

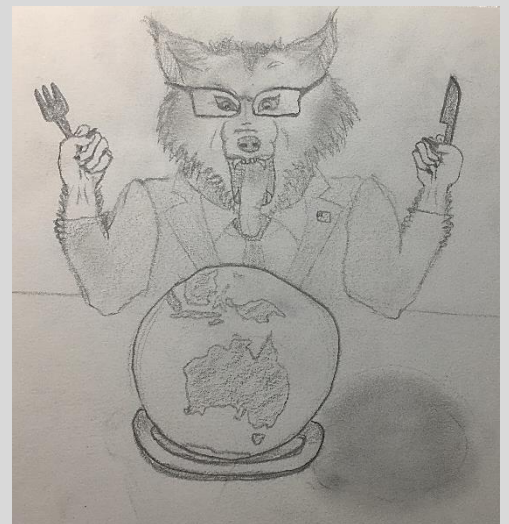
# A Letter of Gratitude to Australia's Government

At the end of 2019 and beginning of 2020 Australia experienced one of the most catastrophic wildfire events in recorded history. During this time communities banded together in a combined effort to protect people's homes and vulnerable animals from the fire-line. Plumes of smoke could be seen from space as the world looked on in disbelief at a country that was leaderless. Black Summer became the name of an event that reflected the absolute truth of how humans were and continue to treat the planet. People were beginning to realise that what scientists had been warning would happen for decades had arrived at our doorstep, but it was at this time that another visitor known as COVID 19 had entered the line light and just like that the bushfires were pushed aside.



Besides their ability to rapidly spread across the country, both crises shared a similar origin which can be linked to the over-exploitation of the natural world. This virus is the outcome of humans taking wildlife from their ecosystems and bringing them in contact with people. Much like the bushfires, disease experts have been warning that pandemics such as this would be becoming more frequent for many years which means that COVID 19 wasn't an if but when situation.

One of the most saddening realities of the age we are currently living in is that Australia's leaders are well informed on the crisis of climate change and have been frequently told the available steps it takes to prevent further damage to the natural world. The fact that our politicians are not safeguarding future generations exemplifies a system that values profit over the lives of people the environment. But as this is a crisis changes need to be made now instead of developing distant targets that rest on the shoulders of younger generations. We are being led by people that are so detached from the natural world that they look to understand the economic impacts before they consider the ecological and humanitarian impacts. It has taken the pressure of other countries to make Australia's government commit to reducing emissions. It's just a question of when we will start witnessing these changes.



The wolf will remain complacent until it has nothing left to eat.

The Great Barrier Reef is one of the worlds '7 Natural Wonders' and something that we cherish as a nation. This reef is the world's largest expanse of coral which continues for 2,300km over an area of 344,400 square kilometres. The individual corals themselves are millions of living organisms known as polyps which have attached themselves to rock and created a hard exoskeleton of calcium. The corals symbiotically live with algae by providing the algae shelter and in return receive oxygen. One cannot survive without the other. What we have seen in recent years, and I have witnessed first-hand is the bleaching of coral reefs. With the warming of waters and increased pollution from agricultural land, corals become stressed and expel the algae from within. This leads to the corals turning white and a graveyard forming in place of a once thriving ecosystem. If the oceans continue to warm at their current rate, there will only be six natural wonders left by the end of this century.

Australia can't be left behind in the climate catastrophe because it is major in all aspects of our lives. Droughts have become a more frequent event and yet so has flash flooding, fires, and other extreme weather events. And this is a broad and accurate description of what climate change is. The increased occurrence and severity of extreme weather events. With this, as we have seen, comes the loss of not only animals but also human lives. So, what is more important, the economic profit to some or the threat to countless people's lives.



We have become so caught up with superfluous aims of keeping up with material trends that we no longer understand that we are a part of the living world and everything that is in it. Once you truly experience the beauty of nature it becomes impossible to ignore the damage that is happening to it.

"Cherish the natural world, because you're a part of it and you depend on it."

-Sir David Attenborough

The world has left the calm and stable conditions of the Holocene and entered a human altered environment known as the Anthropocene. If humans have transformed the world enough to change its climatic conditions, then it is without doubt that we can recover the environment. It is no longer a question of whether we care about the future of the earth and animals living on it, its whether we are prepared to provide a future for humankind.

Yours Sincerely,

Brandon Marlow

