



'Start where you are'. Those four simple words inspired a Newcastle teenager, Anna Rose, to create a school environment group, the Merewether Greenies, and marked the beginning of a long and effective environmental journey.

Anna's presentation to the Rotary Club of Sydney's Climate Action Group provided an overview of her actions as activist, board member, author, and educator to mitigate the effects of climate change and encourage others to do the same. She ended with her reasons for hope and a message of empowerment.

Anna's environmental pathway was set when, after founding the Australian Youth Climate Coalition in 2006, the law graduate led a delegation to the United Nations climate change conference in Copenhagen. Since then, her roles have included Co-convenor of the Vice-Chancellor's course in Leadership & Influence at ANU, Earth Hour National Manager, Director of Farmers for Climate Action and Governor of WWF Australia. She is currently CEO of Environmental Leadership Australia which works to support and encourage leadership on climate change within the community, politics, and philanthropy. Recently she co-founded Australia's first climate advocacy focused giving circle, Groundswell.

Anna has written books and articles on the environment and sustainability. Her documentary, *I Can Change Your Mind About... Climate*, tracked the attempt by Anna and former Liberal senator Nick Minchin, to change each other's mind about the reality of human-induced climate change. This was further explored in her book, *Madlands: A Journey to Change the Mind of A Climate Sceptic*. In 2019 she was named one of the Australian Financial Review/ Westpac's 100 Women of Influence.

Anna is blunt about the consequences of climate change, stressing that it isn't just about polar bears on melting icefloes, but about sea-level rise, food security, biodiversity, health, and quality of life. This can be a difficult message to hear, and it is hard not to feel overwhelmed and powerless. Anna, however, also brings a message of climate hope and believes that the collective ability of people to implement social change, as evidenced so often in the past, can and will create a meaningful shift.

So, *start where you are* is Anna's advice for taking action for climate change. For each of us, this will be different. It may be as simple as choosing to walk short distances rather than drive, changing how you manage waste at home or at the office, having a Meat Free Monday, upcycling clothes, planting a vegetable garden or shifting to an ethical superannuation fund. According to Anna, these small changes, collectively, can make a big difference.

Anna Rose: CEO of Environmental Leadership Australia, "Climate Crisis within Community, politics and philanthropy" 13.09.21