

Hello,

It's fantastic to have this opportunity to put my ideas forth. I was looking for just such an initiative. I see the following ideas presented requiring a joint commitment from the both federal and state governments, local business and the school communities of the state of South Australia. The following ideas outline a strategy for all state schools to reduce their carbon footprint, and possibly over time, even reverse it. Potentially, each school could pay a significant contribution to the generation of their own energy costs.

Schools Creating Change

We often hear about our negative impact on the planet – our environmental footprint. But footprints are only half the picture. The other half is just coming into view. It's called a handprint, and it measures the positive impacts we can make, simply by changing the way we do things, at home, and at work.

An Example:

What if schools could collectively raise millions of dollars for local school projects while saving their communities millions more in energy? It's remarkably doable.

In America, Owens Corning donated 300 water heater blankets to the first school, in Boston, where a water heater blanket saved a typical household \$5/month in water heating costs. The first school donated these blankets to local households, asking them to share the first 9 months of savings back to the school, letting each household reap hundreds of dollars of future savings. When the school received \$45 per blanket from the benefitting households, they kept \$15 (more than \$4000 raised for each school) and use the remainder to buy two more blankets, passing the program forward to two more schools.

Here we see an effective example of where schools and students could watch their influence grow as their ripple effects spread out across the country and beyond. Each school's contribution will eventually dwarf its footprint. And water heater blankets are just one of dozens of possible ways to participate, to raise money.





Henley Primary School Example

What if Henley Beach primary was able to secure donation/s 5 or 6 kilowatts (or more!) of solar power from state wide solar businesses and used the first two years of money generated (money bought back from the grid) to donate to another state school to buy more solar power? (This could generate around \$5000 - \$6000 per year). If this chosen school buys their solar from the company/ies who made the initial donation, a reciprocal exchange would occur, further promoting an incentive to engage with the program.

From here the second school generates 1-2 years of income and this too is paid forward to another school, and so on. After the first 3 (or nominated years) the school can either choose to keep donating the money generated to buy more solar for themselves or for other schools, reducing the ecological footprint.

It would be great to be the school that starts the program rolling and this initiative, if backed by Climate Change S.A., could potentially lead to all schools in South Australia, and even Australia, generating their own solar. Based on the Henley Primary School model, other schools could seek out their own start-up donation of solar power and begin the process again, making the idea even bigger and better with the ultimate aim of each school working to use the energy generated to dwarf its footprint.

Students could potentially be involved in choosing the next school based on their existing 'ecological merit', or steps taken towards this. Almost every South Australian school is equipped with a gym, thus providing a large elevated surface area to be used for solar capture, a significant untapped resource.

Here we have a do-able and sustainable climate change strategy for South Australia, should we be able to generate a collaborative mindset between both state government (school property), federal government (who own many school gyms in South Australia), the school community and local and state business. We just need a great team to pull all of this together.

I hope you are able to give these ideas your consideration,

Sincerely,

Michelle Stratton

Parent and employee of Henley Beach Primary School