
The Effects Of Climate Change

I first experienced the effects of climate change when I visited the Great Barrier Reef. While it was an amazing sight, the growing effects of the coral bleaching on the once incredibly colourful coral was undeniable. I was excited to dive into the famous reef that was once viewed as the most amazing reef in the world, but was shocked that it had lost so much colour and life. The Great Barrier Reef is something that all Australians should be proud of, with it being one of the seven natural wonders of the world, we should feel privileged to have it here in our own backyard. However, I am in disbelief that we have allowed it to disintegrate and our willingness to change is urgently required.

Most of our first experience with the Great Barrier Reef would have been watching Finding Nemo. The beautiful ocean we all saw in that movie will soon be a thing of the past. With rising sea temperatures and levels, ocean acidification and increased frequency of severe weather events, change is crucial to our climate although, some of the changes are now out of our control. Climate change is now more visible than ever with various extreme impacts on our world. In 30 years we could see the end of ski seasons in Australia as the days of natural snow cover could jump from the hundreds to single digits. This means our beloved Winter getaway may reinvent itself to be a mere burst of cold air in the midst of extreme rising temperatures. Not only will this mean no snow, it will greatly affect our economy and leave many people jobless. Many professional Australian snowboarders and skiers will have to give up their profession or resort to overseas countries which can be expensive and troublesome.

Antarctica is also reducing in size as the Antarctic ice melts faster than expected. Antarctica has enough ice to raise sea levels by 58 metres. Experts believe that the Arctic sea ice is melting at 9% per decade. This number is so large that soon you will be able to sail from Europe to Russia over the North Pole without any ice in the way. For marine species like penguins, polar bears and seals, their habitat will be left in ruins. Polar bears need their habitat to hunt, raise their cubs and a place to rest after long days of swimming. While some may argue that sea ice melting will not influence the rising sea levels, due to the sea ice displacing most of the melted ice, 95% of the world's ice is land based meaning that if it melts, sea levels will rise. Global warming will soon melt the ice at poles and mountain tops raising sea levels by 65 metres. Australia will gain a new inland sea and lose most of the coast line where 4 out of 5 Australians live. Yes, that includes you. Global warming doesn't just mean more trips down to Williamstown beach, it means scorching new heats that will inhibit us from leaving the home. If you thought last year's sunburn was bad, just wait.

After a stressful week at school or work many of us like to enjoy a beer at the local pub on Friday night. Sadly, beer's top 3 ingredients are suffering due to global warming. Water, barley and hops are being threatened by the heavy rainfall and droughts that are likely to increase as greenhouse gases trap heat and warm the planet. This will lead to a shortage of beer that may affect your Friday night cure and a rise in beer price leaving you more out of pocket. Over 97% of climate scientists believe that climate change is real, so I can't understand how so many people still don't believe it's happening. It's frustrating how clueless and ignorant people can be towards an issue that is strongly supported by scientists all over the world and is visibly destroying our planet. Climate sceptics argue that they haven't seen a change in the weather

around them when in fact, the average temperature globally has rapidly increased over the last 100 years. They also argue that global warming happens naturally and is not affected by human activity. However, it seems obvious to me that polar bears aren't manning the ships whose fuel has eroded our beautiful reef, and penguins aren't driving the cars that are visibly polluting our air. Those who refuse to face up to the facts are on the same planet as President Donald Trump, who claimed that "The concept of global warming was created by and for the Chinese in order to make U.S. manufacturing non-competitive." Climate change should not be the next moon landing conspiracy.

What can we do to help reduce our carbon footprint:

Simple changes such as walking to school in the morning, rather than using transport and making sure you turn off electrical items when not in use. How hard can that be? It will help cut greenhouse gas and carbon dioxide emissions, providing a positive impact on earth for a brighter future. Ask your parents what energy company they are with and talk about the benefits of installing renewable forms of energy, such as solar panels which will reduce the amount of fossil fuels used such as coal which is a big contributor to the increase of greenhouse gas emissions. Choose companies that are environmentally friendly such as Powershop and diamond energy who have completely cut their greenhouse gas emissions. We can also participate in environmental groups that deliver carbon benefits, such as the Reef 2050 plan aimed to help protect the Great Barrier Reef in the face of a changing climate. We're all turning 18, we have a vote, use it wisely. Get involved in conversations, its easy, ask questions, learn about which party's support what. This is basic stuff, if everyone got involved, we could see a change in our climate.