



Youth Environment Council of SA: Where are they now?



Name: Gareth Bailey

Years involved: 2013-2016, Mentor 2014-16

Current role: Union worker

Coming straight out of YEC, I was very passionate about environmentalism and certain I would follow a career in that area. My thoughts on possible careers have since broadened a little, but one thing the YEC has highlighted to me is that I really enjoy being able to communicate and articulate myself – so I hope whatever roles I do hold in the future, that I can work in that communication with others.

What was the most significant change that came from your involvement with the YEC?

I think the YEC prepared me to being more open to communicating my ideas with others. Basically taking a leadership role means you are trying to facilitate other members to get the most out of their experience, so from there I think it's helped me to understand better aspects of communication and how I can pass on these aspects of environmentalism to others. At school, I remember having recycling bins brought into all the individual classrooms and I also had various discussions with leadership about things like solar panels and renewable energy. I like to think I have also had some influence on my friends in that they try to use less electricity, produce less waste and things like that. And in my volunteering role in local politics, I've been able to bring up sustainability as a priority at our group meetings.

Why was this important?

It bought about a greater interest in being active in my local community, and trying to influence my local area- in my case that's been a political activism, which has been a really positive thing for me and wouldn't have come about if it weren't for my involvement in the YEC. The YEC has been really good in inspiring leadership and personal confidence; in really inspiring people to do the best they can to bring about solutions to environmental problems. To that end, I've also done some volunteering to help a local MP with their state election campaign.

What advice would you give to current and future members of the YEC?

One of the best things you can do there is just try to meet as many people as you can. Talk to everyone- the fact is there are very few other spaces where people our age can find so many others interested in the same sorts of things we are. For me personally, socialising like that not only enabled me to learn a lot more from others, but I made many great friends who I still talk to today.

Is there anything else you would like to share?

One thing about the YEC is that each activity can fit well with an individual's learning style. For me that was the ability to communicate my ideas, and being involved for a number of years I got the chance to strengthen those skills over and over and I knew I had to really be efficient in getting my message across. I found the YEC really did educate me on my own actions and their impacts.