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SA SRC Seeing Ourselves campaign proposes regular diversity reviews to ensure SA schools are inclusive of all students

A poll of more than 750 high school students reveals many students are unaware of youth-led school-based programs to celebrate or support diversity amongst students.

Members of the SA SRC's Seeing Ourselves campaign aim to change this with their proposal to introduce a regular diversity review of a school's policies, curriculum, and co-curricular groups, to ensure these embrace diversity and inclusiveness, both in principle and in practice. Importantly, the review must be undertaken using mechanisms that involve students as co-designers and contributors.

Young people in South Australia are clear they want their schools to be places that support inclusiveness and diversity, acknowledging that students have differing sexualities and gender identities, mental and physical disabilities, and diversity in religious practices and cultural backgrounds.

The proposal for a regular diversity review for schools came from the poll conducted by members of the SA SRC Seeing Ourselves campaign. Students in Years 7–12 were asked how inclusive they think their school is, how their school celebrates diversity, and what they imagine an 'inclusive school' to be like, including in relation to curriculum, celebrations, clothing, and activities.

Members canvassed their peers' opinions at 25 secondary schools across South Australia, representing Government, Catholic and Independent sectors. The schools polled were located in 17 local government areas, with responses coming from students in various year levels and with different genders.

The poll results show that many young people do not see themselves in the texts or subjects they study, or in the holidays or events their school promotes and celebrates. Neither do they have access to the facilities and social supports they need. Consequently, when at school, diverse students are not being fully supported to be – or celebrated as – their authentic selves.

The SA SRC Seeing Ourselves campaign operates from the premise that all students deserve the right to learn in an inclusive environment that celebrates them for who they are. Inclusive school environments support better educational outcomes, the social and emotional development of young people, and their mental health and wellbeing.

The Seeing Ourselves campaign is one of five key issues identified by SA SRC representatives for student-led action this year with the other four being: Free Fares for Our Future; Fitness for Free; Our Future Our Vote; and Greening Our Canteens, details of which can be found at: <https://civicsandcitizenshipsa.com.au/young-people/sa-src/>

Quote attributable to Commissioner for Children and Young People, Helen Connolly
Our aim must be that students with differing sexualities and gender identities, mental and physical disabilities, religious practices and beliefs, and students from different cultural backgrounds, all feel safe and accepted in the same school community. Regular diversity reviews, co-designed and undertaken with input from students, will help to make schools more inclusive, demonstrating in a practical and visible way that diversity is not only accepted, but celebrated in schools.

Quotes attributable to members of the SA SRC Seeing Ourselves Campaign:

Bella Crundwell (Year 10)

We need a place where differences can be celebrated and [where] students can express themselves freely. Culture should be shared and celebrated in schools.

Freya Morton (Year 12)

Long-term support for disadvantaged and disabled students is extremely hard to get if there is little proof of their disadvantage (eg a doctor's note, diagnosis) and this support is vastly unavailable until this proof is provided.

Tahlia Hok (Year 10)

There is potential in every person to be inclusive, we just need to teach them how. School is a place to learn so why not teach diversity too?"

Braden Holley (Year 10)

No student should be targeted because of their differences, especially not in a place where they have come to learn and make their first steps in the world.

Arjun Malhotra (Year 10)

There are no outlets for students of diverse backgrounds and identities to fully express themselves. That needs to change.

Download the [SA SRC Seeing Ourselves Campaign Position Brief here.](#)

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