

Our changing world by Tiger Moth.

In this ever-changing world humans have learned to adapt just like our ancestors did. Through times of political, technological and environmental turmoil, our fellow beings have manoeuvred round such challenges strategically and carefully. The current generation live with the consequences of decisions made over the last two thousand years. I live in hope that current challenges relating to climate change are tackled with the same enthusiasm and energy, as future generations will have to live with the consequences of our decisions, action and inactions.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) provides us with an unprecedented means of supporting human decision-making processes, and if used correctly could enhance our ability to reverse climate change, overcome disease, improve education standards, help more businesses to prosper and make poverty and unemployment a thing of the past. However, some nations doubt the existence of climate change, some demonstrate little desire to support the global call for action, and it's worth remembering AI is not without risk. Governments, law makers, policy makers with unscrupulous values may lead humanity along a dangerous and corrupt path if checks and balances are not put in place to ensure the correct moral path is followed.

On a global level, deforestation for commercial purposes, agricultural expansion and urbanisation in areas such as the Amazon basin, destroys vital ecosystems which support a vast range of plant and animals. The extent and pace at which these human-led activities are taking place are not matched anywhere in the world.

In addition, the area is one of the world's largest natural carbon capture sinks and is essential for climate regulation. Control measures and policies designed to reduce or stop such activities are currently ineffective, which is deeply concerning to the author and many others.

On a national level, the effect of climate change on economic productivity is growing increasingly concerning. Physical damage from adverse weather events, supply chain disruptions and increasing operating and insurance costs add to the stress many business owners face. Many are looking to manage such stress by future proofing their business with the help of support from government agencies such as Scottish Enterprise.

Moving onto a more personal level, I am increasingly more aware of how climate change, in particular changing weather patterns affect daily life. Torrential downpours flood roads in minutes, causing windscreen wipers to struggle. Car manufacturers are now adapting designs in order that they withstand increasing weather demands. Overwhelmed drainage systems spew rainwater onto carriageways, and spray from passing heavy goods vehicle blind drivers momentarily, making driving an unpleasant, scary and dangerous experience.

I fear for elderly and vulnerable people within the community. Thermoregulation is less efficient as we age, and exposure to excessive heat or cold is at its best unpleasant and at its worst fatal. Many countries including the UK are still experiencing periods of extreme weather during which authorities, even in the 21st century appear under prepared and at times caught on the back foot when mobilising support services.

I also fear for the integrity of the food chain. Rising air temperature and habitat changes force species to migrate or risk extinction. For example, polar bears venture into urban areas in search of food as a consequence of vanishing polar ice caps and diminished food stocks. The lack of phytoplankton in warmer seas and oceans impact marine food chains, and higher temperatures increase the risk to humans of food borne illnesses, such as E Coli, as well as water borne diseases.

In my opinion, the greatest challenge to the individual is to reduce the potential impact of climate change on mental health. Eco-anxiety, the widespread worry about the future of the planet, affects many, especially young people.

For older adults who have the wisdom of age and experience, controlling overwhelming thoughts maybe easier as we have lived through many adverse weather events over the years. Evidence suggests that a sense of grief is often reported where there has been displacement from home or family members, job loss or significant changes to familiar landscapes. The risk of anxiety, depression and PTSD is increased in those who have been affected with those whose livelihoods are connected to the land, and those with pre-existing health issues at greatest risk.

So, to finish, above are only a few examples of how climate change significantly impacts us all at global, national and personal levels. The media play a part in reporting the situation accurately, and over sensationalism or scaremongering is unacceptable and unwanted. Fake news is currently rife, sadly an unwanted consequence of AI, and deciphering real and false news is increasingly difficult. There are many organisations who are actively supporting the climate change agenda however we all have responsibility to behave in ways which protects not destroys the planet.

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