

NEWSREEL WORLD

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Programmanus

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ALANNA LESLIE: Hi, I'm Alanna Leslie and it's time for the first Newsreel World of 2020. Today, we're heading to South Africa, Canada, Ghana and much more. But first, Australia...

Australian bushfires, wildlife and climate

Vox pop: What do I love about Australia? The landscapes, the animals, the communities. And that's also everything that's been lost in these fires.

ALANNA LESLIE: That's Ella from Sydney in Australia. She's one of many Australians who have been terrified at the damage done by bushfires that have been raging across the country since last year. For humans, it's disastrous. For Australia's unique wildlife, it's completely catastrophic. According to the World Wildlife Fund, over 1 billion animals are estimated to have been killed. Sarah Allely went to some of the areas affected by the fires to find out more...

SARAH ALLELY: I'm standing in a burned-out forest in the Blue Mountains, 140 kilometres from Sydney. I'm at a place called Evan's lookout where fire recently raged towards the town of Blackheath. Usually, this place is green and filled with eucalypt trees. Instead, all I see are charred remains of the bush. This bushfire season started unusually early. Normally, animals would be able to move into other habitats nearby, but multiple fires joined to form mega-fires, leaving nowhere for wildlife to go. The wildlife that survived are now at risk of dying due to lack of shelter and food. Harry Burkitt is passionate about protecting wildlife habitats.

HARRY BURKITT: There's going to be regional extinction of species. So, while we might not see the complete extinction of the species, we'll see them go extinct in large bio-regions where the species will no longer be present or will be functionally extinct, meaning that it's not performing its role as a member of that ecosystem.

SARAH ALLELY: Harry was named Young Environmentalist of the Year in 2018 by the Bob Brown Foundation. He's campaign manager at the Colong Foundation for Wilderness.

HARRY BURKITT: What is going to be the biggest impact on native animals is habitat destruction. And we have to address that. So, the Gondwana rainforests, which are a World Heritage listed series of protected areas along the East Coast, over 50 percent of them has burnt. The Greater Blue Mountains, over 85 percent of them has burnt.

SARAH ALLELY: Bushfires are a natural part of the Australian environment, but the scale of these fires is unprecedented. Fires are not supposed to burn this hot or big.

HARRY BURKITT: A lot of plants actually thrive in fire. They need it to breed. But it's the extent that is really important too. If particular fires have been too hot, some of those trees won't survive.

SARAH ALLELY: Loss of human life and property has been devastating. But this catastrophic loss of wildlife has young people in Sydney worried about the future of Australia's unique ecosystems.

PRATHA NAGPAL: Pratha Nagpal....

SARAH ALLELY: This is Pratha Nagpal. She thinks politicians should do more to stop climate change.

PRATHA NAGPAL: Like it has generally taken almost a billion to die out for politicians to go, oh, maybe climate change is real.

ELLA HOSTY-SNELGROVE: Ella Hosty-Snelgrove... It's really awful, especially because what do I love about Australia? The landscapes, the animals, the communities. And that's also everything that's been lost in these fires.

SARAH ALLELY: Even people in cities hundreds or thousands of kilometres from fires have been affected. It's been impossible to ignore the smoke that has polluted skies from Sydney right across to New Zealand. And for Australia's wildlife and natural environment, the scale of the devastation is only beginning to be understood. This is Sarah Allely reporting for Newsreel World from the Blue Mountains in South-Eastern Australia.

ALANNA LESLIE: Thanks Sarah.

ALANNA LESLIE: Now for a quick sprint around the globe for a few more stories that have caught our eye...

Malawi: Dreadlocked hair

The High Court in Malawi, a country in South-East Africa, has ordered the Government to ensure that children with dreadlocks are allowed access to public schools. The order was issued following an appeal by a pupil who had been kicked out of a primary school because of her dreadlocked hair. The judge said the dreadlocks are part of the Rastafari religion which should not be discriminated against.

India: The dangers of video games

In Pune, a city in the state of Maharashtra in India, a 25-year old man has died after suffering a brain stroke caused by playing a video game. A statement from local police stated that the stroke was caused by the man becoming over-excited whilst playing the video game: *Player Unknown's Battlegrounds*, also known as PUBG. Last year, a member of Parliament in India called for games like PUBG to be banned due to the negative effects they have on people's mental and physical health.

Canada: Meditation apps for staff

ALANNA LESLIE: A coffee company is providing their staff in Canada with a free subscription for a meditation app. The app offers meditations, articles and other ways of helping people deal with issues such as getting a good night's sleep, help with their focus and other issues including anxiety.

Ghana: Cina Soul

ALANNA LESLIE: Cina Soul is a Ghanaian singer. She sings in a combination of English and Ga, a language which is spoken mainly in and around Accra, Ghana's capital. Here's one of her latest records called Aduwkei... Which is what a song that makes you want to dance is often called in Ga...

Now, South Africa...

South Africa: Abortion and social stigma

ALANNA LESLIE: Abortion is legal in South Africa, and has been for over twenty years. Yet many young girls are subjected to illegal and unsafe abortions because of the associated stigma. A stigma is a strong negative feeling that a large amount of a society have about something. Some healthcare workers refuse to offer the service, so young girls get turned away. From Johannesburg, Carissa Cupido tells us more...

CARISSA CUPIDO: It's a gloomy Saturday morning and I've made my way to a local bookstore in Hyde Park, Johannesburg to meet with Dr Melusi Dlamini. Dlamini used to work at a hospital where he was the only medical practitioner who was willing to provide abortion services.

DR MELUSI DLHAMINI: So one of the biggest reasons my former colleagues mentioned for not wanting to participate in TOP services was religion. Most of them said that they are Christian and that their Christian belief does not allow them to actually perform abortions. There's a lot of reasons why stigma towards abortion exists. You have society telling women what they should be. So, your ideal woman is to bear children, is to be sexually pure. So basically, if you're having an abortion, you... you have sex for fun, you didn't have sex for procreation. You basically have power over your reproductive health, your sexuality. You're going against what society has prescribed it to be. And nobody likes that... And what happens then is that instead of actually going to a place which publicly says "I offer abortions" she goes somewhere back street. Our government is very silent when it comes to abortions. Yes, there are places that the government has opened to provide the services, but they don't advertise. We need to make abortion an everyday topic because whether or not you like it, abortions will happen.

CARISSA CUPIDO: Here's what young people have to say about the stigma surrounding abortion in South Africa.

PAMELA YOLI: Hi, my name is Pamela. I definitely think there is a stigma against abortion, mainly because of miseducation or people just being misinformed or having lack of information as to why abortion is necessary.

SBU MAPETLA: Hi, my name is Boo. I think abortion is really unnecessary. I think there are other options. I think women should not be killing babies.

CARISSA CUPIDO: Abortion has been legal in South Africa since 1997. However, the practice is not offered by all doctors. It still carries the stigma of shame and, in some cases, religious taboo. On paper, progress is cemented and celebrated, but in reality we still have a long way to go to disrupt and eradicate constructs, policing the movement of women's bodies.

ALANNA LESLIE: Thanks Carissa. Even though the law made abortion legal in 1997, which is 23 years ago, women are still choosing to have dangerous backstreet abortions instead of going to places that can provide them safely. It just shows how powerful the pressure of a society can be.

That's it for today. We'll be back on the 15th of February. Until then, see you!