

THINK KIND COMPETITION ENTRY 2019 ENTRY FROM SOPHIE WEENINK SMITH -

ACTION – BIG BEACH CLEAN UP, JULY 2019

Hi I am Sophie Weenink Smith and I am 13 years old and I live in Nelson. I am a vegan as I love animals and marine life. My motto in life is think kind so this was the perfect competition for me.

I decided to hold a beach clean-up at Tahunanui Beach in Nelson so I did this in the school holidays. It really bothers me that marine life is hurt by thoughtless decisions made by humans.

I planned my event using a Facebook event and this helped me get lots of people interested. I contacted the local newspapers and was in 2 newspapers and also on the Breeze radio station.

I wrote to companies who create ethical products which are environmentally friendly and vegan and they donated lots of prizes for helpers.

I wrote to Tonzu and they provided lots of free vegan sausages for the BBQ. I wrote to The Vegetarian Butcher and they provided many free vegan food items for the BBQ helpers after the clean-up.

Over 200 people came to the beach clean-up and we cleared 200kg of rubbish off the beach. It was so successful that now I have a big database of people to help me with more clean ups. I held a vegan BBQ afterwards for the helpers, it was important to me that it was vegan so no animals would be hurt for the sake of a BBQ. I loved the positive feedback about the food and had lots of people asking where to buy this vegan food too.

I also gave a speech at the start of the Beach cleanup about my reasons for holding it and why change is needed.

As a result of my clean up I was asked to be a speaker for a Girl Guides and Brownies event dinner so I told everyone about how I am vegan and things they can do to help our planet. I also wanted to inspire other young people that no matter how old they are they can get out there and make a difference.

I was also trained by Sustainable Coastlines after my clean up so I can map data and add it to their website. I spent a day with them cleaning Monaco and The Glen in Nelson learning from them.

Ministry of Inspiration have asked me to be a Youth Leader and I also received a letter from Jacinda Ardern which was very exciting.

I started a [Facebook Page called EcoGirlNZ](#) as this Beach clean-up has inspired me to do more and more

Newspaper report from before clean up, [read it](#) here

Newspaper report from after clean up [here](#)

Thank you for reading about my project. I hope that any young person who reads about it will be inspired to get out there and think kind too. No matter how old we are, we have the power to do good things. By Sophie Weenink Smith

PS: I would like to acknowledge the support of Nelson Fire Service who came along on the day for Health and Safety and they even helped me cooking all the BBQ food 😊 and Nelson Council and Keep NZ Beautiful provided bags and gloves and all the amazing over 200 helpers who cleaned the beach with me and 'thought kind!'