

Our Big Ideas

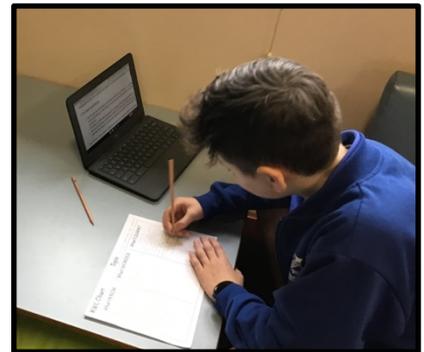
After conducting initial research into sustainability development goals, students narrowed down the three main issues they believed to be most relevant to our school and local community. Through group discussion, students expressed that they wanted to focus on Sustainability Development Goal 7: Clean and Affordable Energy, as they felt it was an area they wanted to learn more about in order to develop their knowledge and understanding of energy sources and consumption and the impact it has on the environment. After selecting the SDG, students were encouraged to think about an overall goal and purpose for the project. Students developed two project goals:



1. To create an awareness in the school and wider community about the overuse of electricity and unclean energy and the impact it has on our environment.
2. To inform the community about renewable and efficient energy options, including ways we can reduce our energy usage.

The main purpose of this project was for students to develop their own ideas, knowledge and understanding of sustainability issues in order to share their findings with the school and wider community to inspire others to also become positive change makers to ensure the future is 'bright'.

All students within the Kreative Koalas project group had opportunities to research, investigate and explore aspects of SDG7 through the use of the KWL strategy, where students identified what they already knew about a topic, what they wanted to learn and what they learnt throughout their research and investigations. Each week, students shared their findings with each other through discussions, online platforms and presentations. This ultimately led to all students supporting one another with developing their knowledge and ideas for the project. In the initial stages, students expressed their enthusiasm and excitement for organising and hosting 'energy fair' school events, creating informative videos and posters, interviewing our staff and community members and conducting investigations to determine energy usage and consumption within our school.



What Happened

Lighting - Students' ideas for the project developed and transformed as they conducted research and investigations to uncover new information, which influenced them in their approach to taking action. After discussing energy usage at Gardeners Road Public School, students began to ask questions about whether or not the school had solar panels, how often technology devices and appliances were used and what types of light bulbs were used. This led to students compiling their ideas to construct a 'GRPS Lighting Audit', where they developed questions to ask teachers and other staff members around the school. After collecting this data, students were encouraged to reflect on the experience to express how they felt about the findings and analyse it to determine what they could do to take action and make improvements to our school.

Gardeners Road Public School Lighting Audit		
Group Members: _____		
Classroom/Room in the School: _____		Date: _____
Checklist	Observations	Rating
Are lights switched off when teachers and students leave the room?		☆☆☆☆☆☆
Is there signage or pictures reminding people to turn lights off before leaving the room?		☆☆☆☆☆☆
Are energy saving light bulbs being used?		☆☆☆☆☆☆
Are any light bulbs not working or flickering? If so, how many?		☆☆☆☆☆☆
Are timed light switches being used?		☆☆☆☆☆☆
Is there more than one light switch in the classroom?		☆☆☆☆☆☆
Is there natural light in the classroom?		☆☆☆☆☆☆



Subsequently, students chose to create small 'light switch reminders' to encourage students and teachers to turn off lights when leaving the classroom to conserve energy. These were distributed to and displayed in every classroom and workspace within the school, including the staff room the meeting rooms and the office. This experience also provided students with the opportunity to discuss the possibilities of changing our schools' light bulbs from florescent to LED. Students presented our principal, Mr Bass, with information highlighting the benefits of using LED light bulbs, such as reducing energy usage, reducing our impact on the environment and reduced CO² emissions.

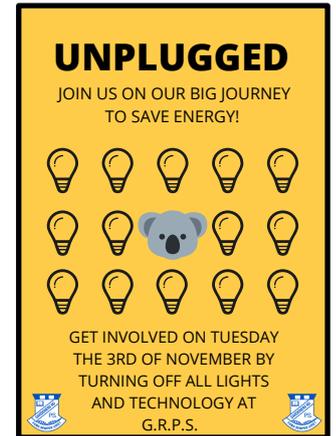


G.R.T.V - After gaining more knowledge and understanding of renewable energy sources and ways in which people can act to conserve and reduce energy use and use energy more efficiently, students asked to create videos that could be shared with the students, staff and community to share facts, information and findings. Unfortunately, COVID restrictions prevented students from presenting at assemblies or to different cohorts, so it was important for them to be creative and use different platforms to communicate their message and reach the wider community, therefore, they chose to create videos in the form of news reports to report on current findings. From there, 'G.R.T.V' was established. The cast, film crew, props crew, directors and editing crew were decided on and students worked together to collate their research findings and compose scripts to begin creating their videos. This received a very warm welcome within the school and local community, with staff commending students on creating a multimodal text that was engaging and accessible by all classes at the school, including infants and the support classes. Parents commented on the creativity of students and the high-quality execution of the videos.



Unplugged – After receiving positive and encouraging feedback from teachers, students, parents and community members (for G.R.T.V), students were inspired to plan and implement a whole school initiative, where all staff and students could participate in an event that highlighted the importance of saving and conserving energy at school. From there, 'Unplugged' was created to encourage everyone to participate in learning without the use of energy, including lighting and technology – an hour without power. Students created posters, which were displayed around the school to promote the event and they also created and shared presentations, targeted to particular year groups to inform them of the initiative and explain why it is so important. This was important as it was easily accessible by all classes within the school and it also encouraged discussions about efficient energy usage to take

place and empowered students from years Kindergarten to Year 6 to join us in being change makers.



During the time of 'Unplugged', students from the Kreative Koalas groups visited different classes within our school. Students reported that it made them proud to see all classes within our school participating and taking the opportunity to engage with fun learning experiences both inside and outside the classroom, without consuming energy.



an initiative by the Kreative Koalas Students

How We Define Success

Throughout the project, students have always defined success by reflecting on aspects of their projects, including creating the light switch reminders, G.R.T.V and Unplugged and comparing them with the purpose and overall goals they set at the beginning of their Kreative Koalas journey (as stated in above in 'Big Ideas') to determine the impact and affect it has had.

Students also defined success through community outreach, being the engagement and participation of the school and wider community. It was important for them to effectively and successfully communicate their findings and research results in order to bring about awareness and change within the community. They were pleased and encouraged to see the positive responses received from all members of the community through 'Unplugged' and the connection they were able to have through people accessing their journey via the online blog platform and their G.R.T.V episodes to stay informed and updated. Statistics show that the students' blog platform has had a total of 450 views and their videos have had a combined total of 200 views.

Having the opportunity to talk with and learn from Karin Stark was also a great accomplishment for our students, which they have explained has helped them to become successful. Not only did they develop their knowledge and understanding of renewable energy and how it can be used effectively to reduce environmental impacts, this opened their minds to understand how it can be used in different contexts within diverse communities. This experience enabled them to forge connections between communities, with a common goal and passion for creating positive changes to reduce our impact on the environment.



What Was Excellent, Unfortunate, or Surprising

One of the most excellent aspects of this project was seeing the students' engagement, motivation and enthusiasm towards discovering and sharing news information and ideas relating to SDG7. Students developed a sense of ownership over the learning journey and were the driving force behind creating and developing scripts, posters, presentations and videos to share information within the school and local community. Students commented on the Kreative Koalas experience, saying:

"I am proud of our achievements with our learning and we have become more responsible with our energy usage at school and in our homes." – Student 1

"The best part of Kreative Koalas was filming, painting and informing people all about our topic, clean and affordable energy." - Student 2

"I have learnt so much about energy, you could almost call me Einstein. We have spread so much awareness, so hopefully more people will be interested in making changes too." - Student 3

"We learnt things that have helped me and my family to become more aware of our choices at home in order to be more efficient." - Student 4

It was also excellent to see the amount of community support and engagement our Kreative Koalas project received, it was a great motivator for students.

Unfortunately, due to COVID guidelines and restrictions, students were unable to go on excursions or visits to locations, such as farms and sustainability hubs to explore renewable energy sources. This also meant that some students from Stage 2 who initially began the Kreative Koalas journey, were no longer able to participate in school-based activities with Stage 3 students, making it difficult to design, plan and organise aspects of the project. These guidelines and restrictions also determined the types of events and activities students could plan and execute within the school and community. Although this was challenging at times, students displayed a great deal of resilience and worked together to overcome obstacles in order to still achieve the overall intended goal.

What was surprising throughout this experience, was that although we had disruptions and setbacks, technology played a huge role in ensuring that students were still able to fully immerse themselves within the investigative process. Virtual Zoom meetings with Karin, virtual tours, online videos, websites and news articles allowed students to still actively engage with the topic, whilst also gaining insight into how renewable energy sources operate. Technology also played a major role in supporting students with sharing their findings and ideas with the community through online blogs, videos and presentations.

Students also commented on what they found surprising:

"I'm surprised at how much I have learnt and I'm excited to keep learning more, so I can tell everyone about it." – Student 1

"I was surprised to find out how much we could reduce our CO² emissions by changing to LED lighting."
– Student 2

Overall, this has been a very inspiring and rewarding learning journey that has encouraged students, teachers and the community to come together to bring about positive change. I am immensely proud of the effort and dedication students have shown throughout the entirety of this project. I hope this experience encourages all students to continue to share their innovative ideas and passion with the world to ensure that our future looks bright.

