

Acting for the Environment

Any article or report with the words “*Climate Change*” or even “*Environmental Preservation*” are all too often educating us on how we can be better or stating that what we’re doing simply isn’t enough. Although this may be all too true; it can be depressing and make one feel that their efforts are worthless. So, in an age where the preservation of our environment is most pressing, when time really is running out; there is value in praise. We should acknowledge how far environmentalists, promoters of change, and caring individuals have come - even just in the last decade.

It is truly uplifting to see so many young people especially becoming increasingly conscious of the world around us, and of course conscious of the state that world is in. Caring about our beautiful whenua and taking action to right our wrongs on a global scale, can be viewed in 2019 as an inspiring movement. This movement is something that has been bubbling away for many years, with passionate individuals doing their part. Yet now, it is uplifting to feel the violent boil of social change, a movement that does not simmer or remain stagnant. This movement will not peak and fizzle out but rather this movement will prosper and continue to evoke change.

Although there is still so much more we can do, we should be grateful for every metal straw, every compostable utensil and every reusable bag. Today it is more and more common to see these items. Often, I feel we now take them for granted. I hope that throughout our journey we can notice each of these items and think, “*Yes there is a long way to go, but hey 10 years ago most people had never even seen a metal straw!*” Which is all too true, even 5 years ago I doubt I had ever heard of a menstrual cup or a beeswax wrap and I’m sure 12-year-old me found great use for that cupboard in the kitchen bursting with plastic shopping bags. So, we should acknowledge the change already, and feel proud that we are on this journey to environmental preservation.

Which is especially valuable for young people today, not only because we are fighting for our futures but also because taking action for the environment, I feel gives many kiwi youths a strong sense of mana. Although in Christchurch, to the Muslim community and even to the wider world the date March 15th 2019, will be remembered by the catastrophic display of hate that occurred. A date that for that reason we should never forget, a date that should remind us to spread aroha and to be accepting of all. Yet before the horrific events of that day had begun, our community had come together for our environment. I bring up the climate strike on March 15th not to diminish the mosque attack or draw attention away from those events, but only because I feel the climate strike bore an important sense of unity and mana for our Christchurch youth, something I feel should be praised. It is all too often that young people are deemed apathetic or are disregarded in political discussion. So, to me the climate march awoke a feeling of pride in my generation, that “*Yes, we do know what we’re talking about!*” and “*No, we aren’t going to give up on this one*”. Walking though Hagley Park with a mass of Rangī girls and students from around Christchurch before we had even arrived in cathedral square was a moment one could not help but feel inspired. There was an eagerness that permeated the group and fueled us towards the strike. A feeling that my words simply do not do justice. This feeling however, was only heightened when we arrived, and the overwhelming number of passionate individuals became apparent. This mass of people who were ready to take action for their environment should be appreciated. As should any action taken to better our planet, whether that action be large or small I feel we should acknowledge each step further and give thanks to the individuals involved. This is because there is value in praise and appreciating each other’s efforts will give us the strength to continue to defend our planet and to take action to preserve it.

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Rangi Ruru Girls' School students strike for climate action

