



Tips to create your own backyard habitat
Use native Australian plants grown locally
collected from...

Imogen, Rowan and Sophie - Making a positive impact locally

What have you been working on?

Our project name was 'Making a positive impact on the environment' and we've done that in a lot of different ways.

So we have our three posters on reusing materials so that less stuff has to be produced in factories, then reducing plastic waste so cleaning it up and using it for other things, and also creating habitat in your back garden for native Australian animals.

We've been planning a clean-up and a fund raiser which is on the 24th November. We're going to do it at Hawthorndene Oval in the Minno Creek area, and we'll be selling succulents in mugs and produce bags which we made ourselves.

We'll also be selling sea glass jewellery, and baked goods like biscuits and cupcakes. But we need to get permission from Mitcham Council first for the food.

How do you make seaglass jewellery?

Rowan found the glass at the beach, then she wraps wire around it and makes a little pendant, which you can put it on a string or a chain. The glass was at the beach, so it was like picking up rubbish because it is rubbish but then re-using it because it looks nice so not just chucking it out, you can use it to make jewellery.

Who else did you work with?

My mum has a Blackwood War on Waste page, so we've been posting on that. Imogen - my parents have posted on Facebook and Instagram as well so it's getting the message out, and Rowan's mum helped us a lot with the succulents. We picked succulents because they don't need a lot of maintenance - you just spray them a couple of times a week. And you don't have to buy ones from the shop with roots, you can just break off a piece and put it in the ground, so these examples are from plants we already had, and they will start to grow roots and become a plant.

How have you involved your schools?

I do an Aware group at school, I go there every fortnight and we share our thoughts on the environment, and I've been sharing this with them every fortnight.

We're involving our school by inviting them to the clean up.

We haven't involved the school so much, but we have a plan in the future that we might write some little things for Sophie's mum to post on her War on Waste page, and we have a newsletter at school that we can put stuff in. So with our posters, if we post things about how you can do those things so they will be little posts every week for a little while, then that will involve the community but not necessarily from our school.

What outcomes did you want?

We wanted to raise awareness and money, one, for Trees for Life, which is an organisation that revegetates cleared land and we wanted to raise awareness about polluting and how we can stop that by reducing, re-using and creating.

We wanted to share what the problem is, but then ways that you can help to solve that, because quite often, as our teacher says 'humans are lazy and we want an easy way out', we want the solution to be given to us. You don't say 'you need to help us', you tell them ways that they can.

Biggest success?

Planning the event and getting to this point. We've been planning the event for the whole year.

Any challenges?

Time management, with school because being in Year 7 we've had a lot of projects, so these were all school projects, and parts were separate.

We hadn't planned our project that well, like the fundraiser was completely planned in the last month. Having a deadline or a motivation really helped us, because we had been doing little things all year that weren't really for the project, so we brought it all together to make it into one project.

What will happen now?

We might become the people who plant the trees for Trees for Life. Our mums were thinking that they could start growing saplings and then donate them to Trees for Life for them to plant. The way it works is that they give you small plants and you grow them until they're bigger, then they take them and go and plant them in areas that need re-vegetating for free, so it would be helping that charity. Maybe we could do the fundraiser again next year and donate it to someone else.

What have you enjoyed most?

I liked making the succulents. I liked working together as a group. It was also an excuse to see each other. We're all in primary school and we have graduation coming up and we'll be changing schools. If it was one person, it would be more of a work load but you wouldn't need to talk with another person before doing it. We kept contacting each other on our laptops and phones, and I think that was harder than talking face-to-face, which is so much easier.

Your advice to other students?

Start the project as early as you can. We planned early but we didn't do anything early, so do something early. Think ahead – do you need permission for something? If so, get it sooner rather than later, because if it's later, you might not get it at all and then there's no Plan B. We only asked Mitcham Council recently, so we haven't given them much time.

This case study was transcribed from an interview. These are Imogen, Rowan and Sophie's words and opinions.