

## Words for Your World

### **Y12 runner-up: Izobel Davies, Xaverian College**

Amsterdam. Bangkok. Venice. Three cities that are so alive in culture and people. Just three of the cities estimated to be underwater by 2030. Whole civilisations being swallowed by the sea, due to happen in less than eight years. Anne Frank's legacy will join an underwater graveyard for our history, a potent symbol of the past submerged. Bangkok's streets bursting with night life sink three centimetres a year, soon to be a place mourned rather than celebrated in. The gondola, once used to transport enthusiastic tourists around Venice, now used to evacuate Venetians who have lived there for generations.

We are demolishing our own heritages. Creating an inevitable loss of the background to our existence. Thousands of lessons are learnt from each moment in history, lessons and lives which will be inevitably lost as the ocean seeps in. Fundamental parts of our identities as human beings are formed as part of our culture and where we are from. I'm scared that I won't get the opportunity to be able to experience the life in all these different countries that I can only dream of. Vital parts of our chance for new experiences and perspectives are quite literally being cut off from us. Most of us only act when we are personally affected. My heart breaks for the people whose way of living is washed away because it didn't affect everyone else soon enough.

Already I can see the effects of the sea levels rising here, in the UK, right now. Cliffs are collapsing as coastal erosion is occurring at an alarming rate. In Northumberland, houses are plummeting into the ocean, forcing people to move their whole livelihoods.

Hurricanes, floods, wildfires, all a product of the climate exacerbated weather force people from their homes right as I speak, as well as the quickly rising ocean levels. Low-income families in countries all over the world face a shortage of options of how to rehome and rebuild a life for themselves and their children. This is a growing problem in each of your countries now and in the coming years. This will affect millions of lives irreparably. The displacement of people globally due to climate change is an upcoming crisis. Governments are often criticised for dealing with crisis' -such as the covid-19 pandemic- too late, so why are you not acting on that criticism and facing the current one with utmost seriousness? Surely our impending extinction is the most serious matter?

If we carry on walking knowingly into our own downfall, then we are destined to end up like the lost city of Atlantis, but with one key difference. Unlike the ancient myth of the utopian city lost to the ocean, there will be no one left alive to pass on the story of how we chose our deaths.