



Lauren - Successful solar panel campaign for school

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

What was your goal and what did you achieve?

I wanted to help make a difference in my school by making it more sustainable and helping to educate people about what they can do to help make a difference. This year for YEC, I looked into the school investing in solar panels as I really wanted the school to find a cost-saving, but also environmental alternative to other forms of power generation. We have had one of three companies come and do a quote and those two will be later in the term. It's passed that the school will get solar panels which will probably be next year. I have also done other side projects like making a documentary on the school's waste and sharing it with the ELC.

What challenges did you face?

One of the challenges I faced was that I was meant to have a meeting about the infrastructure at the school with Mr Stephan Knoll (Minister for Infrastructure) but due to what happened about a week before (having to leave his role), that didn't go ahead so we had to reschedule and that pushed my project back quite a lot so that was a bit annoying. Another problem I faced was some kids didn't really understand the issue that was going on, and they kind of made a joke of it, so I guess the way I overcame that was showing them, because I'm part of the school leadership, showing them what is going on and showing them what issues are happening in our school.

How have you shared this project?

Yesterday I sent an email to everyone in the school

Who did you work with?

I'm one of two environmental ministers at my school so my fellow environmental minister helped me quite a lot. I worked with Chris Hall, my local NRM Education person, and I worked closely with my Principal and teachers.

How did you promote your work?

The solar panel company isn't known for the school yet but the fellow environmental minister and I are writing an article for our local school news, so that will be shared in a couple of weeks. When I showed the ELC children my documentary they wanted to create their own, so I'm currently helping to write a script with them about their own waste.

What will happen now?

We haven't picked a solar company yet so that will still be looked into, so I guess I'm finished with that part. There's all these little projects that I've still got going on. But the whole big idea of getting solar or investing into solar has already been passed so the big part is finished.

Advice for other students?

My advice would be definitely to use your voice and be confident, because you will have to talk to a lot of people. If you're passionate and really want to make a change - go for it! We can all do it, you just need to speak up. If you're passionate about something, it can take you far.

What has been your favourite part?

I think the thing I've enjoyed most about this project is I've definitely improved my public speaking skills and speaking to my Principal. I didn't really do that before this year, especially speaking to people who are higher up who I probably wouldn't feel confident enough to speak to before. Seeing everything come together knowing I've made a lasting legacy on the school.