



Inika and Summer - School Environment Committee

What was your goal?

Inika - I wanted to work with my school in order to form an environment group and do projects with that group to include and influence the school more than I could on my own.

Summer - Our project started with Inika and I, we were both voted in as the Environment Representatives 2019 at our school, and we decided the best way to get anyone involved who was passionate about the environment was to form a committee. There's an Environment Committee in the Junior School but not in the Senior School so we thought it would be a really good idea to do that.

How did you form your committee?

At the start of the year we sent an email out to the whole school asking if you want to come, and we didn't really think many people would turn up but we actually got a huge range of girls, from a couple of Year 12s and 11s, some Year 10s, a few Year 9s, a lot of Year 8s and a couple of Year 7s. The committee meets at least once every two weeks at lunch on a Thursday, and if we have anything else we want to discuss, we send an email out and have another meeting.

What have you been working on?

Inika - We began a 'Fridays for Future' school email where we send out eco-tips and eco-news

to all staff and students to give people ways to be more sustainable. We made newspaper pots with staff and students as a biodegradable alternative, did a school clean up with Years 7-10, and helped plant a little garden/veggie patch at school. We also help clean out the new soft plastics bins at our school, an initiative which was organized by a group of Year 8s.

Summer - One of our teachers is really passionate about saving some endangered plants, so she got us together to help plant them into little pots and then we were able to ask for some space to put the plants in the school. So the school gave us a spot behind the boarding house, and that's where we've been planting *Acacia* seedlings, and also the endangered species of plant which come from the Coorong, and that's where we collected them.

Did you collect them from the school property on the Coorong?

Yes, on camp we were able to maintain some of the endangered plants but our teacher found the seeds and collected them and brought them.

Has anyone else supported you?

Inika - One of the main people was Summer, as she shared the position of environment representative at my school. Some other people

who helped me were my teachers. At the start of the year I had a mentor teacher for the environment rep role, and after she went on leave I had another good teacher with lots of ideas, including the Fridays for Future. I also worked with my Science teacher on organising the garden.

How have you promoted your work?

Inika - My main method of sharing the work Summer and I have done is through email. I also contacted the wider school community (parents, old scholars etc) through an article in the school magazine. Finally, we shared our work through oral presentations at assemblies and to the Year 7s in lesson.

Biggest success?

Inika - I think that my biggest success is when people ask me about or congratulate me on our eco-tip emails, because it shows that people are actually reading and caring about them. Another big success is when I see the newspaper pot plant still alive in my Math classroom, because it means that they appreciate it. I also think that getting asked to write an article for the school magazine was a big success, because that means that the wider school body, not just people I know, was interested.

Next steps?

Summer - We're hoping that the Year 8s who will become Year 9s next year, will have some Environment reps who will be happy to run the committee, and then Inika and I won't be the reps anymore but we'll still come but we probably won't be the ones running it. We have some goals that we want to do for the rest of this year – we want to screen the documentary '2040', we want to initiate Nude Food Days, have a No Waste Wednesday regularly by Term 2 next year, and we are still planting more and managing different plants in our little nursery.

Inika - In 2020, I am hoping that the Environment Committee keeps going even

though I don't have the SRC role anymore. I am also going to continue working with the garden, as we have some extremely rare plants (*Spyridium fontis-woodii*) that we need to work out the pollinator for. I am hoping to continue the Fridays for the Future emails and do some other projects with the committee.

Your advice to other students?

Inika - Try to find some teachers and students that are willing to help, because it makes it a lot easier when you have a group working on something together, rather than trying to do everything yourself.

Summer - Start planning what you're going to do so you know what's going to happen, be organised and on top of things because your plan or idea might change as you do it. Get people involved, don't just do it on your own, try and get your parents, or teachers or students involved to spread awareness. People you might get involved might have some ideas for you and help for you. One of the teachers we got involved had some more ideas for what we could do. They can help inspire you.

What did you enjoy most?

Summer - Both of us have enjoyed being leaders and being able to run a committee and come up with ideas, and collaborate with people who have the same interests as us, because we both love the environment and we want to do the best we can to conserve it. Getting more people who are interested as well, and collaborating with them to come up with new ideas, is really fun, and we enjoy being able to organise that and lead it.

Inika - When I see lasting impacts, such as plants in classrooms, people talking to me about the eco-tips, asking for my opinion on things, and emails from people outside the committee regarding future project ideas.

This case study was transcribed from an interview and a report. These are Inika and Summer's words and opinions.