

What fabulous and inspiring women!

Thank you.

It reminds me, I close my lectures on climate and environment by asking the audience to ponder how and why we arrived at this point.

The point where humanity is literally destroying itself, by destroying the ecosystems, the earth and all her bounty, which nurture, feed, water and support us.

We have directly modified 77% of the land surface and 87% of oceans.

This has left 30% of global land area degraded, which directly affects three billion people – and their capacity to eat, drink and earn a living because the lands productivity has declined.

And if this is not enough one third of species is at high risk of extinction because of habitat degradation.

Globally, climate induced disasters have now doubled over the past 20 years. That is crazy

How did we get to this point?

The answer is blatantly obvious. We have ignored and disregarded the Earth.

In our love affair with money, we have devalued nature. We have forgotten the fundamental relationship we have with the Earth, & we have pillaged and trashed all her natural resources.

A new report tells us that 19 Ecosystems in Australia are collapsing. .. that means they are unlikely to recover

And we have now upended the climate systems.

So we are killing ourselves, and making a damned good fist of taking out thousands of other species as well, in this, the 6<sup>th</sup> mass extinction.

What sheer stupidity??

Our Indigenous sisters and their kin understand this relationship - in spades. But we? We white folk landed on these shores a few hundred years ago, but we didn't listen to them. Nor did we respect their knowledge systems.

This was a fatal mistake. And it was born of arrogance and greed, and to such an extent that those attitudes were **normalised** and **mainstreamed** in the 'white superiority' mantra.

Recent events, just here in Parliament house have brought into focus that skin colour isn't the only basis for being devalued and ignored. Being female is the next rung.

Well, I'd say the boys have catastrophically failed. They have clearly shown that they have no moral or logical right to assume superiority - and certainly not in decision making or in governance or in protecting humanity or our planet.

And by no means am I suggesting that all blokes are bad. Far from it. Many are totally humane, considerate, compassionate & aware – and we love them for it.

But rarely do men with hearts rise to the top.

But as a collective, the ruling white Jocks have shown ZERO evidence of their value as leaders .

They continue to exclude the voice of women and the deep understanding of how to tread gently on this planet – aka our first nation's wisdom.

We now face a massive environment problem and a climate problem. And if we fancy surviving as a species, we need to fix it, and stop the emissions!

“The industrial slowdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic only temporarily *slowed the increase* in emissions, they still grew.

To limit global warming to <1.5°C above pre-industrial levels we need to reduce emissions by **7.6% emissions reduction** every year between 2020 and 2030.

However, even the most ambitious national climate policies fall well short of this target.

So . . . . . a **collective fivefold increase in global commitment is required.**

Alas **AS the 16th largest emitter globally and one of the largest exporters of coal and gas in the world**

Australia is not planning to increase its paltry emission reduction targets & we are now shunned at the international meetings as a Climate pariah.

When I was at the Warsaw COP in 2013, Australia won the Dinosaur award on an unprecedented 4 consecutive days for blocking efforts to reduce emissions and provide finance to the developing countries' efforts to adapt.

It is sad to go to International meeting and be embarrassed to be Australian.

Meanwhile, we are facing an unprecedented uptick in extreme weather conditions that are delivering us unprecedented droughts, heat, storms & fires.

We will soon be facing 50 °C days in our major cities, Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and Perth – as well as the inland towns.

Australia is no stranger to fire, but our fire regimes have dramatically increased.

They are now an annual event – and major bushfires have stricken South East Australia in 2003, 2006, and the devastating 2009 Black Saturday fires that claimed the lives of 173 Australians, and last year's Summer of Horrors.

We are already facing fires that we cannot prepare for, and cannot control  
The worst thing is the Federal government is not even trying!

Last years' fires **were predicted**, yet the Federal Government famously refused to listen to the advice of our nation's top fireies. . . sound familiar?

That failure to listen left us unprepared. And with the extreme conditions the fires burned solidly from early spring in Queensland down though NSW, VIC, and SA until January.

We were caught unprepared for the fires – AND for the severe smoke that rose 25 kms into the atmosphere – a new record – and circumnavigated the Earth ... some smoke stayed here and blanketed Canberra in a thick plume for 6 weeks.

Smoke is toxic and triggers heart and lung problems.

Those most at risk are children, including unborn babies, the elderly, smokers and people with pre-existing heart and lung diseases, including asthma.

Nationally, the smoke killed 417 people & resulted in 3100 hospital admissions for cardiac and respiratory problems,.. . and billions of animals perished

And the figures for Canberra - 31 deaths, 230 hospital admissions plus an extra 89 ED presentations for asthma.

If that is not enough. . . . Exposure to fires brings huge psychological trauma. Real fear. Unforgettable sights, sounds and smells, and memories. And a deep grieving for losses, of family, friends, neighbours, pets and livestock that have been killed or injured in the fire, loss of treasured personal effects and solostalgia - the wider sense of loss of place.

Donations flowed in from across Australia and internationally, and the government promised the \$2.7 Billion as Federal Bushfire Recovery Funding to devastated communities

Many people were “traumatised” by trying to navigate the application process for the funds

One year later, less than half the monies had been given out, and those funds were disproportionately allocated to Lib / National controlled states.

77% went to NSW, 8.75% to South Australia, 7.5% to Queensland and just 6.4% to Victoria.

These Disaster Recovery Payments were intended to support people ***immediately after suffering catastrophic losses.***

Over a year later people are still waiting, some living in Caravans, those camping with friends and family have found their welcome has run out. still living in limbo

This is cruelty of the highest order.

Women, are trying to hold it all together & keep the family fed and comforted.

Women also have to contend with the rise in domestic violence that routinely follows disasters.

So my concluding message to you all .

Australia keeps electing governments that fail to protect our health, our lives and livelihoods. WHY?

Systematic disrespect for the land, for Indigenous knowledge, and women is rife, as the boys next door here are still refusing to listen to women & are busily rallying around to protect their male mates.

Meanwhile,  
climate change continues to unfold – AND Accelerate, which leaves Australia at ever increasing exposure to heat, drought, storms and bushfires.

AS our Government has failed to distribute the monies for recovery. It falls to women to pick up the pieces of the fractured souls families and communities?

. . . . The women who are constantly ignored

We stand together, as we did yesterday on the March 4 Justice,  
We WILL not let our sisters continue to be used and abused, and ignored.

As women, we SEE that our planet needs protecting.  
That our families need protecting. That families everywhere need protecting.  
That future children and families need protecting.

This is NOT soft – irrational sentimental feminine bleeding heart mish mash.  
This is Survival. It is also love. Dignity. Integrity. Compassion,  
And perhaps above all else it **IS quintessentially REASON and LOGIC.**

There can be no more rational behaviour than stopping emissions & protecting the planet so that humanity can survive  
& so that ecosystems can recover and flourish, we need our bees, birds, wombats lands and waterways healthy.

We need women in leadership roles – . . . . and some men with hearts.

And as Cathy McGowan famously said, “Don’t get angry, get elected”.  
This climate needs fixing, and this country needs fixing.  
Women, We have work to do.