**Paige: Introduction Slide 1 Climate Change**

Hello everyone, I am Paige, Leader of Environment and this is Jane, Assistant Leader of Environment at Catherine McAuley, Westmead. We are here today to discuss climate change with you, the initiatives in place at our school as well as the Australian and the Pope’s response to climate change.

Slide 2

**Jane:** There was a recent article released by BBC news which is titled “How 1.5 degrees could change the world” . It discusses how climate change is making the planet 1.5 degrees warmer than it was 160 years ago and the effects which include extinction of flora and fauna, deprivation of our environments and strain on our natural resources which will be destroyed unless we take action. This makes a young person like myself, aware of how we need to ensure the planets temperature doesn’t rise over 1.5 degrees more this century. This can be enforced if ½ the world’s energy is generated by renewable sources by 2050 because it affects every single individual alive today but most importantly, people in the future living on these climates. So, how can we take action on climate change as a school community at Catherine McAuley? +

**Jane:** Firstly, climate change is…Slide 3

* A change in global temperatures which impacts nature due to human activity
* One major impact on climate change is greenhouse gases in the atmosphere which includes the burning of fossil fuels for energy generation +

**Jane:** In Australia… Slide4

Climate change is affecting the coast and borders of our country, especially on the East.

There are Cyclones in the North, extreme rainfall on the East coast, hotter and drier conditions in South- East regions, heat waves and higher sea levels all around Australia, intense thunderstorms on the East coast and extreme droughts in the South.

**Jane:**The causes of climate change are…The Slide 5 increase of greenhouse gases cause climate That it makes extensive carbon dioxide, the largest greenhouse effect enabled by humans. Carbon dioxide is released into the atmosphere from burning fossil fuels due to light from the sun passing through the atmosphere which is then absorbed by the Earth’s surface, raising the temperature and trapping more heat.

Recent data informs us that carbon dioxide and other gases being produced by humans are: Stationary energy (which is electric, construction and fuel generation) (51%), Transportation (20%), Agriculture (13%), Coal Mines (11%), Industry (9%) and finally Waste (3%). +

**Jane:** Climate change creates some drastic impacts... Slide 6

* Heat Waves - Which make areas at risk of extreme heat and fire.
* Heavy Precipitation - Heavy downpours are becoming more common in many locations.
* Sea-Level Rise - Warming and damaging seas and oceans. + **Slide 7**
* This threatened habitats and animals as temperatures warm, many plants and animals are migrating, making it difficult to adapt to new habitats.
* Ocean Acidification -Makes it difficult for corals and microorganisms to survive, disrupting the food supply for other animals.
* Wildfires- Wildfires can destroy homes and be deadly.
* Drought - Warmer temperatures can increase water demand and evaporation, stressing water supplies.

**Jane:** Previous initiatives done at our school Slide 8

**Walk for Water**

Walk for water was an initiative where:

- Students divided into their year groups to participate in a physical, competitive and interactive activity

-Each year group was given a bucket of water which they would have to carry around the field quickly and try not to spill

-Everyone participating would receive a handmade bookmark which had a memorable quote or statistic relating to water

-The purpose of this environmental and social justice activity was to create awareness of the amount of water we take for granted and ways of preserving it as we understood the privileges we had compare to other communities. +

**Recycling Boxes for Bottles/Cans and paper**

Our school enabled recycling boxes to be put in every classroom which:

* Made students and teachers realise how much work needed to be printed and inspired us to do more school work on our laptops to save paper
* Our school also has containers in the students playgrounds to collect cans and plastic bottles which students bring from home or purchase from the canteen
* This way we can exchange these products for 10c per bottle and collect money can to go towards the school environment by purchasing a recycling stationary box
* This allowed my fellow students to encourage each other on the importance of recycling bottles to save the environment as plastic takes a lot of money to produce and the time it takes to decompose in landfill is around 450 years.
* **Compost/worm farm**: and Slide 9
* Another initiative our students have participated in was composting and creating a worm farm
* They got earthworms to break down and compost food scraps from the canteen, staff rooms and hospitality rooms
* We would then use the worm excretory to add to the soil so that it is healthy and read to grow plants in our school vegie garden
* This made students aware of the advantages of composting which include essential nutrients for plant growth and therefore is often used as fertilizer. Compost also improves soil structure so that soil can easily hold the correct amount of moisture, nutrients and air.
* **Environmental Group:**
* Students learn about the significance of producing crops which we share with the school community
* They travel to the creek on Darcy road to pick up rubbish near the dams and detach weeds so the native plants will not be invaded
* This teaches the environment group how to maintain an environment as well as protect, analyse or monitor the environment against misuse or degradation from human activity

**Paige: Slide 10**

Now, that you have heard about the success of the previous innovatives we would like you to know about what we plan to do as leaders during 2018 and 2019:

Slide 11

* Our central plan and idea will involve, opening and running a used clothes stall at recess and lunchtime, where students can buy and sell their own clothing. Leading up to this event we will also be providing the school community with information about the Fast Fashion industry and the impacts that it is having on the environment.
* The used clothing stall, will aim to raise awareness about the importance of cutting down our textile waste and having a more sustainable approach towards clothing and fashion. We felt that this was a very relevant and important topic to target as there is not much coverage about it in the media and it is something that most girls are involved in. The production of clothing actually uses excessive amounts of water and chemicals which release methane - a harmful greenhouse gas- into the atmosphere. We will together hopefully be able to get our students to donate clothing items which can be reworn and therefore resold for a small price. We will also be informing them of the importance of recycling clothing as these synthetic fabrics can take hundreds of years to decompose. The money we raise will go towards starting a school environment fund for solar panels or towards a charity such as mercy works. Any of the left over clothing that could not be sold, will be donated to St Vincent Paul.

**Paige:**

* If this initiative is successful it will hopefully be able to educate and raise awareness about the impact that the fast fashion industry is having on the environment. We hope to shine a light on the textiles industry and the negative impacts that they are responsible for.
* Everytime that a piece of clothing is produced it involves the use of harsh chemicals as well as an extensive amount of water. These methods especially put a strain on our natural resources. The current volume of water consumed by apparel production each year is [equivalent to 32 million](https://www.highsnobiety.com/2017/05/23/fashion-environment-facts/) Olympic swimming pools. Australia is also actually the world’s [second largest consumer](http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-01-12/australias-obsession-with-new-clothes-hurting-the-environment/8177624) of fashion and on average, we consume or use 27kgs of new clothing and textiles every year. If we do not recycle and re-wear our own clothing items, our environment will continue to be heavily impacted. In landfill it can take anywhere from 9 months to 200 years or more for certain textiles to biodegrade.

**Paige:** The Pope's quote: Slide 12

* As young people and a part of the future generation that will eventually have responsibility over our planet, we both value very much the health of our planet and the school environment that we are a part of. We as leaders also want to teach and show others the value of respecting our planet and all of God’s creation, to the rest of our school community. As a part of Pope Francis encyclical, Laudato Si, he expressed very thoroughly and from his heart, the importance of the environment and how protecting it, should be a shared commonality amongst us all.
* “The climate is a common good, belonging to all and meant for all. At the global level, it is a complex system linked to many of the essential conditions for human life”. - Pope Francis in Laudato Si. As Pope Francis says here, we all share this planet and its resources which are what give and sustain all of our lives, so it is up to us to look after it as best we can.

**Paige**: The Australian response to Climate change

* Pope Francis makes many more critical points and plea’s to the people about the importance of the environment and helps us all recognise our role and responsibility that we have for the planet. However, It can be difficult sometimes for us as students to try and make an impact on the small platform that we are sometimes limited to in our day to day school life. It can sometimes even be more difficult when our country is run by politicians that don’t even treat climate change as a serious issue.
* Slide 13
* A special report by the United Nations was released at the beginning of October. The United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change said that global greenhouse gas emissions [must reach zero by about 2050 in order to stop global warming at 1.5 degrees Celsius](https://www.abc.net.au/news/science/2018-10-08/ipcc-climate-change-report/10348720), similar to the article that Jane mentioned at the beginning of this presentation. The authors of the report warned that if warming was allowed to reach 2C, the world would risk hitting "tipping points", setting a course towards uncontrollable temperatures.
* It was an extremely confronting and frightening report, but un-surprisingly what was even more frightening was the Australian governments response to this very report. Even though the report was aimed at urging the world leaders to take urgent action, the Australian government response was not what you would hope to expect from the people running our country. Prime Minister, Scott Morrison even referred to the strategies to reduce emissions as “all that nonsense”, and dismissing the UN’s comprehensive evidence and warning as “some sort of report”.
* When our own Australian government doesn’t even take one of the most pressing issues facing our world today, seriously, it can be disheartening and upsetting for those that see the climate change for what it is and what the future will look like for our own generation and the ones that will proceed us.
* That is why it is so important for us, as the young Australians and the future of this country, to educate each other and help change the path that our country is heading in.
* Jane and I, are very proud to be leading our school on the right path and carrying on from and redeveloping the ideas from leaders that have come before us. We hope to be able to make a positive impact in our school community and hopefully begin to grow and foster a more aware and conscious community of students that will be able to care for and respect the planet, the way that God intended it to be cared for.
* Slide 14

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