

CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES BACKGROUND PAPER

Purpose of background paper:

For decision – this information requires a decision to be made at the meeting.

Summary	This paper gives VicSRC members background information and reasons behind the Executive Committee's endorsement of the constitutional changes outlined in the agenda.
Recommendation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the members approve the motion to change the language used in the gender quotas (clause 8.2.5) from "Students who identify as neither male nor female" to "Students who identify as not cisgender". 2. That the members approve the motion to change the number of students in each gender quota (clause 8.2) from 3 (three) to 4 (four) of each specified gender: male, female, not cisgender. 3. That the members approve the motion to introduce a cap of 3 (three) year 11/12 students that can be members on the Executive Committee in any one term. 4. That the members approve the motion to introduce an option for up to 10 (ten) eligible students to continue for a second term on the Executive Committee without renominating. 5. Introduce a cap of 2 (two) students from any individual school that can be on the Executive Committee in any one term.
Strategic alignment <i>How does this fit within our Strategic Plan, goals and values?</i> VicSRC Strategic Plan 2020-2024	Approving these changes will support VicSRC's strategic goals of inclusivity and sustainability as well as increasing VicSRC's representation.
Relevant information	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Change the language used in the gender quotas (clause 8.2.5) from "Students who identify as neither male nor female" to "Students who identify as not cisgender". Why are we endorsing this change? This change allows for a greater diversity of trans and gender non-conforming students to be included in the quota by expanding the definition beyond the "neither male nor female" (non-binary) identity. Non-binary identity often has specific meaning and presentation (the way people look) associated with it and isn't a comfortable or appropriate label for all not cisgender students. Cisgender (or cis) means that a person's gender matches the gender they were assigned at birth. Transgender (or trans) means that a person's gender is different to the gender they were assigned at birth. 2. Change the number of students in each gender quota (clause 8.2) from 3 (three) to 4 (four) of each specified gender: male, female, not cisgender. <p>Background: Before 2018, the gender quotas for the Executive Committee were five) male and 5 (five) female. In 2018 the Executive Committee reduced the gender quotas to 3</p>

<p>(three) for male, 3 (three) for female, and introduced a third gender quota to capture students that were neither male nor female of 3 (three). Why are we endorsing this change? Since the female and male quotas were reduced, there have been fewer male students on the Executive Committee. This puts pressure on the male Executive Committee members to attend more external engagements representing VicSRC (meetings, events, etc) than the female members as VicSRC tries to include a diverse representation of students at meetings and events. We have never had more than one student that identifies as neither male nor female on the Executive Committee. Increasing the quota for gender will help ensure there are more students of all genders on the Executive Committee representing Victorian students.</p> <p>3. Introduce a cap of 3 (three) year 11/12 students that can be members on the Executive Committee in any one term.</p> <p>Why are we endorsing this change? VicSRC represents all school aged students from primary and secondary schools in Victoria. The Executive Committee has had increasingly more senior secondary (year 11/12) students elected over the last few years which means the ability to represent younger students is more challenging Senior secondary students on the Executive Committee also find it very difficult and sometimes impossible to deal with competing demands of exams, assessments, revision, and work in and outside school. This has meant they have less time to commit to VicSRC activities and duties, meaning they are not able to commit their time to representing Victorian students for their full term Introducing this cap will allow a more equal representation of year levels on the Executive Committee. This means VicSRC will be more representative of the Victorian student community and all members of the Executive Committee will be able to attend more meetings and engagements because they'll have less competing demands to deal with.</p> <p>4. Introduce an option for up to 10 (ten) eligible students to be elected to continue for a second term on the Executive Committee without renominating.</p> <p>Why are we endorsing this change? It takes around 6 months for new Executive Committee members to be fully inducted and get up to speed with their role. During this time it is difficult for VicSRC to continue to advocate for student led changes because there are usually only 3-4 continuing students that have been re-elected. It also means that staff time is focused on inducting and supporting new students rather than on supporting ongoing advocacy. If more students were able to continue for a second year, this would increase the effectiveness of VicSRC's advocacy by allowing students to build stronger stakeholder relationships with key education decision makers and have more influence on long term change in education.</p> <p>5. Introduce a cap of 2 (two) students from any individual school that can be on the Executive Committee in any one term.</p> <p>This has always been a quota for the Executive Committee to ensure there is representation from many different schools but it was overlooked by the lawyers that developed the constitution. This constitutional change would be documenting current practice</p>
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