



## Natalie 2021 - school-wide sustainability actions

### Goals for the year

When a school community agrees to work together on sustainability, amazing things can happen. Natalie's school agreed to make big changes to the way the school operated in early 2020, led by a vision to be a 'pioneering innovator of sustainability in schools'. They have set some clear and ambitious goals which include improving the local environment, sending less to landfill, being plastic-free by 2023, and net zero carbon emissions by 2030. In August, the school installed solar panels on many of their buildings - one of the most viable renewable energy sources. At the moment the panels will cover 30% of the school's energy consumption.

Natalie is a part of the school's Environmental Committee, supporting the design and delivery of sustainability initiatives and special events that work towards the school's sustainability goals. To reduce materials going to landfill, they have introduced collection and recycling systems to increase the separation of materials into four categories - landfill, recycling, compost and paper/cardboard. To move even higher up the waste hierarchy, they are moving to purchasing recyclable products to replace existing products.

The latest goal is to plant 200 trees by 2022 as part of the restoration of First Creek, which runs through the school. The school also wants to develop an indigenous plant seed bank.

Two students on the committee have been doing bread tag collections, which are then donated to Aussie Breadtags for Wheelchairs. This saves the plastic tags from ending up in landfill, and they are recycled locally to help the environment and students with a disability who use wheelchairs. The committee members ran a competition in the junior school to encourage this behaviour, and over three terms one class alone was able to bring in 2290 tags. By November, students from the junior and senior school had donated a total of 11,791 bread tags for the year.

### Challenges

The school created a poster to show students what went in each bin, but many students got confused or didn't understand it. One reason was that it included bin types that the school doesn't have yet. The committee created a new series of posters that were colour-coded to each of the bin types so that students only needed to glance at them to know what each bin was for.