

## National Student Leadership Forum Report

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Over 200 young leaders from Australia and surrounding nations gathered in Canberra for a four day National Student Leadership Forum on faith and values. It is an exceptional forum that enables young leaders to be exposed to a broad range of outstanding leaders in the political, business and community arenas. The forum identifies potential in young leaders and provides a sense of vision for the future in shaping communities and even nations. I had the privilege of being a delegate at this forum in September 2008.



The forum created diverse experiences from a reflective service at the War Memorial, to listening to a moving speech from an Aboriginal leader, numerous politicians, to practically serving a local community through a social justice project. Through these experiences, we were challenged to recognise that leadership is not only about skills and abilities but something deeper that gives us a moral compass. Skills and abilities give us direction in our leadership. However it is faith and values that brings substance to leadership. This 'substance' is one's moral compass, established belief system and core values. This is what ultimately determines how one lives their life, and the process and outcomes of their decisions. The forum gave us opportunity to hear from political, community and business leaders. From Rudd to Turnbull, senators, and other leaders, it was reflected to us time and time again the importance of knowing what you believe, why you believe it and what you're going to do about it.

This forum impacted me greatly in my role of working with hundreds of young people in our local community on a weekly basis. I have noticed that we have a significant challenge facing us. Our generation have more 'stuff' than ever before, but underneath the materialism and consumerism is a deep emptiness. Stuff without substance. As young leaders in this nation, it is essential that we take the time to be challenged to think about what we believe, and to invest 'substance' into this current generation so that they will grow with not only skills and abilities but also with strength of character and a moral compass.

The National Student Leadership Forum gave me an opportunity to hear from some of the most prominent leaders in our nation. It enabled me to meet many significant business and community leaders. It inspired me to live as an example, to invest time, energy and resource into young people and create contexts for them to grow and succeed so that together we can make a positive impact in the community in which we live, leaving a legacy for the generations to follow us.