

EMPOWERING STUDENT VOICE

SRC Masterclass

Your Guide to Building an Effective
Student Representative Council

Brought to you by Peer Support



WELCOME

This masterclass will teach you how to raise the profile of the SRC in your school. You will learn how to keep your students and teachers involved, engaged, and motivated to run an SRC that makes your school proud.

During this masterclass, we will be challenging some commonly held beliefs about SRCs. We will share practice and ideas from other schools.

The SRC Masterclass is an evolution of the Peer Support Program. This program has been helping schools support the mental health and wellbeing of their students for more than 50 years. There are about 1,000 schools currently involved in the program across Australia, impacting around half a million students every year.

Peer Support is about equipping people with the understanding, skills and confidence to be both well in their own right, and also to be well enough to connect effectively with, and to support others.

Peer Support develops student leaders who are authentic and purpose-driven. These are skills every child and young person deserves to learn.

This masterclass shares how you can do this with your SRC.

I will be leading you through this masterclass with the help of psychologist and academic, Professor John Toumbourou, SRC coordinators and school leaders, and student council representatives from primary school and high school.

We hope you enjoy the insights shared across this series.

Jill Pearman

Senior Wellbeing Education Consultant



Meet your teachers

We're delighted to introduce you to a range of voices across this 10-episode series. You will hear from students, teachers and experts. They generously donated their time, driven by a passion to share their experiences and expertise in the interest of supporting the mental health and wellbeing of students across Australia.



Our host **Jill Pearman** is a passionate advocate for student wellbeing and leadership, bringing her wealth of experience as a dedicated leader and educator and her role with Peer Support to the SRC Masterclass. With a deep commitment to empowering young people, Jill has spent her career supporting schools to foster inclusive, student-centred environments that build resilience, confidence, and community. Jill is supported by her colleagues **Sophie Sedgwick** and **Samuel O'Leary**, our Wellbeing Education Consultants, who visit schools to find out about their SRCs.



Our expert **Professor John Toumbourou** is a distinguished academic and Chair in Health Psychology at Deakin University, renowned for his extensive work in youth development, mental health, and wellbeing. With a career dedicated to fostering healthier communities, Professor Toumbourou has been a driving force behind research on building resilience and promoting inclusive leadership in schools.



Teachers and students from **Westfields Sports High School** share their experiences, exemplifying the power of student leadership and inclusivity through its vibrant SRC program. Guided by dedicated staff, including Principal **Andrew Rogers**, SRC Coordinator **Maria Bui**, and Community Liaison Officer **David Falau**, the school fosters a supportive environment where student voices thrive.



Oxley Park Public School is a great example of how schools can create a positive, inclusive culture through their SRC. Led by Principal **Kim Smith** and supported by passionate staff like SRC Coordinators **Carly Paton** and **Fiona Flavell**, the school makes sure every student has a chance to be heard and feel valued. We hear from their teachers and students across the series.

BEST PRACTICE STUDENT VOICE

Part 1

The first part of this masterclass looks at 'the why' of your SRC. What's its reason for being? Across three episodes, we explore the purpose and benefits of prioritising student voice. We discuss how to empower your students to be active agents of the decisions that impact them. We look at the link between student voice and mental health, highlighting the reasons to position your SRC as a wellbeing initiative.



EPISODE 1: THE PURPOSE AND BENEFITS OF A STUDENT VOICE

This episode introduces the incredible potential of SRCs to amplify student voice, foster agency, and build a positive school culture. Often seen as fundraising tools, SRCs can be much more—powerful platforms for student involvement and leadership.

KEY INSIGHTS

The Value of Student Voice:

Empowering students to participate meaningfully in decision-making enhances their sense of belonging, confidence, and social capabilities. This, in turn, benefits the entire school community.

Foundation for Leadership:

Establishing an SRC sets the stage for students to develop critical leadership and life skills such as decision-making, collaboration, and communication. These skills have lifelong benefits.

Inclusive Participation: A successful SRC ensures that every student has the opportunity to contribute, especially those who might not traditionally step forward for leadership roles. This inclusivity helps foster a school culture where everyone feels valued and heard.

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When we look at the SRC through the lens of wellbeing and school culture, it becomes a wonderful mechanism to involve students, develop their agency, and most importantly, hear their voices.

Jill Pearman
Senior Wellbeing Consultant

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EXPERT PERSPECTIVE

Insights from Professor John Toumbourou:

- Listening to students is transformative, not just for them but for adults too. It fosters empathy, connection, and mental wellbeing, making schools safer and more inclusive spaces.
- SRCs teach leadership, problem-solving, and collaboration. They empower students to embrace challenges, overcome fears, and grow into confident role models.

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Listening is the start of the journey—empathy, compassion, and care all stem from it.

OXLEY PARK PUBLIC SCHOOL

Their inclusive SRC structure supports diverse voices, from classroom reps to library monitors and sports leaders. The result? A culture of belonging and respect that reflects their community's diversity.

WESTFIELDS SPORTS HIGH SCHOOL

The SRC's input has directly influenced school decisions on facilities and cultural celebrations, highlighting the importance of listening and acting on student feedback.

TAKEAWAY MESSAGE

A thriving SRC isn't one-size-fits-all. Schools can customise their approach to fit their unique communities, ensuring every student feels valued and heard. When SRCs are done well, they enhance belonging, connection, and mental health—cornerstones of a successful school culture.



Everybody matters, everybody fits, everybody belongs. That sense of belonging is really important.

Kim Smith, Principal
Oxley Park Public School

ACTION ITEMS

- Consider a time as a student or an adult learner when you felt engaged, that you had agency, felt empowered. What was around you at the time and what effect did that have?
- Reflect on whether your SRC genuinely represents student voice and aligns with your school's goals.

EPISODE 2: THE SECRETS OF EFFECTIVE SRCS

In this episode, we look at how to create an authentic and effective SRC that truly activates student voice and promotes meaningful participation. The focus is on engaging students as genuine contributors to their school community.

KEY INSIGHTS

Authenticity in Participation: Using tools like Hart's Ladder, schools can evaluate and improve their approach to student involvement. The ladder highlights the importance of moving beyond tokenism to authentic engagement where students' voices influence and lead decision-making.

Process Matters: A strong SRC isn't about quick results—it's about creating an ongoing, meaningful process that fosters participation, leadership, agency, and collaboration.

EXPERT PERSPECTIVE

Insights from Professor John Toumbourou:

- Agency gives students a sense of belonging and purpose, making schools vibrant and engaging.
- Diversity in SRCs fosters respect and understanding, as students learn from experiences outside their own narratives.
- Training and guidance are essential to help students develop the skills to listen, respect, and lead effectively.

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Agency is about creating opportunities where students feel like, 'Wow, I've got a chance to do something meaningful and make a difference.

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When an SRC works well, students have ownership, and it creates a wonderful sense of belonging across the whole school community.

Jill Pearman
Senior Wellbeing Consultant

OXLEY PARK PUBLIC SCHOOL

Students like Kendall showcase how SRCs empower young leaders to drive initiatives such as fundraising, eco-projects, and creating a wellbeing wagon filled with games for students, especially those in need.

WESTFIELDS SPORTS HIGH SCHOOL

Their SRC reflects the diversity of the school community and ensures students' voices shape key decisions, such as improvements to facilities. They emphasise the importance of balancing leadership responsibilities with academic and personal growth.

TAKEAWAY MESSAGE

School culture is strengthened by an SRC that values process, authenticity, and diversity. By fostering student agency and listening to their voices, schools enhance wellbeing and equip students with life skills that extend beyond the classroom.



Our senior leaders want to leave a legacy. They want to see the school in better hands than when they arrived.

Andrew Rogers, Principal
Westfields Sports High School

ACTION ITEMS

- Think about a past SRC activity and analyse where it would fit on Hart's Ladder.
- Consider how to take the SRC activities higher up the ladder to promote more meaningful student engagement and agency.



HART'S LADDER OF STUDENT PARTICIPATION

Hart's Ladder is a tool that illustrates different levels of student involvement in decision-making processes. It helps schools evaluate and improve the quality of student participation, moving from tokenism to meaningful engagement.

The higher the rung on the ladder, the more meaningful and empowering the participation. You can use Hart's Ladder to assess whether their SRC and other student initiatives genuinely empower students or merely involve them superficially. True participation involves listening, collaboration, and shared responsibility between students and adults. Roger Hart's ladder of participation helps schools shine a spot light on the process needed for authentic participation of students.

This framework encourages schools to reflect on their practices and aim for authentic student voice and agency.

THE 8 RUNGS OF HART'S LADDER

1. Manipulation: Students are involved, but their participation is superficial and used to further adult agendas without genuine input.

2. Decoration: Students appear to participate but are used as a symbol of inclusion without actual influence.

3. Tokenism: Students have some involvement, but their role is minimal and lacks meaningful contribution.

4. Assigned but Informed: Students are given a specific role or task, and they understand the purpose and how decisions are made.

5. Consulted and Informed: Adults seek students' opinions, which are considered during decision-making. Students understand how their input is used.

6. Adult-Initiated, Shared Decisions with Students: Adults lead the process but actively involve students in making decisions.

7. Student-Initiated and Directed: Students lead and take ownership of the initiative with minimal adult intervention.

8. Student-Initiated, Shared Decisions with Adults: Students and adults collaborate as equal partners in decision-making processes.

EPISODE 3: THE WAYS STUDENT VOICE CAN BOOST STUDENT WELLBEING

We delve into the connection between student voice and student wellbeing, highlighting how an SRC can play a pivotal role in fostering belonging, resilience, and positive school culture.

KEY INSIGHTS

Wellbeing and Learning Are

Interconnected: A sense of agency and belonging is fundamental to both mental health and academic success. When students feel heard and valued, they thrive.

The Role of SRCs: An effective SRC provides students with opportunities to contribute meaningfully to their school community, helping them build confidence, social-emotional skills, and resilience.

The Power of Prevention: Fostering positive school environments through SRCs can prevent mental health challenges by creating hope, connection, and a sense of value for every student.

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The work we do with students through the SRC builds their sense of self-esteem and shows them that they matter—right at the heart of this is the feeling that their voice is valued.

Jill Pearman
Senior Wellbeing Consultant

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EXPERT PERSPECTIVE

Insights from Professor John
Toumbourou:

- Listening to and acting on student voices helps foster optimism and a sense of control, which are critical for mental health.
- Teaching students to communicate, listen, and care for others builds strong social bonds and equips them for future success.

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To be heard and to feel valued is transformative, especially for students who may come from difficult backgrounds.

OXLEY PARK PUBLIC SCHOOL

Their SRC fosters belonging through activities like creating artwork and acknowledgements of country, supporting students' sense of identity and inclusion.

Leaders like Bridget reflect the SRC's emphasis on connection, acting as role models and extending support to peers and teachers alike.

WESTFIELDS SPORTS HIGH SCHOOL

The SRC contributes to a culture where everyone feels valued. Malak, a student leader, speaks passionately about the importance of making peers feel safe, respected, and represented.

Initiatives like leadership camps and student-driven meetings ensure that voices from diverse backgrounds are heard and acted upon.

TAKEAWAY MESSAGE

Reposition your SRC as a core part of your school's wellbeing strategy. When structured with intention and authenticity, an SRC can create a culture of respect, belonging, and positive mental health for all students.



A leader is not someone who's bossy or intimidating—they're someone who makes others feel safe and respected.

Mallak, SRC member
Westfields Sports High School

ACTION ITEMS

- Consider how your SRC can contribute to your school's wellbeing strategy. How can you leverage your SRC to contribute to decision-making at your school. How can it complement existing initiatives?
- Communicate the new positioning of the SRC to the school community, including staff and parents?

7 WAYS TO PROTECT STUDENTS' MENTAL HEALTH

Protective factors for mental health are conditions or attributes that help individuals deal with stress and adversity, reducing the likelihood of developing mental health challenges while promoting resilience and wellbeing.

1. A Sense of Belonging

- Feeling connected to a supportive community or environment, such as a school or SRC.
- Knowing that one's presence and contributions are valued by peers and adults.

2. Positive Relationships

- Encouraging strong bonds between students and staff, fostering trust and mutual respect.
- Teaching students how to communicate effectively and listen with care to others.

3. Agency and Voice

- Empowering students to express their opinions and participate meaningfully in decisions that affect them.
- Providing opportunities for students to influence outcomes, which fosters optimism and a sense of control.

4. Optimism and Hope

- Cultivating a school culture that emphasises solutions, progress, and opportunities rather than focusing solely on challenges.
- Encouraging students to see a brighter future and believe in their ability to contribute positively.

5. Skill Development

- Building social-emotional skills like empathy, problem-solving, and leadership through structured activities.
- Teaching students to care for others and to navigate relationships constructively.

6. Recognition of Individual Value

- Ensuring every student feels their unique story and experiences are valued and contribute meaningfully to the community.
- Reinforcing the idea that everyone has something valuable to offer, regardless of their background.

7. Supportive School Structures

- Establishing systems like SRCs where students know their voices are heard and acted upon.
- Creating an environment where students feel safe sharing their concerns and ideas.



Student voice is about creating an environment where social norms of optimism and hope can flourish.

Professor John Toumbourou
Deakin University

MAKING IT HAPPEN

Part 2

This is 'the how' part of the masterclass. Learn practical skills and ideas for bringing your SRC to life. This section covers planning your SRC, onboarding members, developing and running activities, and communication.



EPISODE 4: PLANNING, FORMING AND ORGANISING YOUR SRC

This episode covers the practical steps for forming and organising a successful SRC. The focus is on creating a solid structure, planning effectively, and ensuring the SRC is an integral, vibrant part of the school community.

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If you want your SRC to be effective, make it everybody's business—staff, students, and caregivers included.

Jill Pearman
Senior Wellbeing Consultant

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KEY INSIGHTS

Purpose and Planning: Schools need a clear purpose for their SRC, tied to the school's vision and values. Students could be involved in brainstorming a strategic plan for the year, which could focus on themes like inclusion, belonging, or creativity.

Effective planning includes setting goals, deciding on budgets, and creating a schedule for regular meetings and activities. A detailed constitution ensures structure and clarity.

Representation and Awareness: SRC representatives should actively represent their cohorts. This could be class suggestion boxes or regular feedback from peers to ensure all voices, including quieter ones, are heard.

Raising awareness among the school community is vital. SRC updates can feature in assemblies, staff and caregiver meetings, and social media.

Training and Bonding: SRC training builds essential skills like teamwork, leadership, and communication. Use the downloadable training day resource to help students bond and develop these skills.

Activities and Projects: SRC activities should go beyond fundraising to include projects that foster wellbeing and authentic student voice. Aligning projects with Hart's Ladder ensures meaningful participation.

Evaluation and Sustainability: Schools should regularly evaluate their SRC's effectiveness and make improvements to ensure it remains a dynamic and inclusive platform for student leadership.

OXLEY PARK PUBLIC SCHOOL

Two representatives per class (Years 1–6) meet fortnightly, taking on roles like agenda-setting and minute-taking to gradually lead meetings themselves. Students contribute ideas, promote initiatives on the PA system and social media, and help execute projects.

WESTFIELDS SPORTS HIGH SCHOOL

Their SRC structure includes 30 students from Years 8–12 who meet weekly, with Year 12 leaders running meetings. Roles are rotated, and students work in mixed-year teams.

They develop and lead activities like “Do It for Dolly Day”, which raised \$1,500 and promoted anti-bullying through activities, workshops, and fundraising.

Leadership camps and team-building activities enhance collaboration, confidence, and communication.

TAKEAWAY MESSAGE

A well-organised SRC can transform school culture by fostering student agency, leadership, and belonging. With clear goals, inclusive representation, and thorough planning, the SRC becomes a vibrant hub for student voice and wellbeing.

Our SRC meetings are becoming student-led, with members taking responsibility for agendas, minutes, and planning initiatives.

Fiona Flavell, SRC Coordinator
Oxley Park Public School

We meet every Tuesday, and our Year 12s lead the meetings, giving younger students the chance to learn leadership skills while contributing their ideas.

Maria, SRC Coordinator
Westfields Sports High School



Our teachers don't hold our hands
— they guide us and let us lead.
It's empowering to work with
students from other year groups
to make a difference.

Miguel, SRC member
Westfields Sports High School



Representation means every
student's voice matters, and our
SRC gives them the platform to
share their ideas.

Fiona Flavell, SRC Coordinator
Oxley Park Public School

ACTION ITEMS

- Download the SRC toolkit, which includes a range of templates and resources.
- Start planning for your SRC using the tools and strategies discussed, such as defining the purpose, planning activities, and raising awareness.
- Start planning a one-day training for students to develop the skills needed to run and be involved in the SRC.
- Ensure the SRC has a standing agenda item at caregiver and staff meetings to keep the school community informed.
- Encourage students to represent their cohorts and gather feedback from their classmates to bring to the SRC meetings.

EPISODE 5: ONBOARDING YOUR SRC

We focus on the crucial process of onboarding and training SRC members. Effective onboarding is essential to equip students with the skills, confidence, and sense of responsibility they need to succeed in their roles. This process enhances the effectiveness of the SRC and helps students grow as leaders and contributors to their school community.



Effective onboarding builds the confidence and tools students need to step into their SRC roles successfully.

Jill Pearman
Senior Wellbeing Consultant



The SRC camp allows students to overcome self-doubt and learn to work as a team—skills that are invaluable for leaders.

David, Community Liaison Officer
Westfields Sports High School

KEY INSIGHTS

The Importance of Training: Many schools overlook SRC training, but it's vital for developing leadership, teamwork, communication, and problem-solving skills. Training fosters a sense of responsibility, builds confidence, and ensures SRC members understand their role in representing their peers.

Diversity in the SRC: A successful SRC reflects the diversity of the school, including students with various talents, not just those who excel at public speaking. This inclusivity enhances the authenticity of student voice and demonstrates the school's commitment to student agency.

Training Activities: A full-day training session for your student representatives can involve activities to build leadership skills, teamwork, and decision-making abilities. Students benefit from opportunities to plan the SRC's strategic goals, ensuring their ideas shape the year's activities.

OXLEY PARK PUBLIC SCHOOL

They hold an SRC training day at the start of each year to build leadership skills, teamwork, and a sense of responsibility. Regular meetings every fortnight help SRC members stay engaged and connected.

WESTFIELD SPORTS HIGH SCHOOL

The school runs an annual SRC leadership camp where students participate in activities like high ropes, abseiling, and commando challenges. The camp focuses on overcoming self-doubt, fostering teamwork, and strengthening leadership principles. The experience helps students bond as a group and grow as leaders.

TAKEAWAY MESSAGE

Training and onboarding SRC members sets up your SRC for success. By investing in leadership development, schools can create an SRC that reflects the diversity of its student body, amplifies student voice, and fosters a culture of belonging and confidence.



Training equips students with the skills they need to be great leaders and role models, both now and in the future.

Fiona Flavell, SRC Coordinator
Oxley Park Public School

ACTION ITEMS

- Download and browse through the SRC training manual provided.
- Explore the possibility of having an assembly to formally induct and present the new SRC members with badges.
- Use the toolkit to help plan and execute the onboarding process for your SRC members.

EPISODE 6: SRC ACTIVITIES

This episode looks at the types of activities that an SRC can engage in, and how these activities can have a significant impact on students, the school community, and beyond. While fundraising is often a big focus for SRCs, the episode encourages schools to look at other ideas to create inclusive, student-driven initiatives that foster authentic student voice and enhance wellbeing.

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SRC activities should reflect what the students truly care about—it's about giving them ownership and voice."

Jill Pearman
Senior Wellbeing Consultant

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KEY INSIGHTS

The Importance of Student-Driven Activities: SRC activities should reflect the interests and ideas of students, ensuring authentic student voice is at the forefront. Schools could involve students in brainstorming, planning, and executing initiatives, while also encouraging input from staff and the wider school community.

Using Hart's Ladder: When planning activities, consider where they sit on Hart's Ladder of participation. Aim for activities that are inclusive and empower students with genuine ownership, rather than tokenistic involvement.

Learning Through Fundraising: Fundraising offers opportunities for students to learn about important causes and connect with charities. Inviting representatives from charities to speak to students can further enrich their learning and provide a broader perspective on the impact of their contributions.

OXLEY PARK PUBLIC SCHOOL

The SRC runs different activities, often incorporating local community connections, such as working with local businesses. Two events that students share include:

- Peddler's Day: Students organise stalls like nail painting, games, and hair salons. The funds raised support the Year 6 farewell and graduation.
- Wellbeing Wagon: Funds from a mufti day were used to enhance the playground, providing resources for children to feel included and engaged.



The Wellbeing Wagon brought so much joy to our playground, and it was a fantastic way for students to make a meaningful impact.

Carly, SRC Coordinator
Oxley Park Public School

WESTFIELDS SPORTS HIGH SCHOOL

Here are some of the examples of activities that the SRC has led:

- Do It for Dolly Day: Focused on anti-bullying and mental health, this event included raffles, themed cupcakes, and workshops. It raised \$1,400 for Dolly's Dream.
- Teacher Appreciation Day: Students created a video of kind messages for teachers, which was shared in the school stadium.
- Valentine's Day Fundraiser: Included raffles and themed merchandise, fostering school spirit and engagement.
- SRC Leadership Day: Students plan and run a leadership day for local primary schools, featuring icebreakers, motivational talks, and team-building activities.



Do It for Dolly Day was about standing up against bullying and promoting mental wellbeing—a message that's so important... Our activities aren't just about fun—they're about making sure everyone feels they belong.

Miguel, SRC Member
Westfields Sports High School

TAKEAWAY MESSAGE

SRC activities have the power to make a profound impact on the school culture. By focusing on inclusion, wellbeing, and genuine student participation, these initiatives can foster a sense of belonging and purpose among students. Whether it's a fundraising event, a leadership day, or a wellbeing-focused project, the goal should always be to ensure every student feels heard and valued.



Fundraising is wonderful, but let's think bigger—how can we use these activities to build wellbeing and learning opportunities?

Jill Pearman
Senior Wellbeing Education Consultant

ACTION ITEMS

- Continuously think about SRC activities in relation to Hart's Ladder, ensuring they are inclusive and student-voice focused.
- Canvas the staff and the whole school community to involve them in the process of deciding SRC activities.
- Ensure SRC members take the activity ideas to the principal or executive for approval and sign-off.
- Enhance student learning by inviting representatives from charities to speak to the students about the causes they support.

EPISODE 7: COMMUNICATION

This episode focuses on the critical role of communication in building a thriving and inclusive SRC. The episode explores how schools can raise awareness, foster student voice, and connect the broader school community to the SRC's initiatives. Communication isn't just about sharing information—it's about listening, engaging, and creating meaningful dialogue that empowers students and promotes genuine participation.

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Great communication is at the heart of an effective SRC. It's not just about talking; it's about listening—to each other, to the student body, and to the broader school community.

Jill Pearman
Senior Wellbeing Consultant

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KEY INSIGHTS

Listening is Key: Effective communication begins with active listening. SRC members need to engage with their peers, teachers, and families to ensure every voice is heard and valued.

Inclusive Communication Channels: Schools can use social media, posters, newsletters, assemblies, and class visits to share SRC updates and gather input. Tailoring these methods to the community ensures inclusivity and accessibility.

Peer-to-Peer Connection: Encouraging peer-led communication strengthens relationships and empowers students to take ownership of their SRC's goals and initiatives.

Expanding Participation: SRCs can involve students with diverse skills—like IT, design, or organising events—who might not otherwise participate. This ensures more voices are included and valued.

OXLEY PARK PUBLIC SCHOOL

The SRC fosters communication through regular class feedback sessions and creative initiatives like student-led lessons on recycling and environmental projects. These efforts encourage collaboration and ensure that ideas from across the school are considered and acted upon.

WESTFIELDS SPORTS HIGH SCHOOL

The school effectively uses social media, assemblies, and posters to communicate SRC updates. Initiatives like peer mentoring and leadership programs demonstrate how strong communication can create a supportive and inclusive school culture.

TAKEAWAY MESSAGE

Communication is the foundation of a successful SRC. By actively listening, fostering peer-to-peer collaboration, and using diverse methods to engage the whole school community, SRCs can amplify student voice and create meaningful change. Empowering students to communicate confidently and inclusively equips them with life skills.

EXPERT PERSPECTIVE

Insights from Professor John Toumbourou:

- Communication helps students develop critical social and emotional skills, such as empathy and reflective listening.
- Reflective listening—where students paraphrase and validate what they hear—builds understanding and trust. It's a skill that can be taught and practiced to create a culture of respect and collaboration.
- Parents and carers play a vital role in supporting SRC initiatives. Schools can encourage students to involve their families in discussions, fostering a stronger connection between home and school.

When students communicate well, they grow not just as leaders, but as thoughtful, empathetic members of their school and community.

Professor John Toumbourou
Deakin University



Leadership isn't about being tough—it's about being kind, nurturing ideas, and giving everyone a voice.

Miguel, SRC member
Westfields Sports High School



Listening to students helps us build a better school together. Students feel safe to share ideas when we create opportunities for peer-to-peer communication.

Kim Smith, Principal
Oxley Park Public School

ACTION ITEMS

- Develop deliberate strategies to raise the profile of the SRC and communicate its activities across the school.
- Consider implementing a structure that allows for co-opted members on the SRC to bring in diverse voices and skills.
- Encourage SRC members to visit classrooms and communicate the SRC's plans and goals to the wider student body.
- Explore ways to canvas ideas and feedback from the cohorts that SRC members represent, such as through class visits or feedback boxes.
- Ensure SRC meetings are student-led, with an agenda set by the students and opportunities for them to run the meetings.

EPISODE 8: EVALUATING AND IMPROVING YOUR SRC

In this episode, we dive into the importance of evaluation and improvement for SRCs. By regularly seeking feedback and reflecting on what's working and what's not, schools can ensure their SRCs remain effective, inclusive, and student-focused.

KEY INSIGHTS

Continuous Improvement: Regularly assess SRC activities and initiatives to identify successes and areas for development. This helps SRCs stay dynamic and responsive to student needs.

Involving the Whole School: SRCs can gather feedback from students, staff, and even caregiver using surveys, class discussions, and informal feedback mechanisms.

Practical Evaluation Tools: Schools can use Hart's Ladder to evaluate student involvement and explore ways to deepen participation and voice in decision-making.

Guiding Future Work: Evaluation results can inform the planning of the next SRC, ensuring a seamless transition and ongoing growth.

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Evaluation isn't about overthinking—it's about asking what went well, what didn't, and how we can do better.

Jill Pearman
Senior Wellbeing Consultant

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EXPERT PERSPECTIVE

Insights from Professor John Toumbourou:

- Evaluation helps SRCs grow by identifying what works and what doesn't, encouraging constructive feedback and solutions.
- Using validated surveys, schools can measure risk and protective factors, such as mental health and social skills, to guide SRC initiatives and track progress over time.
- Evaluation isn't just for SRCs—it can promote whole-school improvement, aligning student voice with broader educational outcomes.

OXLEY PARK PUBLIC SCHOOL

The school fosters a culture of feedback through Peer Support and open communication. SRC members regularly seek input from their peers to ensure every student feels heard and included.

WESTFIELDS SPORTS HIGH SCHOOL

The SRC evaluates events like Do It for Dolly Day by gathering feedback from attendees, monitoring funds raised, and observing the overall energy and engagement during the events.

TAKEAWAY MESSAGE

Evaluation helps your SRC continually improve. By encouraging reflection, seeking feedback, and acting on insights, schools can create a culture of improvement that empowers students and enhances their leadership experiences. This reflective practice doesn't just improve SRCs—it strengthens the entire school community.



Listening to students is key—they know the challenges and often have the best ideas for addressing them.

David, Community Liaison Officer
Westfields Sports High School

ACTION ITEMS

- Develop a self-evaluation process for the SRC to gather feedback on what went well and what could be improved.
- Set specific targets and objectives for the SRC and measure the achievements against them.
- Involve the entire school community, including students and teachers, in the evaluation process through surveys, discussions, and feedback sessions.
- Use the evaluation results to guide the planning and improvement of the SRC's activities for the next year.

EMPOWERING YOUR STUDENTS

Part 3

Delve into the transformative power of student leadership and the importance of creating inclusive environments. We explore how SRCs can be a platform for developing essential life skills, amplifying diverse voices, and fostering a sense of belonging among all students. We will look at how to build confidence in individual leaders to ensure every student feels heard and valued.



EPISODE 9: STUDENT LEADERSHIP

In this episode, we focus on empowering students through leadership opportunities. The discussion explores how SRCs can nurture diverse leadership skills, dismantle traditional notions of leadership, and promote inclusivity in student representation.



We're not looking for perfection in our student leaders—we're looking for opportunity. When we show every student that they matter, that their voice counts, we empower them to believe in their own potential.

Jill Pearman
Senior Wellbeing Consultant

KEY INSIGHTS

Leadership is for Everyone: We encourage schools to broaden their view of leadership to include all students, not just those who are confident public speakers or traditionally high-achieving. Leadership can manifest in many ways, from empathy to problem-solving to teamwork.

Skills for Lifelong Impact: SRCs provide students with opportunities to develop critical skills like empathy, communication, decision-making, integrity, and teamwork. These skills not only help students flourish within the school environment but prepare them for future roles in the workforce and society.

Inclusion and Growth: Even students who might initially seem unlikely candidates for leadership roles—those who are shy, face challenges, or have behavioral issues—can thrive and develop valuable skills when given the opportunity to participate in an SRC.

Steps Toward Broader Participation: Consider co-opting members from diverse backgrounds onto your SRC and creating an environment where all students feel valued and capable of contributing.

EXPERT PERSPECTIVE

Insights from Professor John
Toumbourou:

- Leadership isn't reserved for extroverts or the confident. Every student has the potential to lead in their own way, whether it's sharing a unique story, offering empathy, or solving problems creatively.
- Empowering all students to contribute helps them grow personally and builds a stronger school community.
- Teaching students that not all ideas can be implemented is a valuable lesson in resilience and maturity.
- Schools should aim to create universal leadership opportunities, encouraging students to work across age groups and embrace a consultative approach to decision-making.

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Leadership skills are there for everybody. It's about giving the opportunity to have a say, an opinion, and think through visions.

Professor John Toumbourou
Deakin University

OXLEY PARK PUBLIC SCHOOL

Leadership roles in the SRC help students build confidence, teamwork, and respect for diverse perspectives. As Carly, an SRC Coordinator, shared, students often surprise themselves with what they can achieve, and this growth sets them up for success in high school and beyond.

WESTFIELDS SPORTS HIGH SCHOOL

Leaders like Miguel and Onel exemplify resilience and effective communication, showing that leadership is about connection and inspiring others.

The school's inclusive approach encourages students from all backgrounds to step into leadership roles, including those who might not naturally gravitate toward them.

”

Being on the SRC boosted my confidence and made me feel like I was making a positive change.

Onel, SRC Member
Westfields Sports High School

TAKEAWAY MESSAGE

Leadership isn't about titles or popularity—it's about inspiring others and making a positive impact. SRCs have the potential to be a transformative platform for students, helping them build resilience, confidence, and essential skills for life.

By broadening participation and fostering inclusivity, schools can create environments where all students feel empowered to lead and contribute meaningfully to their communities.



The skills students develop in the SRC—teamwork, confidence, respect—benefit them throughout their lives. When students become SRC reps, they come to school feeling braver and stronger—it changes how they walk.

Carly, SRC Coordinator
Oxley Public School

ACTION ITEMS

- Consider how to provide leadership opportunities to a more diverse range of students, including those who may not fit the traditional "leadership" model.
- Explore ways to build protective factors like connection, resilience, and a sense of belonging through the work of the SRC.
- Involve SRC students in understanding the importance of these protective factors and how the SRC activities can help develop them.

EPISODE 10 BEYOND SRC: HELPING ALL STUDENTS FIND THEIR VOICE

In this final episode, we focus on inclusion -- ensuring that all students feel represented and heard through their SRC. The discussion highlights how inclusion strengthens leadership, fosters a sense of belonging, and enhances mental health and wellbeing. The episode also explores the transformative impact of SRCs when they are run with a focus on inclusivity and active participation.



Any time we have an opportunity to build students' voices and foster inclusion, we really have to take it seriously. It's about sending every student the message that they matter, that they're heard, and that they can contribute.

Jill Pearman
Senior Wellbeing Consultant

KEY INSIGHTS

Inclusion Is Foundational: Schools with inclusive SRCs see students thrive as they develop leadership skills, confidence, and a sense of purpose.

Broadening Leadership Opportunities: Leadership isn't just for the high-achieving or outgoing students—it's for everyone, including those with diverse abilities, backgrounds, and experiences.

Practical Models for Inclusion: Initiatives like the Peer Support Program provide structured opportunities for all students to develop leadership skills and find their voice in a supportive environment.

Mental Health Benefits: Inclusive SRCs contribute positively to students' mental health and wellbeing by making them feel valued and represented.

EXPERT PERSPECTIVE

Insights from Professor John
Toumbourou:

- Inclusive leadership is essential for creating a positive school culture.
- Schools can empower students by involving them in the school's inclusivity journey and leveraging their insights to enrich strategies.
- Inclusive SRCs provide transformative experiences, even for students who face challenges, enabling them to grow and contribute positively.

OXLEY PARK PUBLIC SCHOOL

They demonstrate the power of inclusion by ensuring that all students have a chance to participate, including those from vulnerable or isolated groups. Their systems create a culture where every child feels heard.

WESTFIELDS SPORTS HIGH SCHOOL

A diverse SRC fosters unity and collaboration through inclusive events and activities. Their leadership team reflects the cultural and ability diversity of the school.



**Inclusive
leadership should
not be limited to
elite or dominant
personalities. It
has the power to
transform the
entire school
environment.**

Professor John Toumbourou
Deakin University

TAKEAWAY MESSAGE

Inclusion in SRCs is not just about fairness—it's about recognising and fostering the potential in every student. By tapping into diverse voices, schools create thriving communities where students feel empowered, valued, and connected. This foundation strengthens both individuals and the wider school culture.



Before I had a leadership role, I didn't want to come to school at all. Now, I feel proud of myself.

Draven, SRC Member
Oxley Park Public School



Our SRC is about bringing everyone together. It's helped bridge the gap between different groups in our school and created a stronger sense of community where everyone feels connected.

Miguel, SRC Member
Westfields Sports High School

ACTION ITEMS

- Review SRC membership: Ensure diverse representation, including students from varied cultural backgrounds, abilities, and economic circumstances.
- Promote Leadership for All: Create mechanisms to include quieter, less confident, or marginalised students in leadership roles.
- Integrate Inclusion with Peer Support: Explore Peer Support as a complementary model for fostering inclusion across year levels.
- Evaluate Your Approach: Reflect on how well your SRC fosters inclusivity and engages all voices in the school community.
- Empower Students as Partners: Involve students in shaping the school's inclusivity strategies, using their unique insights to drive positive change.
- Provide Training for Coordinators: Equip SRC leaders with tools and resources to create meaningful, inclusive experiences for all students.

THANK YOU

Thank you for joining us on this journey through the SRC Masterclass. Your dedication to fostering student leadership, agency, and inclusivity is inspiring. By championing the voices of young people and creating opportunities for growth, you are shaping the culture of your school and the future of our communities.

Your work as educators and mentors is invaluable, and we deeply appreciate the passion and care you bring to empowering the next generation of leaders.

Thank you for all that you do—your impact is profound and far-reaching.

