

Op-ed

Dear Scott Morrison,

I write to you in grief, anger, and disappointment. There are no other words to describe how I am feeling. You continue to shut down our cries for help. Cries in anguish. Cries in need of your help to save our lives. Yet you say that you are putting our lives first. This is a lie.

Many adolescents believe that it is time to put a stop to this madness. By madness, I mean the fact that our world is in danger and you aren't doing anything to save it. Nothing. You may know a young girl called Greta Thunberg, who has put her heart and soul into saving our future. Yes, my future and my children's from extinction. She has sparked interest in millions of kids around the world to protest about this very serious issue. We must stop climate change before it stops us.

I may be only thirteen years old, yet my future is in peril. I can barely walk outside without complaining about the heat. The warmth is stealing our winter away from us. Yes, when it is summer it means 'beach time', however that will only last so long until our oceans get overheated too. You may say 'toughen up princess, the heat is not going to kill you.' Say that to the fish in the sea who are continually suffering from the toxic acids in the water as a result of climate change. The reality is that if we don't start acting against climate change, it will kill entire ecosystems.

Climate change is happening right before our eyes. People may not want to believe it, but just ask yourself, why is there a new temperature record every summer? The statistics and facts behind it show that it is far beyond a myth. The Intergovernmental Panel of Climate Change (IPCC) recently issued a report claiming that "if humans don't take immediate, collective action to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius by 2040, the consequences will effectively be baked into the natural systems of the planet." Our nation needs to collectively act against climate change if we all want to share it with the future.

You may argue that we are missing valuable education by attending these strikes, however, activism positively benefits us. It is one unique way to put what you have learned into action. Psychologist and author Steve Biddulph stated that "the involvement in helping the world is key to mental health and making good adults for the future." This is just as valuable as learning your timetables or learning how to write an essay. Professor Michael Platow from the Australian National University's Research School of Psychology agreed. "It's all part of a civics education, it's getting students engaging in their civic responsibility," he said. Participation in debates and protests is a great way to get students actively engaged and develop into moral adults.

Moreover, the strikes give students a sense of community and belonging. This leads to making life-long friendships with like-minded students. Our opinions may not be valid to you because we aren't able to vote, however we are the future voters, and we will vote together.

We want action! Students are protesting because we feel that you aren't considering our options. As if you don't care about us. Yet you say that you care about everyone. This is a lie.

Climate change is closing in on us and our chances to share the planet with the future generations are rapidly diminishing. In a Tasmanian protest, student Amelie Hudspeth said, "as young people, it's really important to us that we have a safe future, and at the moment it's just not happening." You are taking our own lives away from us. Just because your life isn't in jeopardy doesn't mean that you should be putting ours in it.

Our opinions are just as valuable as yours, Mr. Morrison, however your actions express that we are nothing but little kids who don't know what we are saying. Yet you say that everyone is equal.

That is a lie.

You may not think you are, but you are the one trying to shut down our strikes and ignoring our opinions. If everyone was equal, you would give us a chance to explain our logic behind climate change.

As my Prime Minister, I urge you to consider the options of the future. We could keep going down this road of destruction, or we could choose to save the planet for future generations. If you disagree, then re-think what you call a democracy if we aren't able to freely protest and express our opinions.

The ball is in your court.

Fervently and resolutely,

Talia Edgar.