

# FOSSIL FREE SCHOOLS

## A STUDENT TOOLKIT FOR ACTION

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### Frequently Asked Questions

#### Who is the Fossil Free State Sector Coalition?

The [Fossil Free State Sector Coalition](#) is a group of people from a number of different groups and organisations around Aotearoa who are all working together to try to get the public sector in Aotearoa to stop burning fossil fuels. The Coalition is made up of students, teachers, parents, and other people who care about getting rid of fossil fuels in the state sector.

#### What are we doing?

In Aotearoa - approximately 1140 - burn fossil fuels - coal, oil, or gas - in order to heat their buildings, through the use of boilers. This is a massive problem for school communities for two reasons. Firstly, the burning of fossil fuels has a big impact on our **health**, especially when it comes to coal, which makes us more likely to have respiratory health issues - problems with breathing. Secondly, burning fossil fuels has really negative impacts on our **climate**. Burning coal, oil and gas is the single biggest source of carbon dioxide from human activity and it also pollutes our air and water. We are running a campaign asking the Government to set aside enough money to convert all fossil fuel boilers in schools to renewable energy, because of the

problems they are causing. Currently, there isn't enough money set aside to do this, and it is unacceptable that fossil fuels are still burnt in schools around Aotearoa.

### **But what's the Budget? What's a Budget campaign?**

The Budget is where the Government sets out how it intends to spend its money over the next four years. A Budget campaign aims to impact how they spend that money. As discussed above, our budget campaign has the intended impact of getting the Government to allocate enough funding to convert all fossil fuel boilers in state sector buildings in next year's Budget.

### **How can I help?**

We are looking for amazing students who are interested in raising awareness within their communities and fellow students, and putting pressure on the Government, either to bring this campaign into their school environments or to speak up as a young person who is impacted by fossil fuel boilers. This is directly impacting our students' health and futures, and so it is so important that student voices are heard. Sound like something you'd be interested in? Well look no further! We've collated a toolkit of resources, all developed by students who have been involved with the Fossil Free State Sector Coalition, to help you get involved in the campaign! So just keep reading - we hope they're useful!

### **One final question - if I take part in this campaign, what should I focus on?**

Since this is a Budget campaign, it's important to remember that there are schools all over Aotearoa who are dealing with fossil fuel boilers - and that they ALL need to be transitioned to renewable energy. It will be really tempting to focus on your own school, however we have a system-wide issue, and so we need to use our own stories to influence change at a national level. We're asking students to try to influence the 2022 Budget, rather than to push for just their own boiler to be transitioned.

### **Here's how YOU can be involved in the campaign!**

The first and most important thing to do is to sign the FFSS petition on our website - here is the [link](#). The more people who sign it, the more powerful our call to action for Government will be.

We currently have created resources for two different ways of taking action. Those are actions that you can take as **individuals**, and actions that you can take within your **school community**. Each of those kinds of actions is critical to our campaign, and whichever one you choose is really important. We would really encourage you to take action within your school, however individual action for this campaign has an impact as well!

You can find helpful resources for both kinds of actions below.

## Individual Actions

### Write to your local MP

One of the ways that you can impact our campaign as an individual is by writing to your local MPs, and/or to one of or all of the people on the following list of important targets:

Budget Ministers: Jacinda Ardern, Grant Robertson, Megan Woods, David Parker

The Education and State Services Minister: Chris Hipkins

This could take the form of a letter or email. Tell them about your school, and why you want not only your own school's boiler, but all boilers across the country to be replaced. If your school boiler has already been replaced, tell them about how good that's been, the impact it's had on your community, and why other schools need to have the same thing happen to them. You could even arrange to set up a meeting and talk to them in-person about it. Here's an [example](#) of how to write a letter or email - you're welcome to use this template as well and add to it!

### Send your story in the form of writing/poetry/visual art - to 'It's Our Future'

Secondly, you can take part in our main campaign that we're running. We're aiming to have this being run as workshops in schools, run by students, but we're also asking individuals to take part! We are compiling art work and writing from students all over the country to upload to our website and send to our MP's, answering the following questions:

- What do you want your school to look like in 2030?
- Why do you want a fossil free future?

This is called **It's Our Future** and a full resource pack can be found [here](#). Submissions are open until May 10th 2022. Check out the webpage here: <https://350.org.nz/its-our-future/>

## Actions within your school community

First of all, it's super important that before you bring this campaign into a school environment, you talk to your teachers, deans, or principal to make sure that it's okay for you to do so. Your teachers **may** already be aware of Fossil Free State Sector's work, however if they're not, it might be a good idea to show them the FAQs from the beginning of this resource kit, or even take them to our website to show them more.

## How to talk to your school

If you don't know how to set up a conversation with your teachers/school, here are our quick tips on how to get the best reaction you can to that conversation!

1. Set up a designated time when you can talk about this, rather than just asking them when they're already busy. This way, they'll be more likely to listen to you, and to consider and think about what you're saying.
2. Be respectful!
3. Talk about why you specifically care about this and want to do something about it. What are the impacts on you and your future? What are the impacts on you right now?
4. Tell them which actions you want to do, from the list we've provided in Resource 4b - or if you've got your own idea, that's great too! Discuss what kind of support you'd need to set these actions up. It's super important that you stick to this plan afterwards (if your school agrees) or discuss any planned changes with them.
5. Figure out what kind of time this is going to take up **BEFORE** you have this conversation, and then make your school aware of your plans. Be prepared to compromise on this - teachers have to cover a lot in class, so for example your school may not want that to be a time when you'd run them.
  - a. Ideas for when you run these actions could be: in mentor/form/ako time, in class time particularly if you have social studies or science classes, at lunch or after school, or any other time that your school thinks is appropriate.
6. Be prepared to compromise on **everything**. Your school doesn't have to agree to anything, so if they ask you to make a change, it's important that you work with them in order to keep your relationship with them good.
7. At the end of the day, you could follow all of these tips and your school may still not allow you to do anything. If that happens, be polite and let them know that you understand their decision. There are still other ways you can be involved in this

campaign! Feel free to contact us at [350@350.org.nz](mailto:350@350.org.nz) if you have any issues, and we can provide support

## How to set up actions at your school

Schools around the country have lots of different situations when it comes to environmental groups. If your school has an enviorgroup or enviro leaders, that would be the first point of call to figure out who could help you organise something. Otherwise, you could ask your friends to help you, or think about working with a teacher at your school who's interested!

Once you have a group of students who are happy to organise things with you, or at least would be interested in participating in them, you're ready to move on to the next step: taking action! Don't forget to send us pictures and videos - [350@350.org.nz](mailto:350@350.org.nz)

## Kinds of actions you could do & resources to help you run them

One important action that we'd really love to see you do is to run a workshop getting students at your school to participate in the **Fossil Free Schools** campaign. This aims to compile art work and writing from students all over the country to upload to our website and send to our MP's to make a statement that we want change, answering the following questions:

- What do you want your school to look like in 2030?
- Why do you want a fossil free future?

If this sounds like something you'd be interested in, a full explanation can be found [here](#). Any art/ writing created will need to be shared with [350@350.org.nz](mailto:350@350.org.nz)

One example of a way you could participate in this is by filling out one of these postcard templates we have created. There are postcards for writing on, or for those that would rather colour in, we have some for that purpose as well. You will need to select one from [this folder](#), print it off double sided and write a message on the back about why you want to see 100% renewable energy in schools, then pop it in a post box!

Another action you could take is around raising awareness of the problem within your school community. We have put together a short presentation that you could share in assemblies or classes. All the key information is on the slideshow - and you can elaborate on the bullet points if you want to. Here is the link to this [presentation](#).

Please remember to send us photos of all of your actions at [350@350.org.nz](mailto:350@350.org.nz) or post them on social media and use the hashtag #RenewableEnergy4Schools or #FossilFreeSchools to make sure we get to see what you've been up to!

We look forward to seeing what you do!