Dear Friend,

I call you ‘friend’ because although we don’t know one another, I want to open my heart to you.

Over the last twenty years we have watched catastrophes unfold on our tv screens. Countless typhoons have killed thousands in the Phillipines and in China, in Bangladesh, Pakistan and India. We have seen ancient villages washed away in Italy, Germany and Japan. We have seen central American villages buried in mud slides. We have seen fires rage in Greece and Spain, the US and Canada. We watch the African children die in drought.

Closer to home in Australia, big towns like Lismore have become uninhabitable. This year I saw floods across huge expanses of NSW, Queensland, Victoria and in Tasmania. And a few years ago, we had bush fires all down the East coast of Australia and in Tasmania. Places like rain forest which I thought would never burn, have been scared, forests of ancient trees which never saw fire for thousands of years.

COVID, which has changed our society for ever, is another Climate catastrophe. As the climate changes new viruses can thrive.

Each catastrophe seems like the end of the world and then I forget about that one and another one follows, bigger and more frightening than the one before, which I now can’t recall.

It is hard to hold all this in front of my eyes. So easy to slip into denial. To look away and get distracted by buying new pretty stuff, new hobbies, my own family life. Until it is *my* house that is burned or flooded. *My* family who cannot grow food in drought affected land. As long as it is happening Over There I can look away.

We each do what we can. I try to use less plastic, I try to travel less, to travel slower, to avoid aeroplanes, to eat local produce, to grow my own veggies.

But I feel like Canute trying to hold back the sea. The carbon in the atmosphere continues to grow, the graphs are more and more alarming. The ice melts, more and more species become extinct. The planet heats.

Paul Gilding says in *The Great Colllapse* that we need to move to a ‘war time footing’. Every effort needs to move towards winning the war against climate catastrophe. Action needs to be systemic and immediate. We do not have any time left.

Banks can play a part. I want the banks to immediately stop supporting fossil fuels.

So I join with others across Australia, starting here in Devonport, to lobby the banks to that end.

I commit to sticking it up the banks. These stickers will appear on ATMs across the coast.

Please join me, in acting in any way open to you that will work towards saving the planet as a habitat suitable for human beings and other life.

In solidarity for life on earth,

Sally O’Wheel

Forth