Student:

Oliver

Topic:

The physics and factors involved in designing a surfboard for Victor Harbor

What is your name?

My name is Olly

What was your research question?

The physics and factors involved in designing a surfboard for Victor Harbor.

How did you decide that would be your question?

Well, firstly I really wanted to do something I was genuinely interested in. So I kind of just… I grew up on the beach and I’ve been interested in surfing for the last, not quite 18 years but about 10 to 15 years or something like that. But I still, I’d never really gotten, really into it and I wanted to know a bit more about more surfboard design. I’m not that much of a hands on kind of a person so I wanted to get, you know, develop a few skills in that area and stuff like that so firstly I broke it down to surfing and then I wanted to do surfboard design and then I came to, you know, how could I make it unique and that’s when I came to choosing Victor Harbor because I lived near there for a long part of my life and stuff like that and that’s how I kind of developed it into that question. And then the physics side of things, I’d been studying physics at school but I wanted to know a bit more about more about waves and stuff like that and how the relationship between a surfboard and a wave and how it actually worked. It all kind of came together like that, eventually.

Where did your information mainly come from?

Firstly I booked a few interviews with about three or four people, you know a few locals to Port Elliot, a surf board business owner, a shaper and also a family friend who was one of the original surfers back in Cactus. He discovered a few beaches in Cactus back in the day. So I booked interviews through them. That was for more specific information to do with Victor Harbor and South Australian waves but when it came to more…the board design, I did talk to the shaper but a lot was on line and in books and some of these books actually came from the people I interviewed with so, yeah, it was mainly, interviews, the internet and books.

How did you present your research outcome?

Well, basically it was a product that I made, as I said, I interviewed one of the shapers and I was lucky enough, he gave me some time out of his own time to come into his workshop and actually make a proper board and from all the research I’d done, taking all my own measurements, basically it was a custom made surfboard, designed for Victor Harbor and for me and for the average swell. So basically I took a whole lot of data over about 2 or 3 months of the average swell conditions and then from that I took, you know, from there, that’s where I designed the surfboard, based on those kind f things, so I ended up making a professional surfboard basically.

What challenges came up whilst undertaking the Research Project?

Obviously the weather conditions change over a whole year so my surfboard…I only ended up being able to take about two and a half months of data to average because I had to get a move on with my writing and the actual project. So I ended up only taking February and March, only two months out of twelve months of the year, worth of data. And that was fine, I came up with an average of swell conditions but that was only to the end of summer there and basically throughout winter it gets bigger and changes. All those swell directions, swell size, winds, they all change so that wasn’t…it didn’t stump me in any way in my research except it was just a fault, you know, basically my project wasn’t as accurate as it could have been if I had taken it over different times of the year, which was what I’d hoped to do except I just couldn’t achieve that in the time frame.

What would you say to students about to start their Research Project?

Obviously if you can get it going, I mean a few of my friends got it started in the holidays, at least got their question organized and at least an area or a topic that they could study, they got it organized in the holidays before they started that year. I had the whole surfing idea plus a few back-ups so I think it’s important to have…in my first few weeks of Term 1 I had my main one, my main topic of interest but then I had about four or five other different areas which varied from wine making to sport injuries, I had about five or six different topics ready to go in case one failed. I think initially don’t just focus on one area of interest. Make sure you have three or four backups in case something goes wrong or you change your mind, because a few people did change their mind and it did set them back, that time management came back to haunt them. Apart from that just choose something you’re genuinely interested in. A lot of people chose something they were vaguely interested in, or vaguely involved in, so whether it be sport, so they’re just like I might do something on sports injuries or something like that, where they weren’t actually genuinely interested in it but I have been into surfing for 10 or 15 years as I said but I didn’t know as much as I wanted to so I was just taking my knowledge that step further so when it came down to the writing I was actually enjoying it and I was interviewing people that were talking about interesting stuff to me. So I think… yeah, just something you are genuinely interested in, it was the big thing for me.

How did your Research Project prepare you for what you are doing now?

So I did learn my lesson, at the very early stages of Research Project because I didn’t know how big it would be, you know I heard it was a big task, I knew it was a big task but initially I fell a bit behind. So this year, it’s kind of always in the back of my mind this year in terms of especially writing, with my English assignments and stuff like that basically to get it started and you know get things underway and always be thinking about it and stuff like that. Obviously I’m not applying much of my surfing knowledge to my different subjects at school but in terms of my tangible work ethic and time management it’s definitely in the back of my mind when it comes to any assignment or revision or something like that and I’m always on the mark with due dates.