

CLIMATE CHANGE ON FOR YOUNG & OLD

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The Point of No Return

Emma Sutherland

Climate change:

It began as a concept in my science class.

We named the opposing compounds,

And drew a diagram of the Earth below an ominous greenhouse.

During those naive days, I didn't take too much notice,

Of the great but somehow invisible presence that is global warming.

My parents knew very well from a long time back,

Taking an interest in the world and environment.

Somehow I hadn't noticed,

To my embarrassment, it could have been my lack of interest.

Being younger,

It is easy to live without considering one's footsteps.

Convenience often supersedes the right thing to do,

And it is more comfortable to act how one wants without
thinking too hard.

But with age comes wisdom and with wisdom comes knowledge,

With knowledge comes understanding and with understanding
comes anxiety.

Without realising it,

A world phenomenon was emerging,

Although exposed to the public too late for positive outcomes.

Something that once hid in the shadows,

Now dictates our lives.

At home I live healthily;
One car for four,
Three compost bins and counting.
Four non-meat eaters,
Who enjoy the outdoors and don't see the sense in leaf blowers,
air conditioners and fourwheel drives.
A family with a conscience,
Is it enough?

I think a lot more about the world than I used to,
Goodbye carefree life, hello philosophy.
When I read an article in the environment section
of the newspaper titled 'No Return',
I panic.
Humanity suffers from lack of power and ability,
Because we have let the problem get too big.

I can't help now, but wonder about my existence,
As the ecological clock keeps reminding me of a fate I fear so greatly.
I ask the huge question, 'Why am I here?'
But lack of religious belief makes it hard to find that point to life.

A frustrating part of this situation is,
There is no-one we can really blame.
We can pinpoint certain political figures or people we know and
say 'it's their fault',
But really,
What good will it do?
It will only cleanse our consciences for so long ...

I can't help but feel sick now as I listen to my friends,
Discussing the events of their second overseas trip for the year.
A new car for each 18th birthday that takes place,
And the constant acquiring of alternate homes for the holidays.

Their obscenely large houses,
The perfect temperature in every season.
Their vehicles,

Updated often and always gleaming.
Their 'carbon footprints,'
Leaving a black hole in our environment.

So I can't help but wonder,
How their parents think it is ok,
To implant these values into the minds of their offspring.
How people I know don't seem to stop and think about things,
It makes me angry.

And what I really can't seem to make sense of,
Is the way these sorts of people view life and its necessities.
If we were plunged into sudden ecological decline,
Would they then see the error of their ways?

Sometimes I think it is amusing,
The way an environmental disaster has taken over our lives so
significantly.
When thinking creatively,
It can be that great source of inspiration one needs.
I visualise a painting of a melting world titled, 'the end of time',
Or a film that illustrates the world we have let die.
A world in which we can only take one overseas trip in our lifetimes,
And on the trip that little Tommy happens to take,
His plane is hijacked by terrorists.

I think that many Australians would agree,
That our lives are certainly not the same as they were years ago.
The media has infiltrated our minds with the results of our actions,
But it makes you wonder why all of this didn't happen until now.
Why we could not have been alerted at a stage when something
could have truly been done.

National leaders denying this great dilemma wasn't helpful,
Instead it confused us on how big a part we feel we should play in
its deterrence.
Our 'global consciences' are constantly ticking,
Yet we are numbed by our conspicuous incompetence.

Many have taken on this incompetence emotionally,
Tossing and turning over the dreaded 'what could's'.
The anxiety of it all slowly breaking them down,
Until they find themselves in the psychologist's waiting room.
For those who do the big or even the small things,
And genuinely care for the Earth,
They can be commended.
I admit it is hard not to feel good when you walk instead of drive
for a whole week.

In reality one can be cynical,
And one can be exhausted by it all.
But the frightening truth is,
Things are happening to a world,
A world that I am growing up in.
And I am not necessarily worried for myself,
I am just worried.



Emma Sutherland wrote this in 2008 when she was in Year 12 at
Methodist Ladies' College in Victoria.