



## Mia - Two year project to improve bin systems

*This case study was transcribed from interviews. These are Mia's words and opinions.*

### What was your goal and what did you achieve?

To achieve our passion project which we started last year - starting a recycling system for my school. This year we couldn't do much due to COVID but we continued the rolling out of the bins and getting the compost from the staff areas into the proper bins. We've done reasonably well - we've now got paper recycling bins, mixed recycling, compost and landfill. The compost didn't go so well because we don't have food in our classes so that was a bit of a bummer. Overall it's been pretty good. We trialed compost bins outside classrooms for about three weeks and we had our bins graffitied and kicked around the school so we lost about three bins because people took them. It was a bit random, I don't know what happened.

### What challenges did you face?

We've learned that people can be really stubborn especially the older kids - year 10s, 11s and 12s because they're just set in their ways and it's not one of their priorities. We're hoping if we can get this into the year 7s that they'll bring it further into the year 12s. That's why we started the bins in the year 7 classrooms because hopefully they get used to it. Even experimenting with the bins in our home class, we've had people that think it's a massive joke. They come up to me and go 'which bin does this go in?' and I say 'paper' and then they put it in the mixed recycling on purpose, then we have to go over there and put it back in the proper bin because people just don't want to help. Even though we originally made a powerpoint for our presentation and we've shown it to them so many times, they don't figure it out, they just think it's a joke.

## Who did you work with?

I worked with three of my friends because that was our original passion project group. We've all just worked together because one person can't do everything.

## How have you promoted or shared your work?

We have a magazine that everyone gets once a term that we've put articles in, tips and tricks on how you can be a bit more sustainable even in the littlest way. For example, separating your cardboard from your organic waste in your general bins at home – that helps people out a little bit it and makes our job a little bit easier. If the kids do it at home, they can do it at school.

## What will happen now?

We're not finished, we're going to roll it out to the rest of the school; probably put some bins outside, and see how we go with COVID and everything.

## Your advice to other students?

Definitely start early - don't leave it until you're in year 12 because you won't have time to do it. Be patient because not everyone's going to

get it - people probably won't get it. Don't be disheartened when people judge you, get annoyed at you, you get annoyed at them. Just be patient. We're emptying the paper bin and the recycling bin. We can't do that every time – we want other people to do it because we're running out of time. We might start a group that can do it or a certain person in the class that can do it so that we don't have to keep running in and out of class and our teachers get frustrated at us.

## What has been your favourite thing?

It's definitely the social speaking, getting to know other people's perspectives on things, things like YEC, you can see what other people are doing because they're all like-minded and they think like you. Some of your friends at school don't and they just think you're crazy. I really do enjoy that part, as well as speaking to principals and council members, that's different and I like it.