



Isabelle - Transforming beach and ocean litter perceptions

What was your goal?

For my project I did beach and ocean waste and how to stop it. I set out to achieve a lot of awareness that this is a big issue and that we do need to take steps to stop it and just even doing this little bit can help. It's an issue because affects all of the marine and ocean life, and then especially the fish and if we're eating the fish then we're essentially eating plastic as well which is bad for us and our entire ecosystem.

I got my entire school involved Years 3-7 and I got my teacher involved as well, she was really great help, and I did it by just asking if they wanted to be a part of it and asking my teacher if we would be able to take a bus down to the beach to do a clean up. They're really happy and welcoming in their support. So we did a huge clean up at our local beach Beachport, and I also did a little cleanup by myself at Canunda and then we brought all our waste and rubbish back to school and we made some art of it which was really cool. I also did a little bit of a slide show at my school about how big a problem it was and how it affects all the animals.

Where did your idea come from?

Whenever people at school think of rubbish they think about the dumping in the pine forests, and not the beach. I think beach rubbish gets ignored quite a bit and not many people actually know about it.

Over at Beachport there were these three poles and they just had rope and stuff wrapped around them and little bird's nests made of driftwood and I thought they looked really cool, and thought wow they must find a lot of rubbish on the beach whenever I went there. I thought it would be a great way to raise awareness and it would be a fun way to get my whole school involved in making stuff like this as well.

What will happen to the art now?

Some of them are still in school and hopefully next week they'll be going into our local library to be displayed and there will be a little poster there as well telling people about what happened and about the beach waste. Hopefully the library display will help with spreading it to the community.

Any challenges?

There was a couple of challenges at Beachport - there wasn't much rubbish so we relied a lot on using all of the rubbish we collected and there wasn't much else so we had to make the best of what we had.

Biggest success?

How the artworks turned out and how enthusiastic everyone was with it and how open they were to the idea of it.

Next steps?

It's probably finished for now but I'm just trying to make sure that everyone who goes to beach might just pick up a couple of pieces of rubbish.

What did you enjoy most?

Being able to do it with my school because I've got some great friends there and since it's a pretty small school it was great to get everyone involved.

Your advice to other students?

Go for it, don't be afraid to do it, don't be afraid to speak out and actually ask people for help. You might worry about the reaction but most people are really welcoming and open to it. If you have challenges, keep working through it. Get advice from your teachers and peers and parents, family and friends, just keep working throughout it because eventually you've got to get to the end.

This case study was transcribed from an interview. These are Isabelle's words and opinions.

