NSW has been focused in three distinctly different areas: the Central Coast Region, the St. George District in Metropolitan Sydney and in the Western/Bathurst Districts. The CSC Award materials have now reached the point in their development that they can be more widely distributed and new trial areas can be invited to join the program. Liesel Collings’ “I Concept” from Bairnsdale/Gippsland in Victoria was the first to register and join the trial from the state of Victoria and I am pleased to announce that, from the commencement of second term, the CSC Awards Trial will be extended to Victoria and all other states wishing to trial the CSC Awards Program.

Ralph Murray
LIVING NATIONAL TREASURES

40,000 hours and still counting

On the Central Coast it was my honour to award Mr. Owen Sinclair Powell his long service Gold CSC Medal for what has been in excess of 40,000 hours of service to the Central Coast Community as part of the 1999 Australia Day Ceremony. Award ceremonies were also held at trial schools Gorokan High and Narara Valley High to recognise the long service of parent/canteen/P&C members, long service CSC Award Teachers and students trialing the CSC Awards program.

1999 Australia Day CSC Awards

CSC Awards make it "OK" to be proud of what you have achieved in service to your community and model for all both what our youth and present citizens should aspire to.

On Australia Day 1998, the Kogarah Council, using the CSC Awards program recognised the multiple gold medal effort of PASTA's Vice-President Jeanne Bow who was named Citizen of the Year, based on her CSC Award record. As a member of the 1999 Australia Day Committee, Jeanne has continued her promotion of the CSC Awards as part of the Rockdale City and Kogarah Council's Australia Day Ceremony and this year seven students from the St. George District were presented with their CSC Bronze Medal Awards.

Our congratulations go to Aida Bunyan, Kamal Farhat, Rima Jaafar, Vanda Krikorian, Hanade Tawil and Amy Youssef. Special congratulations must be given to Aida Bunyan who was one of the St. George District SRC delegates on our 1998 SRC-USA Tour. Aida was named the 1999 Rockdale City Council's Young Citizen of the Year.

The CSC Awards program recognises the efforts of all those who actively serve and our earliest indications overwhelmingly support that we are on the right track and that we have indeed found a way to both recognise and reward all who have committed their lives to the service of others. This award aims to give all active citizens the same sort of recognition and esteem as those who achieve in sport, the performing arts, politics and business.

Kogarah Youth Serving the Community

Our challenge as a community is to truly recognise the worth of our long service active citizens as the living national treasures that they are. For the first time at our 2000 International SRC Conference in Sydney we will award our first three CSC Gold (Sapphire), six CSC Gold (Ruby) and nine CSC Gold (Diamond) awards and the life histories of these most special citizens will be recorded in a Guinness Book of records type publication called "Our Living National Treasures" to be published annually by the Youth and Volunteer Research Foundation, Central Coast Campus, University of Newcastle.

(For further information on the CSC Awards contact the co-ordinator Ralph Murray by phone at 02 4348 4342 or by fax at 02 4348 4005)
CULTURES, CHALLENGES, ENVIRONMENTS, POLITICS, MEDIA AND YOU
THEMES OF THE CONFERENCE

Hi. My name is Anna Samson. I hope to stimulate debate amongst you and your friends and colleagues on the issues associated with the themes. Feedback from you will determine the specific issues and sessions, the workshops which can be run, the prospective facilitators/contributors etc.

In accordance with the vision of this International Conference, the Programming Committee is eager to fully embrace all that the concept of “active participation” implies. In addition, in its quest to promote effective representation practices and enhance its impact, the Committee is seeking contributions from around the world, even from those who may not personally be able to attend. Resource material will be published as part of the Conference package.

Each of the days of the Conference will have a specific theme, each of which supports the overall theme of the entire Conference. As our logo reminds us, that important theme is Student Representative Councils: Building a Better Today.

The theme of the first day will be Celebrating Our Cultural Heritage. Young people must increasingly come to terms with issues relating to culture - a necessary by-product of burgeoning globalisation. Delegates will share with each other the traditions, national dress and music which are peculiar to their each state, region or country. Participants will also discuss the importance of tolerance as well as the role and position of youth culture in modern society.

The next day’s theme is Challenges Facing Young People in the 21st Century. An International SRC Conference would be incomplete without an opportunity for delegates to work through a range of sessions held on problems which both confront youth today and threaten to plague continued on page 15...

FOR ADVISERS, ACTIVISTS AND ADULTS

This 1st International SRC (or Student Council) Conference (Sydney 2000) is really intended as 2 conferences in 1. Teachers, student council advisers, counsellors, youth and activity leaders - really, any adults with a genuine interest in secondary education may look forward to special sessions programmed just for them as well as general sessions and entertainment designed for students as well as adults. Consider it to be one huge in-service opportunity, one we hope you feel you cannot afford to miss.

Throughout the five days of the Conference there will be both a student program and an adviser program. Like the student representatives, the adults as well are expected to come as representatives of their school, their district, their association, group or community.

The Programming Committee is currently seeking workshop, roundtable, panel, performance, display and exhibit applications from advisers as well as students, from individuals as well as groups. These proposals can be aimed exclusively at advisers or distinctly for students. Alternatively, you may decide that a mixed age audience is more appropriate. We are also especially interested in proposals wherein:

1) students and advisers share the leadership presentation roles and
2) students run workshop or roundtables just for advisers.

Amongst the special highlights planned for advisers are:

• Conference orientation and getting to know you welcoming sessions;
• A Hunter Valley wine tasting and evening banquet;
• Special purpose workshops and roundtables focusing on adviser and systemic needs;
• An optional special cruise on Sydney Harbour (dinner, lunch or afternoon tea);

continued on page 14...

April 1999
For Advisers, Activists and Adults (cont. from p 13)

- Opportunities to attend high-class shows and cultural events on some evenings of the Conference;
- The recognition of long-serving and outstanding student leadership and volunteer community effort through the formal presentation of special Community Service Certificates and medallions;
- An advisers-only Forum, wherein we develop our own recommendations and resolutions for action.

This last is particularly significant as advisers will NOT have the chance to contribute to the student Forum on the final day. Adult delegates will be observers only as the student delegates debate and control their own deliberations on issues they have identified as important to them.

IF YOU ARE AN ADVISER OR IF YOU ARE THE BILL AS AN INTERESTED ADULT DELEGATE FOR THE CONFERENCE, PLEASE COME PREPARED TO PARTICIPATE ACTIVELY, NOT JUST SUPERVISE. MOST OF ALL, PLEASE COME. THIS IS A CONFERENCE FOR US ALL AS WELL AS 'THEM'.

ACTION IN ALBURY ... FUN IN FRANKSTON SPELLS SUCCESS IN SYDNEY

Some of our local organisers have already jumped into the spirit of the thing with gusto. As the following information indicates, this is JUST what we need to assure maximum participation, ownership and, most importantly, accomplishment of all the necessary prior to the big International Conference.

1. Albury, on the Victorian/N NSW border is really setting a standard. Rebecca Donders, a delegate from the '98 USA SRC Leadership Tour, made sure that there was an active committee up and running prior to her exit to Bathurst to take up first year studies at Charles Sturt University there. She writes:

"I rang up Meg (ed. note: That's Meg Purcell, one of our '99 USA trip delegates) and Albury High's new SRC adviser Joyce McArther to set up a meeting to discuss the FCP grant and electorate committee... That meeting went well and today I addressed the whole SRC! Great news they are joining PASTA!! And they are keen to be the electorate committee! One suggestion was that they do a Video of Albury like Bathurst for the conference. So we can get some sponsorship or something - "the kids from the bush aren't that backward" - food for thought!"

"The Border Mail" - today after my meeting with the SRC interviewed me and I about America and the 2000 conference! Fingers crossed that it'll be a good picture! They were very prompt in getting back to us!!!

I suggested to the SRC to get an email account so we can keep in contact.

I have informed our local YAC (Youth Action Committee) about NASPAC V and get Meg to put some posters around school - and it will be put on the districts agenda!!!"

Meg carries on later with a useful update, just proving that initiating the job isn't the whole job:

"Well I hope that you're taking excellent care of my Bek, since you decided to steal her from me and leave me all alone in the South part of the state. You'll be pleased to know that I am very aware of what's happening now, and I'm continuing to convince our SRC that we should get involved in everything."

Well done Reb and Meg and all you folks in Albury.

Charles Kingston

Some Different Ways of Organising (cont. from p 13)

One of these committee structures, "Electorate Committees", are based on Federal Electorates. There are currently 40 different Australian contact people - students and adult advisers - prepared to contact you in their electorates and start that effort going. Overseas groups have already begun organising for their involvement in the United States, Canada & Africa.

Another structure is also based on location - is "Action Groups". Any school SRC, class or youth group can apply to form their own action group and take on a selected task for the Conference. Action groups can take on very specific tasks necessary to the staging of the Conference.

Some examples are:
- a school SRC responsible for preparing a workshop or local forum on a specific issue prior to the Conference;
- a school or district SRC working on decorations for an International Room and hosting that country's delegates;
- a technological high school working with the Technology group to set up the Conference Internet Centre;
- language classes at one or more schools willing to do the translations of printed materials we send out;
- language students willing to provide interpreters at the Conference/communicate beforehand with other countries in their language;
- a school class or an electorate based action group catering for a morning or afternoon tea at the Conference.

To keep it all on track (and avoid duplication) there is a "Coordinating Committee". They can be contacted through the addresses in this Bulletin or in its parent PASTA Newsletter.

Anyone is of course welcome to join us, but we don't propose to meet that often. Our main function is communication amongst all the groups working on Conference planning.

Please contact us to become involved in your area, and we'll put you in touch with your closest local contact.
Themes of the Conference
(continued from page 13)
society in the next millennium. Topics could include poverty, sexuality, child exploitation, drugs, youth suicide, ethics and morality, violence, homelessness, unemployment, educational opportunity or the lack of it and anything else which those presenting might suggest.

While participants will explore the reasons, extent and seriousness of these issues, the emphasis is on the development of practical solutions which can be implemented by students at local, state, national and/or international levels.

The same holds true for the theme of Day 3: The Environment: Preserving Our Future. This day will focus on how young people from around the world can and have influenced the use of their local environments.

The penultimate day of the Conference will see delegates explore issues regarding The Media, Political Process and You. Participants will look at how they can be involved in and utilise aspects of the media and government, as well as how an understanding of the political process can help one influence those in authority. The emphasis will be on "getting things done".

The final day is arguably the most important. SRCS Publishing Their Home in the Global Village will be characterised by the first International SRC Forum when delegates will formulate and debate recommendations which have developed throughout the Conference. Subsequently, it will be the responsibility of participants to relay these to the constituents whom they are representing and use them as a basis for localised student action. The International SRC Conference Committee will also be formed on this day and an international SRC activity decided upon.

The Programming Committee is encouraging a variety of different presentation formats for sessions at the Conference, all with the emphasis on promoting active participation and contribution by delegates. Workshops run by participants are expected to be a key feature on all days. Other hoped for presentation formats are listed in the application form for presentations on pages 3 and 4 of this section.

These themes and topics are neither mutually exclusive nor exhaustive. The Committee needs not only expressions of interest in this event, but also commitments of contributions to its success. It is only when members of the international student and adviser communities decide to play an active role in its organisation and execution that we are on our way to ensuring a productive and enjoyable event for all concerned.

Anna Samson, Student Co-Chairperson

CONTACT DETAILS
For further information or offers of assistance in this International SRC Conference and its future development, enquiries may be directed to:

Sydney 2000
First International SRC Conference
c/o Charles Kingston
1 Gladstone Street, Bathurst NSW Australia 2795
Phone: (02) 63322603 Fax: (02) 63322302
E-mail: ckingston@interact.net.au

APPLICATION FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS: EXPLANATION
The following application form is for both delegates and presenters. It continues on the back of this page.

• If you are applying to make a presentation, please try and relate it to an issue which you see as relevant to one of the themes for the separate days of the Conference or to the Conference theme itself. (See Anna’s article elsewhere in this issue for an elaboration of these themes.) Your proposed title and outline will be seen as a draft one at present, able to be refined once you receive notice of acceptance of this initial application.

• It is important also you indicate your preferred format and timing. Workshops centred on one issue (or a successful project) and roundtables (more informal discussions led by you or your group) could be one hour, an hour and a half or extended over two hours sessions on two days. Other possible formats for your contribution include a marketplace for school, country, state and project displays, an exhibit hall for businesses and organisations, being one of several keynote speakers or a member of panel sessions, participating in a debate, being a facilitator for interactive workshops.

• Performing art, dance, music and drama presentations: Please indicate whether your group would like to perform as part of a General Session or as one of many groups performing for smaller audiences simultaneously while delegates move from one to another and check out displays and exhibits as well. NB: Unless your performance is clearly explained as specific to the issues of Days 2, 3 or 4, it will be assumed it is intended for the theme of Day 1: “Celebrating Our Cultural Heritage”.

(NB While it would be preferable if you/your group members are in attendance for the entire Conference, we will if necessary consider at this stage performing groups and special issue workshop presenters for single day attendance only if unavoidable and requested in writing. Depending on total numbers attending it may be possible to consider waiving part of the day registration fee in instances where groups or individuals are making special presentations at General Sessions for the benefit of all participants.)

• If you wish to submit more than one application for a presentation, workshop etc please photocopy these pages and send in separate forms for each. Or request multiple forms from the organisers.

Please photocopy these pages or tear out and send to the postal address below. If it is more convenient, you may transpose into an e-mail message and e-mail to: <ckingston@interact.net.au> Please then also send copies to <asamson@wesleyusyd.edu.au> and <garr@7071@usyd.edu.au>.

Postal Mailing Address:
1st SRC 2000 International Conference Programming Committee
c/o 1 Gladstone St., Bathurst NSW Australia 2795
APPLICATION TO ATTEND/PRESENT AT THE 1st SRC INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE - SYDNEY 2000

Tick whichever applies in the questions below.
Add explanatory material as indicated.

NB. As explained in earlier publicity, registration fees for this Conference are Australian $500 (c. US$320) for all delegates. It is the hope of the organisers that the schools, associations and other organisations sending representatives will support their participation financially for all or part of their costs. The registration fee includes all Conference needs for the five days from time of registration except housing for adults. Students will be hosted by families in the Sydney region. If requested, adults will be sent a list of recommended hotels. Adults requiring accommodation will need to make their own bookings unless they have made separate arrangements with the organising committee, including any prepayments required. Day registrations at reduced rates may be available if Conference numbers allow, but this will not be known until two months before the Conference.

Further questions? Email: ckingston@interact.net.au or write to the postal addresses as indicated in this and all publicity.

SECTION II:

For those applying to present a workshop, make a presentation, do a performance, have a display, present in the Exhibit Hall etc:

F. I/Our group (cross off whichever does not apply) wish to apply to do a presentation on the theme of:
   [ ] 1. “Celebrating Our Cultural Heritage” (Day 1)
   [ ] 2. “Challenges Facing Young People in the 21st Century” (Day 2)
   [ ] 4. “The Media, Political Process and You” (Day 4)
   [ ] 5. “Building A Better Today” (Overall Conference Theme - could be any day)

G. How many people would likely be involved in doing your presentation or performance? .........

H. How many of these will be secondary students at the time of the Conference? .........

I. How many of these presenters are intending to apply to be delegate representatives also? .........

(NB. It is not essential to do so at this time but if the names of other presenters are known at present, please list them on a separate sheet. Before final confirmation in March 2000, prior to finalising the Conference program - we will need to know this information.)

Upon confirmation of your application, a more detailed form will eventually be sent to you for mutual exchange of further details.

SECTION I:
FOR DELEGATES TO THE CONFERENCE

A. I wish to apply to attend the above Conference as a:
   [ ] 1. Student Representative
   [ ] 2. Adult Representative
   [ ] 3. Committee Member

B. The name of the group I will represent is

...........................................................

C. My position in or role with this group is

...........................................................

D. My/our contact details are as follows:
   1. Mailing Address: ...........................................................
   2. Phone/Fax and Email (if available): ....................................
   3. Phone/Fax and Email (if available): ....................................

E. I/We DO/DO NOT (cross off whichever does not apply) wish to apply to do a presentation.

...........................................................

J. The type of presentation or involvement I am/we are proposing is: (You may tick more than one area as long as details of each appear on separate sheets)
   [ ] 1. Workshop: (If certain, circle whichever applies: For students only/for anyone)
   [ ] 2. Adviser Program Workshop
   [ ] 3. Roundtable Discussion
   [ ] 4. Performance (indicate clearly what type - dance, music, drama, other - in description below and whether intended for Conference General Session or smaller scale audience)
   [ ] 5. Participant/s in panel
   [ ] 6. Participant/s in debate
   [ ] 7. Speaker at General Session
   [ ] 8. Facilitator of interactive workshops (non-issue-oriented, getting to know you sessions)
   [ ] 9. Have a static display (that can stay unattended throughout the Conference)
   [ ] 10. Have a display stall (where we will be to talk to people during break times)
   [ ] 11. Have an exhibit in the Exhibit Hall (applies to Days 1, 2 & 3 only)
   [ ] 12. OTHER (please describe: ...........................................................)

K. Details of your proposed presentation:
   1. Suggested Title: ..............................................................
   2. Subject of Presentation: ....................................................
   3. People likely to be involved: ..............................................
   4. Estimate of time needed: ..................................................
   5. Space/technical requirements: .............................................
   6. Category of audience preferred: (eg students only? advisers only? either?)
DIVERSITY is STRENGTH

Are you thinking of taking up the challenges presented by a multi-culturally diverse school population. If so, the following ice-breakers and activities from Mary Ledger of East Hartford High School in Connecticut, USA, may be of some assistance.

1. ADD A WORD

Time: 15 minutes plus discussion time
Materials: paper and pencils, watch with a second hand
Procedure: divide group into groups of four, give each group one piece of paper and one pencil and tell them the goal is to create the longest sentence they can using the few words you give them to start it with. Each person will take a turn adding one word. The sentence must make sense and come to a logical conclusion. No talking and they have 60 seconds to complete task. After the time, have each group count up the number of words used and put that number at the edge of paper and circle it. Have groups read sentences. Repeat activity 3 or 4 times. Then change the rules. This time each person has to add a word, but the group may talk and make suggestions. Repeat twice and see if there is a change in the results. Sample starter sentences are: "the cow jumped", "the worm crawled", "a loud crash", "people who are", 'the next time", "a woman screamed", "one dark night"...

Debriefing questions:
- How well did your team do when you couldn't talk?
- How much pressure did you feel when it was your turn?
- How did the activity change when you could talk?
How much pressure did you feel when the group could help?
When you have a problem to solve, does it help to have someone give suggestions?
Will a greater number of people always make it easier to solve problems?
How can people with different backgrounds to yours help solve a problem?
What could someone from a different culture provide that you couldn't?

2. FUNNY BONE

Time: 20 minutes plus discussion time
Materials: different pages of newspaper comics for every person, scissors, masking tape, paper and pencil for each person
Procedure: each person gets a different page of comics and you ask each person to decide which comic on the page is the funniest one that day; cut it out and tape it on the wall; number all the comics so they can be distinguished. When this is complete, have each person make a list ranking all the comics from one to whatever, on which is the funniest. Compare results.
Debriefing questions:
- How difficult was it to select a funny comic to place on the wall?
- How hard was it to rank the comics from really funny to not so funny?
- How did your choices compare to the class choices?
- Should everyone agree on the same comic? Why or why not?
- Does it make any difference what anyone else thinks if you don't agree?
- How do different opinions on the same topic help to make our society a better place to live?
- What would happen if we all agreed on everything?
- If someone disagrees with you are they bad person?
- How does our background help shape how we think?
- Should we ignore our background when looking at various issues? Explain.
- Should we judge others as less than ourselves just because of the way they think or act? Explain.

3. A QUICKIE THAT MAKES A BIG POINT

Time: 5 minutes plus discussion
Materials: five different coloured circular stickers
Procedure: as the group enters the session, place one sticker on each person's hand so that there are several people with three of the colours, only two with one colour and one person whose colour does not match anyone else's. After everyone has a sticker, ask everyone to get into groups without talking.
Debriefing questions:
- How did you get into groups?
- Did the directions say to divide up by colour? Why did you?
- How did the person who didn't have anyone the same colour feel?
- How did the group of two feel?
- How did the people who had several in their group feel?
- Did anyone think about asking the smaller group or the singular one to join their group? Do you think this exercise tells us anything about our society? What?

4. HANDCUFFS

Materials: plastic holders for six-packs - cut them so that each one has only two loops
Procedure: match individuals up with people they don't know well and have them put one loop on one person's wrist and the other on their own. Have the group stay together for a period of time - a meal is great for this activity.
Debriefing questions:
- What were some of the problems you encountered?
- How did you cope?
- What did you learn about your partner?
- Were there some things you could do better with two people?
THE AMERICAN STUDENT LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

In 1998, PASTA took the first group of Australian SRC representatives to America to participate in their National Student Leadership Program. We began our involvement in this program at the site of the 62nd National Student Leadership Conference held in Derby, Kansas.

The conference was an experience that those who were there will remember for the rest of their lives. From the laser show that started the first general session to the hugs and tears as we left families that a week ago had been complete strangers, we were constantly amazed by the reception that we received. As our State guide Shelley said on the first day “if you think that was good wait until tomorrow. It just gets better and better”. And she was right. Motivational speakers, workshops, community service activities, block parties, yellow school buses, and nearly 2000 delegates all left an indelible impression. Looking over the rim of the Grand Canyon, walking the strip with Las Vegas students in Las Vegas, the friendliness of the people at the Leadership camps, the ride down Space Mountain at Disneyland, standing above the ship that was the grave for over 1200 American seamen at Pearl Harbour, meeting students from a school at Hawai and joining in with them at their training conference, all contributed to the memories that we now have. We achieved much more than we thought possible so much so that we immediately decided that this set of experiences should be made available to students on an annual basis. To that end, planning for trips for the next three years is now under way.

Trip 2 (1999): Roseville High School, Minnesota

In 1999 the conference is being held at Roseville High School which is located in Minneapolis, Minnesota. To fulfill the aims of these tours we will be leaving after the conference to tour the States of Wisconsin, Illinois and Missouri, spending time at places like Chicago and St Louis. We will also get to look at a part of the American Great Lakes system that forms some of the border between America and Canada. This system is said to be the greatest inland lake system in the world. Our hope of being able to visit a school after the camp has been realised with an offer from the staff and students of Bordentown High School, New Jersey. Their offer to host us includes taking us on a trip to Washington City, Philadelphia, and New York City, as well as a number of social and leadership activities. There will again be a few days' stopover at Hawaii, before flying home.

Trip 3 (2000): Monte Vista High School, San Francisco

While still only early days for 2000, we are looking at areas to the north of the conference site. States like Oregon, Washington and perhaps even British Columbia in Canada could form part of the itinerary this year, not to mention the beauty of San Francisco itself.


The host State in 2001 is North Carolina on the East Coast of America. Although no detailed planning has been done at this stage, the tour this year could include visit to the Civil War states of Virginia, South Carolina, Tennessee, Alabama and Georgia. Perhaps another visit to Washington, New York, etc could be a possibility as we look further into the time available, costs, etc.

Summary

It is anticipated that each year we will be able to take between 25 and 30 students on this tour. The tour itself will cost approximately $6000. This will cover all costs (fares, departure taxes, transfers, motel accommodation, coach hire, registration fees for the camp and the conference, etc) except for meals for approximately ten days and your own personal spending money. While this money is not easy to obtain, if the comments from both parents and students from last year's tour are any indication, it is certainly worth the effort. The tour will be accompanied by experienced teacher throughout. If the 1998 experience is an indication, future delegates will have an experience that they will remember forever, not only for the things that they see and do, but also for the people they meet and the friendships they form.

Applications are now being taken for the 2000 USA tour to Monte Vista High School, San Francisco. If you are a student or SRC adviser and are interested in more information on this event, contact Ken Page on 02 4396 6485 or email <suepage@ozemail.com.au>

PASTA MEMBERSHIP DETAILS

Existing members are reminded that membership fees for 1999/2000 are now due. Current fees are $50 ordinary member, $25 student/concessionary member and $80 for institutional membership. If you are interested in becoming a member, please feel free to contact the secretary:

Mr Bob Kijurina
PO Box 963
Campbelltown
NSW 2560
On February 21 to 26, the Student Leadership Council of Karingal Park Secondary College (in Frankston, Victoria) held its 12th Annual Leadership Camp at Camp Mahaikah. For the 23 new representatives who attended this camp, these six days were important because they learnt about new leadership skills. For the 13 more experienced representatives who attended, the camp helped them gain more leadership experience.

As soon as the two minibuses left the school carpark at 5 pm on a Sunday afternoon, the young leaders got acquainted with one another. After a 45 minute break at Lilydale for takeaways, the buses continued their journey to Tolmie, north of Mansfield, where Camp Mahaikah is situated.

When the young leaders arrived at camp, they went to their cabins, which had been organised on the trip up, and got some needed sleep.

The next couple of days were busy. The experienced representatives had the feeling that because the camp was the longest in the 12-year history of the camps, there would be large amounts of free time. When they woke up on the Monday, they soon realised that Ross Appleby, the school’s Student Leadership and Participation Manager, and Jenny Caulfield, Mr Appleby’s assistant, had crammed more sessions into the camp than ever before.

During the four days of the camp, the young leaders learnt how to be a good leader, how to set goals, how to be properly organised, how to run a proper meeting, how to work as a team, and stress management.

Also, the SLC elected Office Bearers and people to go to sub-committee. As well as that, the SLC endured the hardest and most frustrating session of the year: the Constitution.

As at every SLC camp, the sessions that involved the Constitution can be lengthy, stressful and can cause tempers to flare. This year’s sessions were no exception. As the merger between Karingal and Ballam Park Secondary Colleges is complete, and the two schools are now on one site, this meant lengthy discussions and changes to the constitution. Also the change of name from Student Representative Council to Student Leadership Council meant lengthy discussions. Overall, the changes and discussions about the Constitution went on for a total of five hours over the duration of three sessions.

As well as work, the young leaders also got time to rest. While some did schoolwork that was due in the next week, others played volleyball, swam in the dam, went yabbie catching, or canoed. The teachers also organised trips to swim at nearby rivers and a trip to a nearby lookout.
At night, the tempo changed. Most young leaders had to do a three-minute speech so they could practise their public speaking skills. Most talked about themselves, their friends and their hobbies, while some talked about their past experience on the SRC. Each speech was scored out of a total of 10. The average was 7.5 to 8, with only two people scored 9 or above.

Also, the young leaders went on a night hike, took up the challenge of the annual Ghost Walk, which is always known to be terrifying, and let their hair down on the Thursday night at the Annual Concert.

Everyone left the camp on Friday knowing that they had learnt something at the camp that they didn’t know before they arrived at Mahaikah. When they arrived back at school at about 2.30 pm, the young leaders all knew that they could now represent the students in their year levels to the best of their potential.

Scott Bourne, Secretary, KPSC SLC

IDEAS FOR ALL STRUGGLING SRCs OUT THERE!!

Karingal Park Secondary College, a rather large school in Frankston on Victoria’s Mornington Peninsula, held their annual SRC camp earlier this year. I use the term SRC loosely here. As some of you might know, Karingal Park has changed the name of the SRC in our school to SLC. That stands for Student Leadership Council. It now covers more than just representing the students. It does that, but it also leads the way for them, branching out of the school onto the community and to other functions and events.

Our camps last for a week. You may be asking why such interest, and some people were telling me we have quite an interesting camp. We go to the school’s privately owned camping ground at Tolmie. With cabins, a recreational room, canoeing facilities, and a magnificent background, it is the perfect place for our camp.

Day one consists of our newly elected members getting to know each other, introducing our senior students, and planning what will take place over the next few days. All members are given a folder which will stay with them all year. It has everything in it: action plan pro formas (for planning events), resource material on coping with stress, running effective meetings, the constitution of our SLC, names and addresses, leadership manuals, explanation of what our SLC is, tips on communication skills etc.

This is the key to our SLC. The senior students and teachers did a mini seminar on why goal setting and good organization is needed. This year a new scheme has been introduced called “Student Action Teams”. With the police there to help, we discussed this new foundation. It will involve working with the police and community, the school administration and most importantly the kids to build a better community together. (Hey, sounds a lot like the ‘Building A Better Today’ theme of the 1st SRC International Conference next year in Sydney, doesn’t it?)

Day 2 was going through an SRC manual, working with how to have effective meetings, and the elections of our working party committees and office bearers. These are: fundraising, social, publicity, radio, Student Action Team, College Council, welfare, vice presidents, treasurer, vice treasurer, student network. The list goes on. All these are the key elements for our success and ability to work well together as a team and get things done.

The next item was our biggest task at camp, the changes to our constitution. It is a mammoth task which usually takes about four hours to complete, with motions, recommendations, changes, new things put in, and working out what has been working and what has not. This becomes our guidelines (our ‘bible’ if you will). If there is any uncertainty in our SLC we look to the constitution.

Day 3 plans the new year ahead. We work out what fund-raise we will hold, what projects we will support, what social events we will take place and when, what did work last year and what didn’t, what
we would like to try. The sub-committees have meetings and go through the year together and work out their specific plans and jobs and deadlines. Each committee is headed by a president who chairs its meetings. They set regular times to meet.

This vital planning session was followed by a mini seminar on team building, a group session working on the development, cooperation, maintenance of a team and how to cope working in a team. In the afternoon our sub-school teachers (co-ordinators for each year level eg junior school, middle school, and senior school) came down from school to visit the camp and have meetings with students in the respective years eg years 7-8 junior school, 9-10 middle school, 11-12 senior school. They all worked on what was happening in those year levels, problems existing and solutions to fix them. Basically it was the teachers one on one with the students, giving them a chance to see from the students' side what needs to be done around the school. Before bed was a relaxing hour of meditation to help us learn to relax when things start to get hectic and stressful.

Day 4 saw another mini-seminar on communication and what it has to do with leadership and SRCs. Each of our SLC members had to perform a 3 minute speech on their chosen subject to give them a feeling of public speaking. As they will all have to speak one time or another at a school assembly, this practice was both practical and timely.

Day 5 was 'departure time'. We were all extremely tired. We were "SRC'd and SLC'd out!!" We had planned the year. We got to know each other. We had a blast. We had fulfilled our goals for the week. In the long run those five days will benefit us in many ways as leaders and citizens. They have already made this year so far run smoothly. This camp is vital for the Karingal Park SLC.

I hope this has given you some ideas on what your SRC (or Student Council or Student Leadership Group) can do next year and help you with some ideas on the planning of your own activities. If you would like any further information or a copy of our constitution please contact me: Carlin Drew, phone: (03) 9789-1757; e-mail: berteng@MSN.com or aurora_princess@hotmail.com.

Good luck to all you student leaders out there and I hope you have a very successful year.

Carlin Drew (Year 11; 1998 Delegate on the USA OZ - USA SRC Leadership Tour organised by PASTA)
Student Representative Councils and Junior School Councils

HOW DO WE KNOW WHAT WE HAVE ACHIEVED?

How do you know if your Student Representative Council (in a secondary school) or Junior School Council (in a primary school) is working successfully?

To answer that question, you need to have some idea of what is possible: a vision, that is, of what an SRC or JSC can and should do. You also need to work out some way of monitoring what the SRC/JSC has done and matching its work against that vision.

One aspect of that evaluation of success is simply to look at what the SRC/JSC has worked on over a period of time — perhaps for the past 12 months. In talking with various groups of students, the following patterns have emerged:

How?

There are three ways in which student groups appear to work:

1. They do things themselves — they organise activities, most often of a social or fundraising nature, or internal to the organisation of the group;

2. They ask others to do things — they discuss an issue, decide that something should happen and approach staff, the Principal, the School Council etc. and ask for action;

3. They share decisions — student representatives take part in broader decision-making body which receives student proposals and then share in a decision, usually on larger, more complex or policy matters.

An effective SRC/JSC should see itself operating in all of these three modes, and should recognise which is appropriate to a particular issue. It should be asking: “How is a decision to be made on this matter? Who has the power to make such a decision?” It might be necessary for the SRC/JSC to draw up a decision-making map of the school, showing what other groups exist, who is on them, what decisions they make.

It should, however, be noted that most real and important decisions will be made in association with others: things that the SRC/JSC can do without reference to others are essentially more limited and trivial; the process of simply asking others for action does nothing to enable students to learn to act or to take responsibility for decisions.

What?

Secondly, we can list some of the common topics that student groups work on. In order of increasing complexity (and, unfortunately, decreasing frequency), I hear of:

- just surviving: the group spends all its time on internal operational matters, worrying about things like meeting attendance;
- fund-raising: students raise money for charities, for the school, for the student group or for specific projects;
- social: students organise social activities for other students within the school;
- facilities: students discuss the existing and possible school facilities (canteen, library, staff areas, classrooms, computers, books etc.) and work for improvements and changes to these or to student access to them (this is often linked to fund-raising efforts);
- rules: students discuss, survey, decide and approach other about changes to school rules and other policies (eg. welfare and discipline);
- environment: students develop and implement programs around the school and in their community about environmental issues (that usually, but not always, go beyond cleaning up the yard);
- advocacy: students advocate for changes on behalf of specific students or groups of students who may want something, or who feel aggrieved;
- curriculum: students discuss survey, decide and approach others about matters of teaching and learning (eg. assessment subjects, teaching/learning approaches) at levels of policy programs or practices;
- community action: students become involved in community issues beyond the school and discuss, decide and act on matters such as employment safety, environment etc.

We can now put these two observations together to form a sort of chart (opposite).
Evaluating

This could be a useful chart to monitor and reflect on what an SRC or JSC has achieved. At the end of a year (or a term) the group would list everything they've worked on - successfully or unsuccessfully - and mark it in the appropriate place on the chart. If an issue has been worked on in different ways, it could be listed in more than one column. Or if an action has involved more than one topic, it could be listed in several rows. Alternatively, the group could write details of all their issues on pieces of paper, with the size of individual pieces giving some indication of the amount of time or attention taken up on working on this issue in that particular way. These big and small pieces of paper can then be stuck in the appropriate square on the chart.

Look at the picture this reveals: what do we notice? What's the pattern? Do all the activities tend to group in one place? Are there empty squares? Why is this? (For example, it might be that all curriculum issues naturally have to be worked on in a 'sharing decisions' mode.)

In taking a student group through this exercise, I usually finish by pointing out that there's nothing wrong with working on fund-raising and social issues (which usually dominate the reports), but that there's a concern if a group only works on these and if they work on them in isolation from other areas (that is: if fund-raising becomes the dominant first issue, rather than being a means to achieve other ends).

After all, what is a school essentially on about: raising money and having socials? If the SRC/JSC is an important/vital part of the school, how come it's not working on the areas that are central to what schools are about?

We can also recognise that the organisation of fund-raising and socials provides valuable experiences in joint action and decision making, but the very effort of doing these activities can take up all the time allocated to the SRC/JSC. (The time commitment is another issue: when do these bodies meet? For how long? Is there any way of building their work into the school curriculum?)

Using this chart suggests one way of getting round these issues of 'balance'. If the SRC/JSC sets up fund-raising and/or social subcommittees within the SRC/JSC, these bodies would be the focus for organising these activities (seeking overall approval from the SRC/JSC) and thus freeing the whole group to get on with other, broader matters. The other chart headings could also form the basis for sub-committees and working groups.

But in some schools, it's almost as if walls are built across the above chart. "Students are not allowed to jump over this wall!" And despite other schools' statements about the desirable broad role of the SRC/JSC in the decision-making structures and processes of that school, perhaps it's the students themselves who continue to behave as if the walls are still there!

Roger Holdsworth

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<th>How?</th>
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<th>Share decisions</th>
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(adapted from an article first printed in Connect 75, June 1992)
Our Junior School Council

The Junior School Council at Eltham East Primary School is an important part of our school.

It is important because:
- it makes the school a better place;
- it gives responsible jobs to the children;
- students can give their ideas about what they enjoy: if they enjoy school, they will want to come and learn and this will keep the school going;
- it makes learning better.

There are twelve students on the Council, from grades 2 to 6. You get to be on the JSC in some different ways. In each of grades 2 to 4, two students are elected by the students. We have to be nominated by someone and then we make a speech about why we want to be on the JSC. Then we go into the kitchen (so we can’t see) and the teachers ask students to vote.

In grades 5 and 6, being on the JSC is only one of many leadership positions. Two school captains are chosen by the Principal and teachers, and then other students can nominate for the JSC. Each person has to appear in front of a panel of three teachers and say why they want to be on the JSC. Two students are selected after this interview.

One of the things we want to improve this year is the information that students have about the JSC. Sometimes when students want to be on the JSC, or when they vote for a representative, they don’t know what the JSC does, or what work is involved. We’ll try to improve this next time.

The JSC meets every fortnight for about half an hour at recess. The grade 6 leaders run the meetings, with the teachers helping. We need to get an agenda for these meetings so everyone knows what is to be discussed. We also need to get reports from people. While we have a chairperson, we’ll also need a secretary, a treasurer and someone to report to the Principal.

After the meetings, everyone is supposed to report to classes or to year levels. In some cases this can happen at level assemblies (eg grades 5-6), but at other levels we will have to go round to classes to report. We also sometimes report to the whole school, to the Principal and to the School Council.

Last year, the Junior School Council collected ideas from the classes for what needed to be done round the school. This also involved fundraising for new playground equipment, recommending about what equipment was needed in the grade 1-2 playground, recycling, changing the food in the canteen, helping visitors to the school and helping at the fete.

This year, we want to improve our reporting to classes and assemblies, and ask classes more about what is needed. At our first training session, we decided that we would like to work on:
- getting bin lids - to stop the crows scattering rubbish;
- asphaltling the grade 3-6 basketball court;
- getting more food choice available in the canteen;
- doing some fundraising for more equipment.

The training day was held in term 1 and it helped us. This is what some of us said:
- “We decided or something to fix up.”
- “I now have more of an idea about things we do in the JSC.”
- “I like to work with other kids.”
- “It helped me to learn about the JSC.”
- “We learned how to work together.”

Sarah, Ricky, Patrick, Isabelle, Emma, Keely, Genevieve, Elizabeth, Rebecca, Ben
The Active Learner

Sara Day Hatton, editor of The Active Learner: A Foxfire Journal for Teachers, published in Mountain City, GA, USA, is seeking contact with teachers who are using student-centred practices successfully in the classroom. She will work with you to publish your story. You can write an article for the journal or she will interview you through email and/or phone and write it with your input.

If interested, write to her at:

Foxfire
PO Box 541
Mountain City
GA 30562-0541
USA

or email her at: dayhatton@foxfire.org
or send a fax to: (+1) 706.746.5829

STUDENT PARTICIPATION
E-MAIL DISCUSSION GROUP

To join: Send an e-mail to: <majordomo@edna.edu.au>
saying (in the body of the message):
subscribe student-participation

... post topics for discussion ...
... make announcements ...
... ask questions ...
... share information and resources ...

Australian Curriculum Studies Association
Biennial Conference
September 29 - October 2, 1999
Perth, WA

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- Values and active citizenship • Assessment
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PASTA AND SRC 2000
NOW ON INTERNET

PASTA's Home Page is now up and running at:

This site is linked through that of the Joint Council of Professional Teacher Associations in NSW with which PASTA and many other subject oriented associations are affiliated.

While still in the process of construction, the site currently covers sufficient information and contact addresses for all of PASTA's major activities and an extensive number of linkages to related organisations both in Australia and internationally.

Each of the following areas has its own page within the PASTA site:

1. Who We Are?
2. What We Do?
3. How Do I Join?
4. The PASTA Newsletter
5. Publications
6. Issues for Advisers
7. Curriculum
8. The Community Service Certificate Program (CSC)
9. The 1st International SRC Conference in Sydney 2000
10. PASTA's USA Student Council Leadership Tours
11. The National Student Parliament/Student Council Project
12. International Connections

The site will be regularly updated as new material comes to hand and always after each new bimonthly issue of Connect. Any new material or enquiries may be directed to Charles Kingston, PASTA Vice-President for National/International Affairs; e-mail: ckingston@interact.net.au

The site was made possible through the cooperation and efforts of Charles Sturt University and the Joint Council working in conjunction with the voluntary technical assistance of Chris O'Rourke. Chris, a former Bathurst High Drama Teacher and SRC Adviser now at CSU, has formed his own web design and publishing company: "MOO Design". He has donated his services to enable PASTA to do this. His site address is:

http://users.netwit.net.au/~moo/

Alternatively, those with an interest in creating their own sites may contact Chris via email at: moo@netwit.net.au and corourke@csu.edu.au

Parliamentary Education Office

The Parliamentary Education Office aims encourage students to become active and informed citizens through developing an understanding of Australian Parliamentary democracy.

The Parliamentary Education Office is situated in Parliament House in Canberra and provides a unique service to Australian schools and tertiary institutions. Staffed by educators with primary, secondary and tertiary experience, the office is committed to meeting the challenge of making parliamentary education interesting and exciting. It does this in the following ways:

- it provides teachers and their students with innovative resources and teaching strategies for teaching about Australia's system of parliamentary democracy;
- it operates an Education Centre program in Parliament House which enables visiting school groups to take part in a variety of role-play activities which provide students with an appreciation of parliamentary processes and concepts;
- staff travel to capital cities and regional centres throughout Australia to conduct Education Centre programs for students and professional development courses for teachers and trainee teachers;
- it provides an opportunity for educators with an interest in parliamentary education to visit Parliament House in Canberra for one week; and
- on a limited basis, it assists community groups in the running of seminars and conventions related to parliamentary matters.

Contact information:

Telephone: (02) 6277 3147
Fax: (02) 6277 5775
E-mail: info@peo.gov.au
Web: http://www.peo.gov.au

Connect 11
Local and Overseas Publications Received

Connect receives many publications directly or indirectly relevant to youth and student participation. We can’t lend or sell these, but if you want to look at or use them, contact us on:
(03) 9489 9052 or (03) 9344 9637

OTHER PUBLICATIONS:

Australian:

Curriculum Perspectives (Australian Curriculum Studies Association, Deakin West, ACT) Vol 19 No 1, April 1999

Linking and Thinking Health (Australian Health Promoting Schools Association, NSW) Vol 6 No 4, December 1998/January 1999

Network News (Surry Hills, NSW) March 1999

Other Ways (AERG, Chirnside Park, Vic) #79, March 1999

Starlink (Melbourne, Vic) Issues 34, 35; February, March 1999

YACSAround (YACSA, SA) Jan/Feb 1999
YACVCibits (YACVic, Fitzroy, Vic) March 1999
Youth Studies Australia (ACYS, Tas) Vol 18 No 1, March 1999

International:


National Youth Congress

On the 26th March 1999, 300 young people aged between 16 and 23 years were riding trains, flying planes or driving automobiles to Canberra, the nation’s capital. Their mission was a common one, to attend the National Youth Initiative’s National Youth Congress.

The aim of the National Youth Congress was to bring young people from as far west as Perth, as far north as Darwin, as south as Tassie and east as Sydney to Canberra to discuss issues relevant to young people across the country: youth suicide, drugs, education, environment, youth rights and profile, racism and multiculturalism. Just like in many youth conferences, when the nation’s top young leaders congregate, there are extraordinary solutions raised and discovered.

However, the NYC is a little different from this stage onwards. Being heavily supported by Rotary Sydney and he Governor-General Sir William Deane, the NYC’s missions and recommendations are passed on directly to the Federal Minister for Youth Affairs, Dr David Kemp. With such support and contacts, it is hoped that finally the government will listen to the knowledgable voice of young people!

So, now that the conference is over, the work has just begun! Regional groups have been set up nation wide to begin community action plans and projects. If you are interested in having a valuable contribution in your community, check out the NYI on the web at www.nyi.org.au or send me an email at: <wilisa@ans.com.au> to find out how you can be involved.

Get involved in our future: we have the power to change the world!

Cherie Wilson
(student member of PASTA, international representative on the 1998 PASTA SRC USA Leadership Tour and delegate to the 1999 NYI Congress)
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Miscellaneous Resources:
- Students and Work - 1985 Connect reprint booklet #5 ($5) $ ..........
- Democracy Starts Here! Junior School Councils at Work (1996) ($7) $ ..........

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

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