

“It’s Not Just a Climate Emergency Anymore”

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In New Zealand we preach **Good Health** and **Wellbeing**, we want what is right with help towards climate action, and assistance around mental health, and we make small progressions in the right direction. But we are at a standstill. We live in a time where we are the last generation that can do something about climate issues and the increasing rate of mental health problems. We may hear and understand the problems, but we aren't fighting for them. We need to start thinking about our futures because both our physical and mental environments are crumbling. So I propose change. I call for the people of Aotearoa and the rest of the world to take action, and make the changes needed.

The changes to be made are a part of the concept of **Environmental health**. This refers to aspects of human health, where the idea that the quality of life is determined by physical, chemical, biological, social, and psychosocial factors in one's environment. According to an article by Forbes, “Being outside in the natural environment makes us **happier**, less stressed, more creative, and more socially connected. It can improve short-term memory and focus, reduce inflammation, lower blood pressure, **fight against anxiety and depression**, and boost our overall immune systems”. Spending time outside in a fresh, clean environment is a great method to care for our well-being and may very well be part of the solution to decreasing the mental health issues in NZ. But something is threatening that. In an article from the UN Environmental Programme, we can see a large number of issues arising on our planet, including: “The **destruction of Wild Spaces, Air Pollution, Biodiversity Loss, and Climate Change**. Each of which: Facilitates the emergence of zoonotic diseases, reduces quality of health, lowers life expectancy, compromises nutritional value of food, reduces the scope and efficacy of medicines, threatens billions worldwide with disease, and introduces risk to health and safety with increase in natural disasters. Taking a massive toll on the world. But from this we can see that to insure Good Health and Well Being we must take Climate Action. And from taking Climate Action we shall insure that there is a clean and cared for planet, that will renew and replenish giving Good Health and Well-Being. That in turn will leads us to making better decisions and feeling more joyous and hopeful, so we will continue to care for the earth and so forth. It's time for us to realise that there is an infinite connection between our mental environment and our physical environment, either both are happy or neither.

But how will we do this? Well I have some methods that we can use. In order for us to secure Environmental Health we must start with the physical. We must choose Zero Waste. Now I know that it is easier said than done, but when committed to, it is possible. Many people around the world are already living bountiful zero waste lives, and we can all do the same. Let's get to some methods. Method 1. **Educate**. Look at the items in your house right now, and consider what's going to happen with it when you're finished. Take the time to understand the impact your waste has. 2. **Shop Smart**. Only buy what you need and know you are going to use it. When buying, insure your products/packaging can be recycled, composted, reused, or better yet leaves no waste behind. Not only that, think about if the way your product got to you was sustainable. 3. **Volunteer**. Get out there and clean up our country, there is so much waste out there, all you need to do is pick it up and sort it. 4. **Be**

Thoughtful. The only way we can sort out our physical environmental problems is if we all work together, and think about the impact of things before we do it, and make a conscious effort. As we will be ensuring that our physical environment is looked after we can continue to spend time outside to better our mental wellbeing knowing we are doing everything we can. Also If you want to be a part of a community there is an app called “**Brightly**” that is dedicated to eco-friendly living, giving all the help you need to live Zero Waste

And that’s it. Easy isn’t it. Small fundamentals that will go such a long way, when continued to be extended upon. And I know many people after reading this will just keep their current ways of thinking and not give any of those methods a second thought. But don’t let it be you. It’s not just a climate emergency anymore. It’s a well-being emergency. It’s a people emergency. **It is your emergency.** Let us do this together and we’ll stop the crumbling of our environments once and for all.

<https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/six-reasons-why-healthy-environment-should-be-human-right>

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/MentalHealthIsAhumanright.aspx>

<https://www.ehinz.ac.nz/indicators/overview/what-is-environmental-health/>

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