Climate Change, why should I care, it doesn't affect me?

By Alexis Taylor

Climate change is very real in this age. The constant pollution, burning of fossil fuels and the lack of care for our environment is pushing us closer to damaging our planet beyond repair. You may be saying 'How does this affect me?' Well, you may not be able to see the effects straight away, but they are there. Ever notice how summers are getting hotter and droughts have been more common. Well, this is some of the many effects of climate change. Research suggests weather patterns are changing and becoming more extreme due to climate change. Australia has seen this firsthand; drought then fires then flood, all within the space of a few months.

People who live in more suburban areas feel the effects of droughts less but people who live further out, away from the city, feel the effects much more. In 2019, Australia's main cities got a taste of what the outback areas had been suffering with for the past 2 years, the drought had hit the city, but it was nothing compared to what was felt in the country. We timed our showers, we let our gardens die and our cars were coated in dust, but we all did our part to push through the worst of it. The federal Government has spent ~$8 billion on drought assistance, and ~$10 billion on the Murray-Darling program. The Murray-Darling program is a plan to make sure that the water in the basin is equally shared between all users including the environment. Another $1 billion dollars is being put in to expand dams. This is money that could be spent on that pothole at the end of your street that annoys you to no end, if only we could look after our planet. We are already planning for the worst, making bigger damns to hold more water because we know that climate change is going to bring on another drought, but we aren't thinking long term. Climate change will stop for no one, so we need to stop preparing for the worst and get rid of the problem.

2019 Australian drought

In the summer of 2020 Black summer thrashed the south east of Australia. It was the worst bushfire season Australia has ever recorded. Many people lost their homes but more importantly many people lost their lives. 33 people lost their lives. That is 33 more people dead then there should have been. We lost 6 Australian firefighters, they were serving their country and they lost their lives whilst protecting others. 3 American firefighters died helping protect people who they had no relation to and have never met. The many other people who died stayed to protect everything they had, livelihoods and memories. 2,448 homes where burnt, memories lost. All because of Climate change many people lost everything. It brought us together as a community, but the devastation could have been avoided if we could have just looked after our planet. Black summer cost Australian Tourism $1 billion, and that was just tourism alone. The individual costs were ridiculously high, ~3,094 people needed to rebuild their houses, businesses, or other buildings. Many of the people that needed to rebuild had lost their livelihood because their livelihood was their crops, or their livestock. Smoke related health costs is estimated to being $1.95 billion. The cost of the Black summer bushfires was too high, the billions of dollars lost in order to rebuild buildings and lives as well as the invaluable lives lost. You can't put a price on someone's life.

Fire ravaging a home 2020 Australia bushfires

RFS' Brave leader Shane Fitzsimons presents a medal to a deceased firefighters son

The Floods. Floods hit the South East coasts of Australia and parts of Queensland. After a hell of a few months Mother Nature decided we hadn't paid enough for our contribution to climate change, so she gave us the rain that we had been desperately praying for a few months earlier. As many Aussies know, we got quite a bit more rain than we asked for, quite a lot more actually. Roughly 18,000 people had to be evacuated from the severe floods across NSW. NSW's entire coast went under a severe weather warning for the 3rd time that year. The military was brought in to assist with search and rescue. The Bureau of Meteorology predicted 'increased rainfall, strong winds, damaging surf and abnormally high tides' and their prediction was correct. Widespread damage to areas that are home to about a third of Australia's population. 1,400 first responders had conducted over 700 flood rescues and responded to over 7,500 requests for assistance before the floods were even over. Warragamba Dam spilled over for the first time in 5 years.
Wildlife and livestock were seen floating, dead around houses engulfed in the flood. Many people lost their source of income especially if they were farmers. People lost their homes, their possessions, and their businesses. Funds were offered by the PM to those forced to evacuate. Businesses across the state were counting up the costs of the devastation caused by the floods. The NSW Government were already estimating the costs to be over $2 billion by the time the 2020 floods took its first victim. Insurers where overwhelmed as they received more than 17,000 claims across NSW, the costs of all the claims is estimated to be worth more than $245 million. The 2020 floods took two innocent victims, one in Glenorie and another on the Gold Coast. Overall costs of the 2020 floods were massive with the loss of many houses and livelihoods.

Koala taking refuge from the 202 Australian floods

Australia was hit bad over 2019-20. Mother Nature punished us for the way that we treat our earth. The costs of these natural disasters are unspeakably huge, Australia lost many lives, and the economy was badly damaged over this period. In Australia the economy felt the damage immediately with many consumers becoming less confident to go shopping. Many people lost their income, so they weren't supporting the economy. Prices of products went up. If we could have just done a few small things, the effects of climate change would have been a lot less devastating. If we changed to metal straws instead of plastic straws sooner, if we would have chosen to carpool or use the bus instead of driving individually and if we had cut down our carbon emissions even just a little bit, we could have avoided such a disaster. Climate change causes weather patterns to become more spontaneous, vicious, and harsh. We can do a few simple things to ensure the health of the planet for future generations

"I don't know any time in state history where we have had these extreme weather conditions in such quick succession in the middle of a pandemic," Gladys Berejiklian. We are really starting to feel the effects of climate change and if we dont do something now. Climate change is affecting our everyday lives. Mother Nature is screaming out at us to save the planet. Climate change is not only affecting the environment but also the people and the economy. Climate change is costing us lives, livelihoods and the economy's health. But then again, why should I care, it doesn't affect me… well it does affect you.