

# HOW TO RUN A STUDENT FORUM

Student Forums are an opportunity for students to collectively produce ideas of how to improve schools and students' experiences.

Student Forums are a great way to talk with students about their experiences at school and gather ideas for positive change.

Forums are often a one-off event but can also be a series in order to fully explore a topic.

They are an effective way to reach students with specific experiences or backgrounds, students with lived experience of a topic or the general student body.

Forums work well with smaller numbers of students to allow for in-depth discussions and for all participants to feel heard.



## GET STARTED!

- Pick a topic
- Find a date and time
- Book a room
- Plan activities to generate discussion
- Advertise to get people there
- Run it!
- Collate the ideas
- Present recommendations

This resource was adapted from *Co-producing Mental Health Strategies with Students: A Guide for the Higher Education Sector* by Student Minds

# STUDENT FORUM STRUCTURE

## WELCOME

*Suggested time: 5 mins*

Introduce the facilitators and why the forum is happening, set some rules for the group

## ICEBREAKERS

*Suggested time: 10 mins*

Play some quick name games so everyone gets to know who is in the room

## SHARE EXPERIENCES

*Suggested time: 15 - 30 mins*

Share and discuss different experiences of school and your forum topic

## BRAINSTORM

*Suggested time: 15 - 30 mins*

Collaboratively come up with ideas for solutions to issues or positive changes for improvement

## WRAP UP

*Suggested time: 5 mins*

Thank everyone for their time and let them know what the next steps are

You can make your forum as long or as short as you like - we recommend between 1 and 2 hours!

## USEFUL RESOURCES

Head to [www.studentvoicehub.org.au](http://www.studentvoicehub.org.au) for a Group Agreement Template and Tools for Generating Ideas, and see below for some forum activity ideas.

# FORUM ACTIVITIES

Use a range of interactive activities that make your forum engaging and empowering, and help generate discussion and ideas.



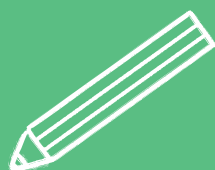
## 3 MINUTES

Ask everyone to come up with 3 questions about your topic in 3 minutes



## CONVERSATION CAFE

Write questions on butcher's paper around a room and ask participants to rotate around them writing down their answers



## DRAW A JOURNEY

Visualise a student's journey or experience through school by drawing a timeline or map



## TIPS

- Set your forum within a wider context of the real world to build a sense of purpose
- Allow all ideas to be contributed without getting bogged down in the details
- Try not to go in depth into the ideas - gather as many as possible!



## BLUE SKY THINKING

What does the ideal situation look like? How could we work towards that blue sky?

# AFTER YOUR FORUM

To make your forum a success, it's important to do something with the information you've collected - and tell your student body about it!

## MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS

Collate and summarise the ideas from your forum and present recommendations for change. Talk to your teachers and Principal about them or present them at an assembly!

## RUN ANOTHER FORUM

Dive deeper into a particular idea or issue that came out of your first forum to understand it better or to create a plan of action.

## TAKE ACTION

Talk to your Student Representative Group or create a Student Action Team to work on making change.

## USEFUL RESOURCES

Head to [www.studentvoicehub.org.au](http://www.studentvoicehub.org.au) to check out VicSRC's ALTER Model for Student-Led Action!