



Michael - Christies Creek: our responsibility

What was your goal and what did you achieve?

My aim for this year was to put in place a starting force to push for change regarding the pollution at the Christies Creek, my local creek and so my aim was basically just to get the message out there and to try to provoke change, trying to get change to happen. My initial response to this idea was to get out there and take some photographs, so I went for a walk on a Saturday and took a bunch of photographs of the creek and rubbish and the pollution which I then later developed into a pamphlet.

I contacted the Council to get approval to use some of the images from the archives of the creek twenty, thirty, forty years ago so I could have a compare-and-contrast type thing in these pamphlets. I then took the pamphlets to the O'Sullivan's Beach OSHC and the Southern Montessori School and I took a letter that I also designed around the O'Sullivan's Beach and Christies Beach community and into the neighbourhood. I just did letter drops, I didn't have a whole lot of time on my hands. I did it all alone and I got a hand from my brothers, my dad, my mum for a bit of going around taking photos and distributing the letters but mostly it was on my own.

At the same time, our school also adopted a part of the creek and so while I've been doing this, we've also been doing that, and it's kind of helped promoting each other.

What does adoption mean?

Every once in a while we go down to the creek, to this section of the creek and we just clean up as much as we can. We take huge bags and we just go for it for about a couple of hours during school.

Your biggest success so far?

The biggest result and success was that through my pamphlet, the O'Sullivan's Beach OSHC has decided to take a day where they're going to go down to the creek and they're going to clean up and so there's change happening and hopefully in 20 years it's going to look so much better and be a nicer place to be. The photos from 20, 30, years ago, you can still see that it's starting to change into the pollution, and so in 20, 30, years in the future that's what I want it to look like, and then for it to keep getting better and better until it's a healthy and sustainable ecosystem.

There's definitely room for re-vegetation. There's a lot of un-native grasses from people just dumping grass there, and so we need to put effort into cleaning up the environment and restoring it to its original natural beauty.

What are your next steps?

I definitely need to go out there with OSHC and help give them a hand, but I think continuing to promote this and maybe write some more letters and keep distributing it, keep it in the forefront of people's minds and maybe then change will happen.

Are Council interested in your brochure?

They were definitely interested. I asked the library to put it in the library but unfortunately there wasn't room there at the moment so hopefully that'll still stay there and over time have room to put it in there.

Have you faced any challenges?

My biggest challenge was trying to overcome this aspect of - I wanted to give it to the council and put it in the library and just trying to reign in my high hopes and trying to just get it out there in any way I can. Then trying to coordinate it with my school, that was a very difficult thing but by just doing a little bit of extra homework and a little bit of work in my spare time, I got it done.

What have you enjoyed most?

The biggest enjoyment out of this was finally being able to know that I'm doing something and to be able to put my work out there, and get into the creek and experience nature a bit more than just staying at home and thinking 'oh it's so bad, I can't do anything about it'.

Why did you pick Christie Creek?

I've always gone there, it's right near my house so it's a nice place to do walks but then you come across all the rubbish and it just dampens your mood a bit and then you hear about people and your parents who used to go there and it's clean and it's nice to walk there and you can go yabbing there and get so many, just hearing that pushes you to want to do it and want to help.

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

