

These Are Just Stories To Him; We Cannot Afford To Remain Passive

By Elin af Klinteberg

On this sweltering summer day, I find a quiet moment in my garden to sit, look around, and reflect on how much our environment has changed since I was a little girl.

My name is Elin af Klinteberg, and I hold deep pride in being part of the Gloucester community. It's hard not to feel a mix of nostalgia and concern as I think about the significant transformations our beloved environment has experienced throughout my lifetime. As I share my childhood memories with my son, Elias, I can almost see the vibrant stories unfold. I remember those thrilling adventures we had in the cold winter months, scurrying down to Lanes Cove to run across the frozen "icebergs" or those sun-soaked summer days when we excitedly ran barefoot down to Plum Cove beach, diving into the refreshing embrace of the cold bay.

Sadly, these are just stories to him. He has not experienced seeing Lanes Cove freeze up, let alone create “icebergs” for him to walk across, and it’s too hot to walk barefoot to the beach without risking burned feet from the hot pavement. These may seem like silly things to think about, but as someone who feels extremely connected to nature, it’s overwhelming!

It's hard to comprehend the immense changes that we as humans have forced on our beautiful planet. Most of these changes are so small that we don't see them in our day-to-day. If it weren't for the chart on the old Paint Factory, you might not notice the rise of the ocean with your naked eye. This is due in part to the massive melting that has happened to the world's glaciers and to the warming oceans. These changes have come over years, decades, even centuries of deforestation, water pollution, and air pollution. Our climate is unable to sustain us healthily.

I understand that planet warming is part of the natural cycle, but I can't help but feel worried about the rapid pace of these changes. This rapid pace is a call to action that weighs heavily on my heart, urging us to come together for the sake of our future.

The question is not just what I can do to help our planet, but how I can actively care for myself amid this shifting landscape. We absolutely need more voices—more individuals willing to stand up and speak out. It's time for collective action and accountability. We cannot afford to remain passive.