

Eco-Anxiety: A Discourse Analysis of Media Representations of the School Strike for Climate
Movement

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Abstract

Introduction: Eco-anxiety has been described as worry (heightened concern), which may encompass various types and degrees of distress (physical and/or psychological) about the present environment/climatic crisis, and the future state of the health of ecosystems.

Aims: The main objective of the study was to analyse how the youth climate change movement was constructed by the newspaper press in Australia, with respect to both eco-anxiety and climate change. At present, there has been no discursive research that has examined how youth climate change protesters are represented in the Australian media by newspaper publication.

Methodology: This study used Wetherell's approach to critical discourse analysis to identify rhetorical strategies, repertoires and modes of argumentation. A search was conducted from NewsBank and from eight main Australian newspapers websites focusing on articles published during 2018 - 2019. A subsample of nine extracts from 100 opinion/commentary newspaper articles were utilised to illustrate the main recurring themes found in in the data set.

Results: The findings suggest that articles published by News Corp (e.g. *The Australian*) gave negative portrayals of the School Strike for Climate movement, while Nine Entertainment Co. (e.g. *Sydney Morning Herald*) generally framed the school strikes positively, including all regional newspapers irrespective of the media outlet.

Conclusions: The ongoing existential threat of climate change will ensure that eco-anxiety is an ongoing problem, so further research will need to investigate its longer-term significance, as well as public and media representations of the school strikers.

Keywords: School Strike for Climate, school strikers, climate change protests, eco-anxiety, climate anxiety, environmental worry.

Declaration

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree of diploma in any University, and, to the best of my knowledge, this thesis contains no material previously published except where due reference is made. I give permission for the digital version of this thesis to be made available on the web, via the University of Adelaide's digital thesis repository, the Library Search, and through web search engines, unless permission has been granted by the School to restrict access for a period of time.

Signature

29 September 2020

Contribution Statement

It is acknowledged that my supervisor and I collaborated on some elements of this thesis together. I wrote a research proposal outlining the topic, then my supervisor and I collaborated to develop and design the appropriate methodology and research questions for this project. The thesis also had received feedback and/or comments on each section by my supervisor and thus I made adjustments accordingly. I abided by the *Australian Standards for Editing Practice* (ASEP) and the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research*. I also abided by the University of Adelaide's policies in relation to assistance and editing. I conducted the literature search and was responsible for manually searching and screening the newspaper articles and selecting appropriate articles for the data analysis. I completed the discursive analysis on my own, and lastly, I wrote all aspects of the thesis, other than where my supervisor made any suggestions and/or recommendations as discussed above.

Signature

29 September 2020

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Overview

The aim of this study is to apply critical discourse analysis (Edwards & Wetherell, 1993; Potter & Wetherell, 1998; Wetherell, Taylor & Yates, 2001) to media representations of the School Strike for Climate Australia (also referred to as Climate Strike; Youth Strike for Climate; Youth for Climate; or Fridays for Future (Bowman, 2019; Hagedorn et al., 2019)), in an attempt to understand the social construction of *eco-anxiety*, and in particular *climate anxiety* (Pihkala, 2018a). According to one definition, climate anxiety is “chronic fear of environmental (climate) doom” (Clayton, Manning, Krygsman & Speiser, 2017, p. 68).

School Strike for Climate (SS4C) is an international environmental movement that comprises of school students who “strike from school to demand politicians take our future seriously and treat climate change as what it is: a crisis” (School Strike for Climate Australia, 2020, para. 3). Their three main objectives are: (1) cease manufacturing new gas, oil and coal developments; (2) 100 percent renewable energy by 2030; and (3) support job transition for the fossil-fuel industry (Kristof, 2019; Rutter, 2019; School Strike for Climate Australia, 2020).

1.2. Significance of the Youth Climate Change Movement

Greta Thunberg, a Swedish high school student, initiated the first protest outside of Sweden’s Parliament on 20 August 2018 (Boulianne, Lalancette & Ilkiw, 2020; Holmberg & Alvinus, 2020; Lee, Gjersoe, O’Neill & Barnett, 2020; Lehmann, 2019; Watts, 2019). Thunberg continued to protest regularly on Fridays during school hours, to raise awareness about climate change. Thunberg’s climate strikes mobilised the global youth to join her movement *Fridays for*

Future and Global Week for Future throughout 2018 and 2019 (Boulianne et al., 2020; Gould, 2019; Han & Ahn, 2020).

Participation from school students substantially increased in 2019 from the first major protests held in 2018. It was reported that approximately between 20,000 - 40,000 young people worldwide protested about climate change by December 2018 (BBC News, 2020; Chrysanthos, 2019). In comparison, between 1.4 - 1.6 million school strikers protested on 15 March 2019 across 1700 cities from 133 different countries (Bergmann & Ossewaarde, 2020; Boulianne et al., 2020, Han & Ahn, 2020; Thomas, Cretney, Hayward, 2019). The Global Week for Future strikes during 20 - 27 September 2019 witnessed between 6 - 7.6 million students protest internationally in 4,500 places across 150 countries (ANKARA-Anadolu Agency, 2019; Lee et al., 2020; Tollefson, 2019). Similarly, in Australia, over 40,000 youth attended the 15 March 2019 protest, whereas 300,000 youth participated in the 20 September 2019 strike. This was considered to be one of the largest climate strike protests in history and is evidence that the protests have generated considerable popularity among school children (Baker, Perper & Watson, 2019; Woodward, 2019).

1.3. Collective Movement of Young People

The school strike movement is a significant event because youth feel disempowered (McCartney, Campbell, Conacher & Mackie, 2019) and the protests are seen as an act of civil disobedience by many young people (Puntillo, 2019) in order to assert some degree of political influence (Johnson, 2020; Mattheis, 2020). Young people in most countries (those below age 25) are more concerned about climate change than older people (Tobler, Visschers & Siegrist, 2012). They are most likely to see climate change as anthropogenically caused, and hence capable of being mitigated by political action and policy decisions (Arbuckle, 2017; Benegal, 2018; Hornsey,

Harris, Bain & Fielding, 2016; Metag, Füchslin & Schäfer, 2015). Even compared to the protests of the 1960s, particularly in 1968 over the Vietnam War, it is unprecedented for young people, much younger than the primarily university students of the 1960s, to mount street protests (Marris, 2019; Rodriguez, 2019). In Australia, many schools supported the strike and were pleased for students to attend during school time if they had written permission of their parents.

1.4. The Existential Threat of Global Climate Change

Before examining eco/climate-anxiety, we need to be clear about that which is making people, especially young people, anxious. Numerous scientists have proposed that the Earth is presently in a geological era called the “Anthropocene,” one defined by largely negative human impacts (Hamilton, Bonneuil & Gemenne, 2015, p. 1). Human economic and technological activity has become a force substantial enough to impact upon both the biodiversity and geophysical processes of the planet (Steffen et al., 2011, 2018), where a “planetary-scale critical transition” (Barnosky et al., 2012, p. 52) may have been reached, beginning another mass extinction of life, the sixth mass extinction (Barnosky et al., 2011; Ceballos, Ehrlich & Dirzo, 2017).

The present rate of species extinction is even faster than in previous mass extinctions before humans existed; over the past two decades, one-tenth of the world’s global wilderness has been lost (Watson et al., 2016). In 2017, a doomsday warning to humanity, signed by 15,364 scientists located in 184 countries was issued, stating that since the previous World Scientists’ Warning in 1992, apart from the stabilisation of the stratosphere ozone layer, all of the major environmental problems have worsened, with catastrophic climate change particularly troubling (Ripple et al., 2017). This warning was followed up by one specifically addressed to climate change in 2019, with 11,258 scientists based in 153 countries declaring that “planet Earth is facing a climate

emergency” (Ripple, Wolf, Newsome, Barnard & Moomaw, 2019, p. 1). The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has declared, “The climate crisis has arrived and is accelerating faster than most scientists expected ... it is more severe than anticipated, threatening natural ecosystems and the fate of humanity” (Ripple et al., 2019, p. 2).

There is now mainstream scientific concern, which was previously limited to a few climate scientists (Hansen et al., 2016), with “potential irreversible climate tipping points and nature’s reinforcing feedbacks ... that could lead to a catastrophic ‘hothouse Earth,’ well beyond the control of humans” (Ripple et al., 2019, p. 2). This raises the controversial possibility of the collapse of modern civilisation from unresolved “planetary overload” (McMichael, 2014) or human extinction (Bendell, 2018; Ehrlich & Ehrlich, 2013; Greer, 2016; McPherson, 2013; Read & Alexander, 2019). Even the otherwise cautious IPCC stated in 2018 that humanity has twelve years left to avert a “climate change catastrophe” (Masson-Delmotte et al., 2018; Watts, 2018).

1.5. Climate Change and Mental Health

Climate change has become an increasing concern worldwide, especially among younger generations (Arbuckle, 2017; Boulianne et al., 2020; Hornsey et al., 2016; Tobler, Visschers, & Siegrist, 2012; R. Smith, 2019). For example, there has been a 4,290 percent increase in searches for the phrase “eco-anxiety” by youth in Britain’s Oxford Dictionaries during 2019 (Oxford Languages, 2019). Further, surveys conducted by teams of scientists around the world, in 19 cities and 16 countries, of the Fridays For Future climate protests, found that the majority of protesters experienced feelings of “frustration, anger and anxiety” (de Moor et al., 2020, p. 4) with respect to the issue of climate change (Bowman, 2019).

Australian survey research indicates that in some samples, 95 percent of youth aged 7 - 25 years believe that climate change is a serious problem, with 89 percent worried about the present future effects of climate change (Abbott et al., 2019; American Psychological Association, 2019; Carlisle et al., 2019; Chiw & Ling, 2019; Kassam, 2019; Merzian, Quicke, Bennett, Campbell & Swann, 2019). Additionally, Harris Poll in conjunction with the American Psychological Association, surveyed 2,017 people and found that 68 percent of participants reported feelings of “eco-anxiety” (American Psychological Association, 2020). Similarly, in 2007, the Australian Childhood Foundation and Child Abuse Prevention Research Australia surveyed 600 Australian children between the ages of 10 - 14. The results showed that 44 percent of the sample felt nervous about the future impact of climate change and a quarter of the children were severely distressed about the state of the world (Tucci, Mitchell, & Goddard, 2007).

Other survey data have demonstrated high levels of anxiety towards climate change by young people. Kelly (2017) surveyed 114 university students and found that those who studied environmental majors reported feeling very concerned about climate change. Likewise, a nationally representative survey of 1,278 American adults found that 62 percent of Americans expressed moderate worry about climate change, whereas 21 percent of participants were very worried, which has substantially increased since March 2015 (Leiserowitz et al., 2018). Furthermore, a survey by ReachOut and Student Edge of over 1500 Australian students aged 14 - 23 years found that 80 percent of students reported feeling anxious about climate change. The survey results also indicated that 17 percent of participants reported losing sleep due to worrying about climate change and 82 percent believed that climate change would substantially reduce their future quality of life (ReachOut, 2019), with similar concerns being expressed by young people across the globe (BBC Newsround, 2019; Duffy, Hammond & Cheng, 2019; Jones & Saad, 2019;

Paroczai, 2019; Sanson, Wachs, Koller & Salmela-Aro, 2018; M. Smith, 2019; Swell Investing, 2018; Triodos Bank, 2019).

Psychological research indicates that there is a significant positive correlation between concerns about climate change and distress, levels of anxiety and/or dysphoria (Searle & Gow, 2010; Temte, Holzhauer & Kushner, 2019), with one in five Australians experiencing at some time, climate-related distress (Australian Psychological Society, 2019). Young people (under age 25 years), are especially vulnerable to the physical and psychological effects of climate change (Abbott et al., 2019; Burke, Sanson & Van Hoorn, 2018; Enson, 2019; Grauer, 2020; Kelly, 2017; Martin et al., 2020). Some ill-effects include cognitive deficits, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Chowdhury, Mondal, Biswas & Brahma, 2013), learning problems, depression, and sleep and anxiety disorders (Burke et al., 2018; Garcia & Sheehan, 2016; Sanson et al., 2018; Strife, 2012).

Climate change is generally viewed by physical scientists as a geophysical and ecological phenomenon, even if anthropogenically (human) caused (Catton, 1982; Hamilton, 2010; Masson-Delmotte et al., 2018; Wallace-Wells, 2019). However, climate change is at the same time a social construction (Pettenger, 2007; Stehr & Storch, 1995), most notably a nexus of conflicting political ideologies, especially neo-liberalism and right-wing and conservative orientations against left and progressive politics (Giddens, 2009; Hamilton, 2007; McCright & Dunlap, 2010; Shove, 2010), which are highly evident in the discourses of climate change (Dryzek, 2005; Hamblyn, 2009; MacGregor, 2010; Szerszynski, 2010). This suggests that a critical discursive approach to understanding the shifting meanings and debates about eco/climate-anxiety would be fruitful. While progressives see eco/climate-anxiety as a reasonable response to an existential threat,

putting the Earth on the brink of an “apocalypse” (Greer, 2016; Kleres & Wettergren, 2017; McPherson, 2013; Patrick, 2007; Read & Alexander, 2019; Scranton, 2015, 2018; Seed, 2000; Veldman, 2012), the neo-liberal right sees eco-anxiety as a manifestation of false consciousness, a mistaken and delusional psychological response (Frost, 2019; McCright & Dunlap, 2010; Vaughan, 2019).

1.6. Eco-Anxiety and Climate Anxiety

There is now an extensive literature, spanning a number of decades, investigating the relationship between human health and climate change (Blashki et al., 2010; Howard & Huston, 2019; Kjellstrom, Butler, Lucas & Bonita, 2010; McMichael, 2013, 2014; McMichael & Dear, 2010; McMichael, Friel, Nyong & Corvalan, 2008; McMichael & Lindgren, 2011). The World Health Organization regards these health ramifications of climate change as “the greatest threat to global health in the 21st century” (Costello et al., 2009, p. 1693; Watts et al., 2015, 2017). Thus, the Australian Medical Association has formally recognised climate change as a “health emergency,” as has the American Medical Association and British Medical Association (Australian Medical Association, 2019, para. 1).

Further, as climate change is a “chronic environmental stressor ... of possibly perilous consequence” (Evans & Stecker, 2004, p. 2; Lorenzoni, Pidgeon & O’Connor, 2005; Pidgeon, Kaspersen & Slovic, 2003), climate change also has highly significant human psychological consequences (Etkin & Ho, 2007), both direct (e.g. eco-anxiety) and indirect (e.g. depression and suicide arising from a causal chain involving for example drought and poverty) (Bourque & Willox, 2014; Eckersley, 2008; Lowe et al., 2006; Reser & Swim, 2011). In the last decade, there has been a growing body of psychological/medical research addressing the relationship between climate

change and human mental health, documenting primarily negative effects (American Psychological Association, 2009; Berry, Bowen & Kjellstrom, 2010; Cianconi, Betr o & Janiri, 2020; Clayton et al., 2015, 2017; Coyle & Van Susteren, 2012; Willox et al., 2013b; Doherty & Clayton, 2011; Fritze, Blashki, Burke & Wiseman, 2008; Gifford & Gifford, 2016; Hayes & Poland, 2018; Hayes, Blashki, Wiseman, Burke & Reifels, 2018; Swim et al., 2011; Weissbecker, 2011).

Eco-anxiety, of which climate-anxiety is one of the principal contemporary manifestations, has received academic as well as some media coverage (Budner, 2018; Cook, 2019; Dockett, 2019; Garcia, 2018; Grant, 2019; Hayat, 2019; McCartney et al., 2019; McDonough, 2019; Moberly, 2019; Nickerson, 2019; Nugent, 2019; Payne, 2018; Pihkala, 2019; Plautz, 2020; Pollack, 2018; Shalant, 2017; Usher, Durkin & Bhullar, 2019; Ward, 2017; Watson, 2019). The eco-anxiety literature has explored other related concepts including “ecological/environmental melancholia” (Lertzman, 2015); “climate grief” (Bristow, 2019; Cunsolo & Ellis, 2018; Willox, 2012; Engstrom, 2019; Windle, 1992); “sorrow and loss” and “mourning” (Brugger, Dunbar, Jurt & Orlove, 2013; Cunsolo & Ellis, 2018; Cunsolo & Landman, 2017; Willox et al., 2013a, 2013b; Willox, 2012; Drew, 2013; Randall, 2009; Roelvink & Zolkos, 2011); “eco-trauma” and “Post-Traumatic Eco-Stress Disorder” (PTESD) (Kelsey & Armstrong, 2012; Neria, Nandi & Galea, 2008; Pihkala, 2020; Robinson, 2018; Udomratn, 2006; Warsini, West, Mills & Usher, 2014; White, 2015; Woodbury, 2019), and “eco-grief” (Attanasio, 2020; Cunsolo & Ellis, 2018; Gordon, Radford & Simpson, 2019). The concept of eco-anxiety though is broader and more general, as someone could have eco-anxiety without the extremes of eco-trauma or grieving and mourning, since the “loss” of ecological value may not yet have occurred.

Albrecht's concept of "solastalgia," is anxiety produced by environmental factors, "when there is a recognition that the beloved place in which one resides is under assault" (Albrecht, 2006, p. 32). However, this is too narrow, as a general conception of eco-anxiety (Albrecht, 2005, 2011, 2019; Albrecht et al., 2007). Here, eco-anxiety arises from a threat to an individual's sense of place; geographical proximity enlivens environmental concerns (Brown, Reed & Harris, 2002; Norton & Hannon, 1997). This is a concept for examining eco-stresses associated with place destruction (Askland & Bunn, 2018; Connor, Albrecht, Higginbotham, Freeman & Smith, 2004; Cordial, Riding-Malon & Lips, 2012; Galway, Beery, Jones-Casey & Tasala, 2019; Higginbotham, Connor, Albrecht, Freeman & Agho, 2006; McNamara & Westoby, 2011). Typically, solastalgia requires the object of concern to be some personal object to which one can have a "sense of place" relationship, such as an endangered forest, even the entire Amazon rainforest. However, climate change anxiety transcends solastalgia because it may encompass anxiety about existential threats to the entire life support system of the planet, given that under some scenarios, a runaway warming effect could replicate past mass extinction events (Ward, 2009).

Likewise, the definition of "eco-anxiety" by Clayton et al. (2017) as a "chronic fear of environmental doom" (Clayton et al. 2017, p. 68), apart from requiring a definition or characterisation of "doom" (is it mere destruction, the collapse of civilisation, a near term extinction event or something else? (McPherson, 2013)), is too narrow, as not all people, especially youth, have embraced "doom" and most protest to prevent a deterioration of the environment to any such level (Moser, 2020).

Some people think of eco-anxiety in terms of "fear" (Charlson, 2019; McQueen, 2018; Robbins & Moore, 2012), as is part of the Clayton et al. (2017) definition. Eco-anxiety is thus

viewed as a “cause within the mind,” while eco-fear is a “genuine and realistic response to an outer crisis” (Buzzell & Chalquist, 2019, para. 8). Although this follows a position in psychology which sees fear as having a definite reference, while anxiety has “a quality of indefiniteness and lack of object” (Wilkinson, 1999, p. 450), fear can have an indefinite reference (e.g. “fear of the unknown,” fear of some possible danger in a dark wooded area) and anxiety may have a definite reference (e.g. anxiety about some specific technological risk) (Beck, 1992; Cossman, 2013; Dunant & Porter, 1996).

There are also conceptual and philosophical limitations to a purely technical approach to eco-anxiety, seeing it as “an emotion characterized by feelings of tension, varied thoughts and physical changes like increased blood pressure” (American Psychological Association, n.d., para. 1). From a clinical perspective, eco-anxiety could be viewed as a form of Generalized Anxiety Disorder, as defined by the diagnostic criteria of DSM-5, being “excessive worry,” difficult to control, associated with three or more symptoms: (1) restlessness; (2) being easily fatigued; (3) difficulty concentrating; (4) irritability; (5) muscle tension and/or (6) sleep disturbances (Akiskal, 2007; American Psychiatric Association, 2013).

However, someone could have eco-anxiety with only two of the symptoms, or even no physiological symptoms, instead having a more reflective “existential angst” discussed in existentialist literature (Greenberg, Koole & Pyszczynski, 2004; Pyszczynski, Greenberg, Koole, & Solomon, 2010; Yalom, 1980) and psychology (Gillespie, 2016; Greenspan, 2004; McIntosh, 2008; Pihkala, 2017, 2018b; Tillich, 1952).

The concept of eco-anxiety would require, at minimum, *worry* about the environment/ climate crisis, a focused concern which could encompass various types of “distress” (Searle &

Gow, 2010). “Environmental worry” has been used synonymously with “environmental anxiety” by researchers who have addressed environmental concerns other than specifically climate change, with the production of an Environmental Worry Scale (Bowler & Schwarzer, 1991; Steinheider & Hodapp, 1999). This research defines “eco-anxiety” as “worry or agitation caused by concerns about the present and future state of the environment” (Ray, 2020, p. 3; Smith & Hughes, 2013, p. 148). While some psychologists have distinguished between worry and anxiety, with worry associated with problem-focused adaptive strategies for coping, and anxiety yielding poor problem-solving (Davey, Hampton, Farrell, & Davidson, 1992), this is not necessarily so in the climate domain, with eco-worry and eco-anxiety both motivating people to partake in political action (Bouman et al., 2020; Smith & Leiserowitz, 2014). Worry and anxiety can both be “severe and debilitating” (Gifford & Gifford, 2016, p. 292), but may also be rationally grounded and an “intelligent response” to real ecological threats (Bednarek, 2019; Edwards, 2008; House & Stark, 2002; MacLeod, Williams & Bekerian, 1991; Ojala, 2016, 2018; Verplanken & Roy, 2013).

Based on the above, a working definition of “eco-anxiety” with respect to the issue of climate change can be described as follows: *eco-anxiety is worry (heightened concern), which may encompass various types and degrees of distress (physical and/or psychological) about the present environment/climatic crisis, and the future state of the planet, namely the health of human and non-human life and ecosystems.*

1.7. Previous Research

There has been considerable academic discussion on the School Strike for Climate movement such as the studies: Deisenrieder, Kubisch, Keller & Stötter, 2020; Dobson, 2019; Emilsson, Johansson & Wennerhag, 2020; Hagedorn et al., 2019; Han & Ahn, 2020; Holmberg &

Alvinus, 2020; Kristof, 2019; Kvamme, 2019; Lehmann, 2019; Mayes & Holdsworth, 2020; Scheitle, 2020; Spajic, Behrens, Gralak, Moseley & Linholm, 2019; Stott, Smith, Williams & Godlee, 2019; Thew, Middlemiss & Paavola, 2020; Thomas et al., 2019; Trihartono, Viartasiwi & Nisya, 2019; Walker, 2020; Wielk, 2020.

However, very little has been published from the perspective of critical discourse analysis. Existing studies, have usually been more conventional sociological investigations of various aspects of the movement including: the composition and motives of the youth protesters based upon survey data from participants (de Moor et al., 2020; Swim, Geiger & Lengieza, 2019; Wahlström, Kocyba, De Vydt & de Moor, 2020); the political *modus operandi* of the movement (Bowman, 2019; Einsiedel, 2020); issues of self-identification, agency formation and collective identity (Boulianne et al., 2020; Brünker, Deitelhoff & Mirbabaie, 2019; Kimball, 2019; Lee et al., 2020; Maier, 2019; Marquardt, 2020), as well as issues of civil disobedience (Mattheis, 2020; Thackeray, et al., 2020) and disruptive dissent (O'Brien, Selboe & Hayward, 2018).

Isacson (2020) conducted a discourse analysis of Greta Thunberg's speeches, with a focus upon the element of securitization of climate change, and the social construction of climate change as a survival threat (Peoples & Vaughan-Williams, 2015). McKnight (2020) as well has examined the utopian discourse of the School Strike for Climate movement, using a critical discourse analysis within the framework of Bloch's utopian theory (Bloch, 2000), which involves a critique of the present to seek a better future. Examining quotes from social and mainstream print media of the youth activists, as well as Greta Thunberg, McKnight concluded that the strikers were not merely anxious about the future, but had a "militant optimism" to create a just and ecologically sustainable world (McKnight, 2020, p. 60).

More relevant to the concerns of the present study are other findings of Abdulahad and Nyberg (2020) and Bergmann (2019). Abdulahad and Nyberg examined 31 electronic news articles about Thunberg as TIME's "Person of the Year" to uncover United States Media bias. Although they could not draw any valid general conclusions about United States structural media bias from the examination of only one event, they did observe "framing," with the left media largely portraying her in a positive light, and deserving of the award, with the right media dismissing of her, seeing her generally in a negative light (Abdulahad & Nyberg, 2020, p. 37).

Bergmann and Ossewaarde (2020), in a critical discourse analysis uncovered that the Fridays For Future movement and Greta Thunberg were delegitimised in two leading German newspapers, by use of ageist language (e.g. "pupils," "absentees," "dreamers" (Bergmann & Ossewaarde, 2020, p. 273)), so that these young climate activists could be dismissed as naïve and "ignorant" and their core concerns ignored (Bergmann, 2019). The issue of the use of ageist language in the Australian media will be examined in this study.

Jacobsson (2020) examined how the "Youth for Climate" movement was constructed in the Swedish press. This research found that in general, the Swedish press used various rhetorical devices of "emptying," to neutralise the overt social critique embodied in the protests and drain away the radical political content, thus disempowering the protests (Jacobsson, 2020, p. 8). The core philosophical tenets of the protests were that the remorseless "logic of neoliberal capitalism," of unending economic growth, coupled with constant consumerism, was incompatible with ecological sustainability (Jacobsson, 2020, p. 8). Jacobsson showed that the Swedish press, defended the economic need for "business as usual" (Fuchs, 2017). Other academic studies of media coverage of climate change in general, show that if there is not outright opposition, the focus

is usually upon “soft” solutions such as “green growth,” ignoring the wider socio-ecological challenge posed by the limits to growth critique (Barkemeyer, Givry & Figge, 2017; Parr, 2015).

1.8. Study Aims

Extensive research has shown that mainstream media has the ability to influence public opinion, attitudes, beliefs and behaviours (Happer & Philo, 2013; McCombs. 2014; Schildkraut & Elsass, 2016), especially on issues such as climate change (Boykoff & Roberts, 2007; Vu, Liu & Tran, 2019). Thus, examining how different media publications construct youth climate change activism highlights the importance of discursive research on climate change. As discussed above, there is limited research conducted on how the School Strike for Climate movement is represented by the mainstream media. In particular, there has been no discursive research that has examined how school strikers are represented in the Australian media through newspaper reporting, with a focus upon the issue of eco-anxiety, as an explanation for the unprecedented extent of the protests.

The main objective of the study was to analyse how the youth climate change movement was constructed by the newspaper press in Australia, with respect to both eco-anxiety and climate change. The current study aimed to explore two main research questions: (1) how were the school strikers represented by the Australian newspaper press? (2) How were eco-anxiety and climate change constructed in the context of the School Strike for Climate movement? Consistent with previous research showing how climate change is situated in a nexus of conflicting political ideologies, it was hypothesised that media reports from Nine Entertainment Co. sources (previously known as Fairfax) will be positive and sympathetic to the climate change emergency narrative, recognising the existence of eco-anxiety, while News Corp sources would downplay or deny the threat of climate change and thus delegitimise the school striker’s concerns.

A plausible explanation for yielding similar results, is that News Corp and Seven West Media are considered to be more conservative leaning and pro-economic growth, thus embracing climate change denial (Bacon, 2011; Muller, 2017; Bridge Initiative Team, 2019). However, newspapers for Nine Entertainment Co. are regarded as more progressive and thus are more open-minded towards the environmental crisis (Bacon, 2011). However, the *Australian Financial Review* newspaper is regarded to be Australia's foremost economic and financial paper and favours economic growth and profits, as is seen by publications from *The Australian*.

It is interesting to note that in August 2020, Rupert Murdoch's son James resigned from the News Corp's board of directors over editorial disagreements and other decisions made by the corporations (Rushe & Pengelly, 2020). One of those disagreements was over News Corp's coverage of climate change issues, with a spokesperson for James and his wife saying: "They are particularly disappointed with the ongoing denial among the news outlets in Australia given obvious evidence to the contrary" (Rushe & Pengelly, 2020). This exemplifies the point that there is an identified bias from News Corp on the reporting of climate change content.

Chapter 2: Methodology

1.9. Analytical Approach

The epistemological approach that this study adhered to was a critical discourse analysis, to identify rhetorical repertoires, strategies and modes of argumentation to represent emerging themes from newspaper articles used as data for this study (Potter, Edwards & Wetherell, 1993; Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Wetherell, 1998; Wetherell, Taylor & Yates, 2001). Although global climate change might appear as a purely geophysical phenomenon – and much of the discourse of climate science is described in such terms – the root cause of the climate crisis arises from human behaviour, which is why even physical scientists ultimately speak of “anthropogenic” climate change (Amel, Manning, Scott & Koger, 2017; Hulme, 2008; Pettenger 2016; Yearley, 2006). As such, climate change is intrinsically political, it is no surprise therefore that a human-caused phenomenon of global reach thus will be viewed differently by conflicting interest groups, with radically different perspectives (Hoffman, 2011; Hulme, 2009; Markowitz & Shariff, 2012; Marshall, 2015; Oreskes & Conway, 2010). The analysis below will show these conflicting world views, frames (Grundmann & Krishnamurthy, 2010), or discourses of shared ways of apprehending climate change and its causes (Adger, Benjaminsen, Brown & Svarstad, 2001, p. 683; Doulton & Brown, 2009; Grundmann & Krishnamurthy, 2010; Taylor, 2013). These ways of apprehending the “world” are mediated by language, and language defines the problem and “conflicting discourses” of climate change (Fleming, Vanclay, Hiller & Wilson, 2014; Hajer & Versteeg, 2005; Olausson, 2009; Wodak, 2008).

As a highly contested and politicised issue, this, of course, gives an immediate entry point for discourse analysis which encompasses “all forms of spoken interaction, formal and informal,

and written texts of all kinds” (Potter & Wetherell, 1987, p. 7). Discourse analysis is primarily concerned with the constitutive nature of language (Edwards & Potter, 1992; Potter, 1996), where language does not reflect some theory-neutral world, but rather socially constructs it (Potter & Edwards, 1999). In general, discursive psychology attempts to understand the “action orientation” of language, with objects and events constructed by linguistic rhetorical usage, discursive strategies, “interpretative repertoires,” rhetorical commonplaces (Wetherell, 1998) and by understanding how definitional boundaries are set in discourse (“ontological gerrymandering”) (Woolgar & Pawluch, 1985). In both talk and writing:

rather than seeing such discursive constructions as expressions of speakers’ underlying cognitive states, they are examined in the context of their occurrence as situated and occasioned constructions whose precise nature makes sense ... in terms of the social actions those descriptions accomplish (Edwards & Potter, 1992, pp. 2–3).

In short, discourse has a rhetorical function exhibiting various visions of the world, world views or *weltanschauungs* (Pepper, 1961), that constitute “reality.” This is well illustrated by the differing rhetorical devices employed by the warring “tribes” of mainstream climate scientists and climate change sceptics, where core assumptions about what constitutes “proper” and “correct” scientific discourse are debated (Callaghan & Augoustinos, 2013), as well as the battle of the economy versus the environment (Kurz, Augoustinos & Crabb, 2010). We will see a similar philosophical divide in the analysis of media representations of the School Strike for Climate movement.

1.10. The Data Corpus

The data set encompasses all online articles published on School Strike for Climate in Australia from 3 November 2018 to 29 December 2019 by the Australian mainstream press. This timeframe was selected on the basis of Greta Thunberg's first protest in 2018 up until the most significant protests of 2019.

The search engine NewsBank was utilised during March 2020. A second search was conducted during July 2020 (referred to below as the secondary search) from eight of the major Australian newspaper outlets (see list below) to compensate for articles that were not identified in the initial NewsBank search results.¹

News Corp and Nine Entertainment Co. are the two main media companies that own the major newspapers in Australia. According to a Roy Morgan (2018) survey, the most circulated newspapers in Australia include the following: (1) *Sydney Morning Herald* (Nine Entertainment Co.); (2) *Daily Telegraph* (News Corp); (3) *Herald Sun* (News Corp); (4) *The Age* (Nine Entertainment Co.); (5) *The Australian* (News Corp); (6) *Courier Mail* (News Corp); (7)

¹ In July 2020, when the data was examined in detail, it was noted that NewsBank primarily produced results from regional newspapers, and therefore lacked articles from the eight main newspapers. Some individual newspaper articles were cross referenced on the Newsbank search engine and subsequently were not listed. Furthermore, the NewsBank search also did not yield any articles from the *West Australian* newspaper. Hence, a second search was warranted to contain the entirety of articles on the school strikers.

Australian Financial Review (Nine Entertainment Co.); and (8) *West Australian* (Seven West Media). These eight outlets were therefore chosen for the data search.

The keywords "School Strike for Climate AND Australia" yielded 309 articles from NewsBank and 194 articles from the secondary search. There were 177 repeated and/or irrelevant articles removed from both the NewsBank and the secondary search. In total, this resulted in 326 newspaper articles (171 original articles from NewsBank and 155 from the secondary search). Combined, both searches produced 173 news reports, 100 opinion/commentary articles, 37 letters to the editor and 16 editorials.

Given the large number of articles retrieved, it was decided to limit the analysis to the 100 opinion/commentary articles. A subsample of nine opinion/commentary articles were selected to represent the most recurring themes that were discovered in the data set. News reporting was framed more neutrally, irrespective of the newspaper outlet. In comparison, the opinion/commentary articles contained the most interesting material for analysis in relation to competing ideological representations of climate change and the school strikers. The main objective of the study was to analyse how the youth climate change movement was constructed by the newspaper press in Australia, with respect to both eco-anxiety and climate change.

1.11. Method of Analysis

The methodology that this study followed is the eight-point guide of how to conduct a psychological discourse analysis: (1) decide on the appropriate research question; (2) decide on the appropriate type of data; (3) generate the corpus; (4) transcribe the ascertained data; (5) conduct a preliminary reading to search for action orientations; (6) generate the results; (7) identify cases to support findings and (8) write the report (Goodman, 2017). The analysis was directed by the

two main research questions: (1) how were the school strikers represented by the Australian newspaper press? (2) How were eco-anxiety and climate change constructed in the context of the School Strike for Climate movement? The main objective in the first instance of the analysis was to identify key themes that illustrated particular constructions of identity and representations of the climate activists, eco-anxiety and climate change. Exemplar extracts were selected to illustrate these recurring themes and representations. Appendix 1 provides supplementary examples of extracts in other opinion/commentary articles that embodied the most presented themes found in all of the 100 opinion/commentary articles.

Chapter 3: Analysis and Discussion

Consistent with previous research by Jacobsson (2020) along with Bergmann and Ossewaarde (2020), which found a delegitimisation critique of the student protesters, primarily by the right-wing press, the present study also found that young climate protesters were predominantly delegitimised by opinion/commentary pieces published by News Corp. By contrast, Nine Entertainment Co. media largely legitimised the school strikers in opinion/commentary pieces published in their outlets (see Table 1 for percentages of each newspaper outlet that constructed articles positively or negatively). This was the case for articles published in the *Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Age*. However, the *Australian Financial Review*, mostly framed the school strikers negatively, with a few exceptions.

As will be shown below in the discussion of delegitimisation, the presses critical of the student protesters predominantly characterised them as “children,” immature and too young to have independently formed and justified beliefs. The student protesters are thus manipulated by various adult forces, a point also made by other commentators (Bergmann, 2019; Bergmann & Ossewaarde, 2020; Jacobsson, 2020).

Table 1 presents the percentage of articles either critical or supportive by the Australian media press. This table supports the main hypothesis that Nine Entertainment Co. framed school strikers more positively versus News Corp who presented youth climate protesters negatively.

Table 1

Percentage of Positive and Negative Opinion/Commentary Articles in Newspapers

Newspaper	Negative	Positive
<i>Sydney Morning Herald</i>	0.00	100
<i>The Age</i>	0.00	100
<i>Australian Financial Review</i>	66.67	33.33
<i>The Australian</i>	83.33	16.67
<i>Herald Sun</i>	66.67	33.33
<i>Daily Telegraph</i>	84.62	15.38
<i>Courier Mail</i>	60.00	40.00
<i>Western Australian</i>	50.00	50.00
Other (NewsBank)	0.00	100

Note: Table 1 demonstrates for the 100 opinion/commentary articles examined from the eight major newspapers and the regional newspapers from NewsBank, the percentage of articles where the authors either expressed critical or supportive views of the School Strike for Climate movement.

The discursive analysis below is presented in two main sections: accounts that delegitimised the school protests and those that legitimised them. Consistent with the findings in Table 1, most extracts are taken from News Corp publications in the former, and Nine Entertainment Co. for the latter. Additional extracts that supported the identified themes are to be found in Appendix 1.

1.12. Delegitimisation

A discourse analysis will now be presented with a discussion of the theme of delegitimisation. Opinion pieces that discredited the school protests typically positioned the school students as politically naïve and driven to action by external interest groups including parents, the school curriculum, climate activists and the political left. The analysis begins with three extracts that illustrate these patterns and then goes on to identify the main arguments that were used to accomplish this. These included: the manipulation of “children” using “climate panic” (or what has been defined in this study as eco-anxiety); economic ramifications; the “cultural wars,” and nefarious forces.

Extract 1 is from an article by Bella d’Abrera, the Director of the Foundations of Western Civilisation program at the Institute of Public Affairs; a conservative, neo-liberal think tank. d’Abrera’s article, “Young Eco-Warriors Not Taught about How We Power Democracy,” published in *The Weekend Australian*, has an explicit discrediting rhetoric. In this piece, she argues that “children” are being manipulated because they are fed a diet of “climate panic” at school.

Extract 1: ‘Young Eco-Warriors Not Taught About How We Power Democracy,’ *The Australian/The Weekend Australian*, Bella d’Abrera, 14 March, 2019.

1. The schoolkids missing their lessons today are being raised on a diet of climate panic.
2. There’s little doubt that the prospect of spending a day out and about with friends
3. shouting about Adani, fossil fuels and the Morrison government is infinitely more
4. thrilling than enduring a morning of double maths followed by an afternoon of double
5. science.
6. After all, it’s much more exciting to be an eco-warrior than it is to sit through hours of
7. algebra, or come to terms with acid-base equilibrium systems and their applications.
8. Alas, there is much more to today’s School Strike for Climate than this. The reason why
9. Australian children are out in force is because they have been terrified into it. These
10. young Australians, convinced that many of them will barely make it into adulthood before
11. the advent of a climate Armageddon in 2031, might as well be wearing “The End of the
12. World is Nigh” sandwich boards traditionally favoured by evangelical doomsayers.
13. Australian children are taking to the streets en masse to demand climate change action
14. quite simply because they believe what they are being told. From their first day at school
15. until their last, they are taught an environmental determinist view of human civilisation.
16. The message repeated ad nauseam throughout much of the national curriculum’s content
17. by way of “sustainability”, one of the three ubiquitous cross-curriculum priorities, is that
18. “humans and their natural environment are closely interrelated”.

Lines 19-23 omitted.

24. In this simplistic, neopaganistic narrative, capitalism and coal are evil and should be
25. rejected because they are driving us towards a catastrophic, end-of-days scenario of
26. unimaginable proportions that can be averted only by embracing socialism and
27. renewables.

28. However, few students are taught about the costs that come with climate action. More
29. worrying, it seems this is being deliberately omitted from their education. According to
30. analysis by Copenhagen Consensus Centre director Bjorn Lomborg, solar and wind
31. provide less than 1 per cent of the world's energy, and already require subsidies of \$129
32. billion annually.
33. Institute of Public Affairs research recently found that abiding by the Paris Agreement
34. will cost Australia \$52bn.
35. It's unlikely students will be told about Lomborg's conclusion that the agreement could
36. not only cost up to \$2 trillion but that it will also have no discernible impact on the
37. environment.

Lines 38-79 omitted.

In extract 1, striking school students are constructed as suffering from “climate panic” (1) being terrified into it” (9), and told that they are facing a “climate Armageddon” (11). They are compared to “evangelical doomsayers” (12), donning sandwich board warnings that “The End of the World is Nigh” (11-12). The implication is that children are unscrupulously manipulated and are naïvely believing what they are being taught in the school curriculum about climate change (16-18). Furthermore, their participation in the school strikes is represented simply as an excuse to skip school, in particular maths and science (4-5).

This extract is rich in invective criticism, representing the “children” (9) as being in a revolt against modernity, rejecting Western civilisation, adopting a “neopaganistic narrative” (24) where “capitalism and coal are evil” (24) and where salvation lies in “socialism and renewables” (26-27). Those deeply concerned about the threat of climate change are positioned as embracing a fanatical anti-Christian (“neopaganistic”) religion of apocalyptic doom (25-26).

To bolster her account with purported scientific credibility, d’Abrera quotes well known climate and environmentalist critic Bjorn Lomborg, whose career has involved showing the uncertainty about the existence of climate change and then criticising the economic feasibility of the use of renewable energy sources (28-37). She argues (35-36) that Lomborg has shown that the Paris Agreement would cost up to \$2 trillion and “have no discernible impact on the environment” (36-37).

In extract 2, leading right-wing journalist Andrew Bolt illustrates all of the rhetorical strategies of delegitimisation mentioned above in his article, “Greta Thunberg Sails in from the Fringes of Reality” from the *Herald Sun/Sunday Herald*. The metaphor employed here is that of a wayward political sailor, journeying from the “fringe” of politics to centre stage – illegitimately. The allusion of sailing relates to Greta Thunberg taking a solar powered sail boat to go to the United States from Europe rather than fly by plane, to show that people can travel in a sustainable way.

Extract 2: ‘Greta Thunberg Sails in from the Fringes of Reality,’ *Herald Sun/Sunday Herald*, Andrew Bolt, 4 December, 2019.

1. CHILD messiah Greta Thunberg has finally sailed back to Europe, and the media
2. is again falling for the fakery.
3. Take the ABC, awed that Thunberg sailed back from the United States rather than
4. catch one of the jets she blames for helping to create this “climate catastrophe”
5. where already “people are dying”.
6. It bumbled: “She says she travelled by catamaran instead of plane to ‘send a
7. message it is possible’ to live a sustainable lifestyle.” Er, wait. Doesn’t the ABC
8. check anything in its mad promotion of the climate scare?

9. For a start, sailing between the US and Europe is hardly a sustainable “lifestyle”

Lines 10-18 omitted.

19. What’s more, their yacht had “a diesel engine as a back-up”. Thunberg would

20. have caused fewer emissions had she simply caught a plane. The ABC should

21. have been alert to this Potemkin trip. There’d been plenty of reports that when

Lines 22-23 omitted.

24. The sheer impossibility of living as this absolutist 16-year-old preaches should

25. temper the media’s enthusiasm for treating the sermons of the Swedish sage as a

26. holy blueprint for life.

27. In fact, they should ask who’s taken over the coaching of this child, now on a

28. permanent school strike.

Lines 29-34 omitted.

In this extract, Bolt’s depiction of Thunberg as a “child messiah” (1) is designed to position her as a false prophet. By ridiculing her decision to sail to the United States, he positions Thunberg as lacking common sense and thus credibility. The media, specifically the ABC, is constructed as being hoodwinked by her actions, which is attributed to their “mad promotion of the climate scare” (8).

The journey is referred to as a “Potemkin trip” (21), alluding to her trip as fraudulent. Thunberg is “absolutist” (24) and a “16-year-old” preacher (24), a “Swedish sage” (25) who delivers “sermons” (25) that are supposed to deliver a “holy blueprint for life” (26), but she is in fact a disobedient and recalcitrant “child” (27) on “a permanent school strike” (28). The criticisms here are the same as found by right-wing critiques of Thunberg in Europe (Abdulahad & Nyberg, 2020).

In extract 3, from “Class War in Coal Strikes,” diverts from the previous opinion/commentary pieces in that it attempts to draw out negative ramifications of the School Strike for Climate on the employment prospects of rural youth. In this article rural youth are depicted as victims, vulnerable to the protests of city youth, who do not face the ramification of economic uncertainty that rural youth face.

Extract 3: ‘Class War in Coal Strikes,’ *Courier Mail*, Domanii Cameron, Gerard Cockburn, Stephanie Bennett, 15 March 2019.

Lines 1-16 omitted.

17. “I don’t think they (protesting students) have an understanding of what it is like to live in
18. rural Australia,” Mrs Murray said. “The city kids aren’t listening to the bush kids. It
19. would shut central Queensland down, if something were to happen to the mining
20. industry.” About 5000 students are expected to join the strike in Brisbane, but it’s not

Lines 21-36 omitted.

37. Sara also said the strikers were aware of the impact on coal miners if the project was not
38. to go ahead.

39. “It’s terrible – we do see so many people who do rely on Adani jobs – we need to be able
40. to transition in a way which is comfortable for everyone involved,” she said.

Lines 41-45 omitted.

46. behaviour plan.” Queensland Secondary Principals’ Association president Mark
47. Breckenridge urged parents to think carefully about the impact of “taking a day away”
48. from their children’s learning.

49. “We encourage kids to be at school every day and that parents and students need to
50. consider that in terms of making decisions,” he said.

51. “Any absence of a student is disruptive to their learning.” Rockhampton dad KC

52. Schneider's son Carter, 6, will not be going on strike. Mr Schneider said he did not
53. support the strike action and believed children should be at school to learn.
54. "A lot of those kids are too young to understand what it's all about anyway," he said. "It
55. would be something that's forced on them by their parents. Ever since our towns have
56. been around, there has been mining." Isaac Regional Council Mayor Anne Baker said the
57. coal mining region in central Queensland provided \$1.5 billion in royalties to the state
58. budget each year.

Lines 59-60 omitted.

61. LNP education spokesman Jarrod Bleijie said kids should protest on their own time.
62. "This is nothing more than wagging school and any student who participates in the strike
63. during school hours should be punished accordingly," he said. "If students really believed
64. in this issue let's see how many would turn up on a Saturday."

Lines 65-80 omitted.

The seeming "objective" issue in this opinion piece is that if there is a movement to renewable energy, the already high rural youth unemployment rate will explode, as mining and non-renewable energy jobs disappear, making rural towns real ghost towns. Thus, the article cites rural parents who state their opinion on the matter (Mrs Murray and Mr Schneider). The rhetorical use of reported speech is to enlist the potential sympathies of a reader by personalising the issue with a view of a person who could be "just like one of us."

Here, the narrative is advanced by a father, Mr Schneider, that the youth are too young to understand the issues and are under the influence of activist parents (54-55). Isaac Regional Council Mayor, Anne Baker, expressed concern about damage to central Queensland's \$1.5 billion in royalties. For the Liberal National Party education spokesperson Jarrod Bleijie, the protesters

are just students wagging school, and he says that he would like to see “how many would turn up on a Saturday” (63-64). The narrative here is that the young protesters are not merely ignorant, but insincere, most just wanting an excuse to get out of school.

1.13. Nefarious Forces

In extract 4, John Roskam’s article, published in the *Australian Financial Review*, introduces the theme of the culture wars in Australia. Roskam is the executive director of the right-wing think tank, the Institute of Public Affairs, which has championed the idea that the universities in the West, including Australia, are in the grip of radical left academics (Gorman, 2019). Roskam continues this theme in his article where he uses an example involving university students and the climate strike to illustrate the intellectual crisis at Australia’s universities (6-8), who are engaging in “partisan politics and ideological barracking not disinterested intellectual inquiry” (7-8).

Extract 4: ‘Watering Australia’s Intellectual Deserts,’ *Australian Financial Review*, John Roskam, 26 September 2019.

1. Our universities have given up on diversity of thought. No eco-system does well when that
2. happens.
3. If what happened at RMIT University in Melbourne last week was a one-off event, it could be
4. laughed at as the behaviour of a single rogue academic.
5. But the pity is that the actions of a senior lecturer in mechanical engineering at RMIT
6. University, Hormoz Marzbani, neatly encapsulates the intellectual crisis at Australia's
7. universities. Our universities now engage in partisan politics and ideological barracking not
8. disinterested intellectual inquiry.
9. Marzbani informed his students that if they attended the climate strike, they would be

10. awarded full marks for that day's assessment. The students' work requirement was "All you
11. need to do is email me a group selfie in the crowd". Helpfully Marzbani enclosed with his
12. message the details for the time and location of the strike.

Lines 13-42 omitted.

43. Australia's university students are beginning to realise what's happening because they see it in
44. class every day. According to a survey of 500 students commissioned by the Institute of
45. Public Affairs, 31 per cent of respondents have been made to feel uncomfortable by their
46. university teacher for expressing an opinion. Even more damning, 58 per cent of students feel
47. they are more exposed to new ideas on social media than at university.

Lines 48-56 omitted.

In this article, Roskam expresses “moral outrage” at the actions of a mechanical engineering academic, telling students that if they attended the climate strike, they would be “awarded full marks for that day’s assessment” (10). Roskam cites other examples of academics allegedly misusing their positions in advocating student support of the climate strikes.

The narrative of the universities under siege by the radical left is continued in the article with Roskam quoting a survey of 500 students, commissioned by his own Institute of Public Affairs, where allegedly 31 percent of respondents felt “uncomfortable” for expressing an opinion in class (Mulholland, 2019). We are not told any further details, but we are led to believe that these students’ opinions might well be climate change scepticism, which is the core thrust of the article. The rhetorical strategy to delegitimise the climate strikers is thus wider than what we have previously seen. It entails an acceptance of climate change scepticism, in the context of something of a conspiracy theory about the universities and their scientific output under a left-wing siege.

In extract 5, Gemma Tognini “Kids are being used as Pawns in Climate Wars,” repeats the culture wars theme. The title clearly positions the students as being manipulated (“pawns”) by some dark nefarious forces behind the scenes. The artwork accompanying the article has a tail section of an aerial bomb, seemingly WWII vintage, with a child’s drawing attached to it, illustrating her claim that “small humans have been weaponised for political leverage and political gain” (10-11). This is compared to Joseph Stalin’s weaponising of children during the Soviet era USSR (1-8).

Extract 5: ‘Kids are being used as Pawns in Climate Wars,’ *West Australian*, Gemma Tognini, 13 March 2019.

1. The murderous communist tyrant, Joseph Stalin, knew a thing or two about the power of
 2. education and how it can be used to manipulate.
 3. He famously described education as a weapon, the effects of which depend on who holds
 4. this weapon, and at whom it is aimed. Like I said, he’d know. Stalin wrote the book on
 5. brainwashing under the banner of re-education, filling Soviet gulags with millions of
 6. people whose crimes primarily consisted of thinking the wrong thoughts.
 7. It wasn’t just education, he was the master at weaponising children too. Against their own
 8. families, most of the time. On that point, history is very clear.
 9. Why the history lesson? Well, in the simplest terms I’ve noticed a trend that’s made me
 10. really uncomfortable, that made me think of how at times through history, small humans
 11. have been weaponised for political leverage and political gain. We’re seeing it again.
- Lines 12-58 omitted.
59. Think about that. There’s a reason we don’t let kids and young tenders drive or drink
 60. booze or a whole bunch of other things they can’t be expected to carry the weight of

61. responsibility for.
62. I understand the emotion behind what's going on but in the face of facts (still hotly
63. contested) emotions don't count. In the end Friday will come and go, Maccas will have a
64. spike in sales, but let me leave you with this thought. A protest without cost is nothing but
65. a day off. If we fail to teach kids that standing up for their beliefs comes at a price, then
66. we have failed them greatly indeed.

Line 67 omitted.

In this account, protesters are positioned as too young to be able to “carry the weight of responsibility” (60-61), so once more, delegitimising their opinions. Moreover, Tognini claims that the protests are based upon emotions, which has been manipulated for a political agenda, versus “facts,” which themselves are argued to be still “hotly contested” (62-63). Thus, there is an undermining of the climate strikes by the allegation that the field of climate change is at present scientifically unsettled. By invoking emotion as the primary motivation for the school strikes and concern for climate change, the rational agency of the students is undermined. As Edwards (1999) argues, attributing behaviour to emotion rather than reason is a powerful rhetoric strategy to discredit one's actions.

In extract 6, Clarissa Bye “Hardcore Climate Change Activists Coach Children on how to Orchestrate Massive School Walkout,” gives some more clues about who the agents are that are manipulating the “children” – “Taxpayer-funded eco-worriers” (1). This extract purports to present investigative journalism by the *Daily Telegraph* to debunk claims that the strikes were initiated by the students. Instead, it were being orchestrated by “hard line” leftist activists behind the scenes with support from taxpayers' money. The description depicts a well-oiled, strongly-funded machine at work that is telling “children” (1) what to think.

Extract 6: ‘Hardcore Climate Change Activists Coach Children on how to Orchestrate Massive School Walkout,’ *Daily Telegraph*, Clarissa Bye, 18 February 2019.

1. Taxpayer-funded eco-worriers are coaching children to skip school again next month,
 2. giving them detailed instructions on how to play truant, make posters and organise
 3. “marshals” for a climate change protest march.
- Lines 4-6 omitted.
7. Despite claims the walkout is being “initiated” and “led” by volunteer students, The Daily
 8. Telegraph has uncovered extensive links between the hard line Australian Youth Climate
 9. Coalition (AYCC) and websites providing logistics for the truant day.
- Lines 10-33 omitted.
34. Children’s emotions are also being played upon — they are told to write they “feel sick”
 35. when they see and hear about climate change and to send this out in chain emails.
- Lines 36-43 omitted.
44. Education Minister Mr Tehan said parents have a right to know “who is influencing their
 45. kids, what are their real motives and who is paying for it”.
 46. “The Australian public will be cynical about a so-called student-led strike that is actually
 47. organised and orchestrated by professional activists,” he said. “What is most appalling is
 48. this political group is organising their protest on March 15 when all schools and students
 49. across Australia are being asked to take part in the National Day of Action against
 50. Bullying and Violence to stand up to bullies and support the victims of bullying.”
- Lines 51-64 omitted.

In this account, Bye claims that the AYCC is putting words into the mouths of impressionable young people who are too immature to think for themselves. And the political leaders appeared to agree with this, such as the Education Minister. Thus, the Minister saw AYCC

help as a sinister one behind the student strike which he implicitly compares to “bullying” (47-50). Hence, the “Australian public” (46) should be “cynical” (46) about the entire strike and what it represents, according to the Education Minister (44-50), also endorsed by the journalist Clarissa Bye.

The analysis has thus far has considered Australia’s conservative, primarily neo-liberal papers. We have seen only a brief mention of eco-anxiety, not using that term explicitly, but by reference to panic, produced by external manipulating agents, professional climate activists that have a leftist hatred of Western civilisation, and an agenda to produce a socialist society. The analysis now turns to opinion pieces which were supportive of the school strikes that functioned to legitimise concerns over climate change.

1.14. Legitimation

By contrast to the opinion piece above, left-leaning publications such as *The Age* and *Sydney Morning Herald*, published opinion/commentary pieces that supported the school strikes. The opinion article by Michael Adams, “Greta Thunberg is a True Leader by Every Definition,” strongly contrasts with the articles previously discussed from News Corp.

In extract 7, Adams expressed being in awe of Thunberg when she delivered her critique of government inaction over climate change. He applauded her rise from a lone student holding a climate change school strike to inspiring millions to do the same in the course of a year. This made her not only a feminist icon, but also a target for criticism by large segments in the mainstream media, political figures such as President Trump and parts of the corporate sector. In extract 7, Adams gives a concise summary of the main types of criticisms made of Thunberg to delegitimise her, and consequently, her position on the climate crisis.

Extract 7: 'Greta Thunberg is a True Leader by Every Definition,' *Sydney Morning Herald*,
Michael Adams, 25 September, 2019.

Lines 1-17 omitted.

18. They've attacked her because she is young and, therefore, in their minds, can't possibly
19. understand the so-called complexities of the science or of world affairs.
20. They've attacked her because she has Asperger's syndrome, attempting to exploit society's
21. ignorance of the autism spectrum by claiming she is a "deeply disturbed", "unstable", "mentally
22. ill" teenager. They have even cherry-picked statements from her mother's autobiography and
23. Greta's speeches out of context.
24. They've attacked her appearance by comparing her trademark pigtail hairstyle to that of Nazi
25. propaganda that featured young girls with the same hairstyle and by claiming she was "too
26. emotional to see things clearly".
27. Amazingly, over the past few weeks, seemingly every conservative commentator, every internet
28. troll and every tin hat-wearing conspiracy theorist has thrown one giant co-ordinated tantrum
29. over Greta, all using some form of dehumanising and degrading language to describe her and
30. paint her in as negative light as possible.
31. Under the weight of this constant harassment for weeks on end, even the toughest and bravest
32. of adults would probably have a severe mental breakdown.
33. But instead, Greta responded in a manner that showed she possesses more maturity and
34. leadership than any of her critics. Taking to Twitter, she said:
35. "When haters go after your looks and differences, it means they have nowhere left to go. And
36. then you know you're winning! I have Aspergers, and that means I'm sometimes a bit different
37. from the norm. And - given the right circumstances- being different is a superpower."

Lines 38-47 omitted.

The core critique of Thunberg relates to her being “too emotional to see things clearly” (25-26), which critics may also link to her Asperger’s syndrome, leading to criticisms of her being “deeply disturbed,” “unstable,” and “mentally ill” (21-22). The rhetorical strategy employed by critics is the use of “emotional discourse” (Edwards, 1999), where emotional descriptions of a person are used in a narrative to undermine the rationality of a person’s discourse and actions. Although Adams does not go into detail about this, it is implicit in his article that Thunberg’s critics, whom he is critical of too, are employing psychological and psychiatric discourse, quite illegitimately, since few, if any, of these critics, which he depicts as: “every conservative commentator, every internet troll and every tin hat-wearing conspiracy theorist” (27-28), would have had professional psychological/psychiatric qualifications, without even considering clinical and professional ethics considerations of making such descriptions publicly.

Adams concludes that Thunberg’s critics who, have “thrown one giant co-ordinated tantrum” (28-29), have sought to “describe her and point her in as negative light as possible” (29-30) as a rhetorical strategy of “dehumanising and degrading” (29). Adams applauds Thunberg’s strengths and resolution to defy her critics, quoting her Tweet, where she said, in essence, that when critics need to get personal, focusing on irrelevancies, then we know that they have lost the argument. This, Adams concludes, shows true leadership qualities and integrity, not folding under intense and unfair scrutiny and pressure. Thus, the Adams article attempts to refute the emotional discourse critique of Thunberg, by showing that not only does it miss the mark, but Thunberg’s emotional qualities, such as strength, courage and integrity, far outweigh anything that critics have raised.

In extract 8, Craig Challen 2019 Joint Australian of the Year, “I Feel Duty Bound to Support Striking Students,” praises “younger citizens” (13) for taking such action.

Extract 8: ‘I Feel Duty Bound to Support Striking Students,’ *Sydney Morning Herald*, Craig Challen, 12 March, 2019.

Lines 1-7 omitted.

8. In 2007, a soon-to-be prime minister described climate change as "the greatest moral,
9. economic and social challenge of our time". There seemed to be few voices raised against
10. this sentiment at the time. However, during the ensuing 12 years, successive Australian
11. governments have conspicuously failed to meaningfully address this challenge,
12. succumbing to the power of vested interests, want of courage and political expediency.
13. Our younger citizens represented by the strikers are justifiably appalled at the lack of
14. action. It is no wonder that they feel a need to take matters into their own hands and
15. demand action from the leaders of today. The issue cannot wait until these impressive
16. young people have their turn at running the country.

Lines 17-25 omitted.

26. To those claiming that these young people should be attending school instead of
27. protesting, I say that there are some lessons that cannot be learnt in school. While it is a
28. shame that they will miss classes for one day, the learning that will come from taking
29. responsibility for their futures and standing up for the principles in which they believe are
30. far more important. I dearly hope that their efforts will bear fruit.

Line 31 omitted.

In this account, Challen constructs climate change as a matter of urgency, and to wait until a more ecologically informed generation gains political power is to leave it too late. Thus he

implicitly challenges the right-wing critique of Thunberg and the school strikers as immature and irrelevant, by arguing that the severity of the climate crisis is so great that action is needed now, which is what the young protesters are advocating. As well, Challen counters the truancy argument (26-30) by suggesting that there are life-learning events that add to people's education, and that classroom learning is not the be-all and end-all of learning. Indeed, Challen has a very positive view of the school strikers, seeing them as "impressive" (15) and "younger citizens" (13), indicating that they already have a place in civil society, by contrast to the dismissive view of Andrew Bolt.

1.15. Eco-Anxiety Prevalent Among Students

In extract 9, "Climate Anxiety is Real, and Young People Are Feeling it" was one of the few media articles to discuss eco-anxiety/climate anxiety in the context of the School Strike for Climate [see appendix 2 for extracts of other articles that refer to climate anxiety]. The article begins with the personal example of one first year University of Sydney politics student who is anxious about the planet's future "on a daily basis" (12). Ward then also quotes survey data indicating that climate anxiety is widespread among students (15-19).

Extract 9: 'Climate anxiety is Real, and Young People are feeling it,' *The Age*, Mary Ward, 20 September 2019.

Lines 1-10 omitted.

11. Ms Kaur, 18, says she feels anxious about the future of the planet "to some extent" on a
12. daily basis.
13. "I feel really powerless and helpless sometimes. Because the decisions have already been
14. made, and not knowing what to do with that is quite scary."

15. According to new survey data from youth mental health organisation ReachOut, four in
16. five Australian students report being somewhat or very anxious about climate change,
17. with close to half of those experiencing these emotions on a weekly basis.
18. The survey data, which is not nationally representative, was collected from 1595 high
19. school and university students aged 14-23.

Lines 20-22 omitted.

23. One in five students who took part in the ReachOut survey said they were planning to
24. either not have children or have fewer children because of climate change, a position Ms
25. Kaur identifies with.

Lines 26-32 omitted.

33. In 2017, the Australian Psychological Society released a guide for psychologists to help
34. patients "come to terms and cope with the profound implications of climate change".
35. Approaches recommended by the guide to manage feelings about climate change include
36. expressive coping (such as letting yourself cry), maintaining a healthy routine, and
37. seeking social support from others.

Lines 38-50 omitted.

51. However, she says taking part in the strike and other climate change protests has been the
52. biggest help.
53. "It's helped me to feel like climate change is not completely out of my control."

The Ward article makes reference to the psychological problems of climate anxiety and cites the 2017 guide for psychologists released by the Australian Psychological Society (33-37). A psychologist is quoted who notes that anxiety management techniques (mediation, exercise) may be helpful, as getting involved in a protest (35-37). The article concludes by returning to the University of Sydney politics student who has found that taking part in the climate change protests

has helped the most with her eco-anxiety (51-52): “It’s helped me to feel like climate change is not completely out of my control” (53). The article thus combines professional accounts of eco-anxiety, and illustrative personal accounts, with the former functioning to justify the latter.

There is a stark contrast between the six articles reviewed from the News Corp press and the three more personal articles from *The Age* and *Sydney Morning Herald*. The latter take on a mainstream IPCC-based approach to the climate change issue, accepting that the majority of scientists see climate change as posing an existential threat. Given that the threat is real, the articles, primarily Ward (2019), goes on to investigate the legitimate psychological causes behind the School Protests, namely, that young people are genuinely anxious about the future.

Chapter 4: Conclusion

This study has discussed Australian media newspaper representation of the School Strike for Climate movement, with respect to both the concepts of eco-anxiety and climate change. Eco-anxiety has been seen as a heightened concern that could encompass various degrees of physical and psychological distress about the present environmental and climatic crisis. Major scientific bodies, such as the IPCC have expressed the position that the world is rapidly approaching a climate change catastrophe, and the literature surveyed here on the issue of eco-anxiety indicates that this threat is a real and rational ground for expressions of anxiety and fear. Thus, this study sought to uncover how in the media the youth climate change movement was constructed by the newspaper press in Australia, with respect to both eco-anxiety and climate change.

The study has employed the methodology of a critical discourse analysis to portray the rhetorical repertoires and strategies employed by media commentators, primarily drawing upon the work of Wetherell (1998), an invaluable aid in the understanding of how descriptions are constructed to represent factuality and objectivity, but which may, on closer examination reveal political interests and agendas. With respect to the climate change debate, critical discourse analysis reveals that these competing political interests are based upon radically divergent world views; namely neo-liberalism and political conservatism, which seeks preservation of the capitalist status quo and continuous economic growth of primary importance, versus an alternative ecological/holistic world view, that sees structural social injustices in capitalism, and unending economic growth as responsible for the present ecological crisis.

The conservative/neoliberal pieces have a clearly stated conspiratorial tone, where climate change protests are linked to other primarily left-wing issues associated with social justice. They

see the actions required of radically curbing carbon dioxide emissions as undermining capitalism and crippling markets, holding no hope for renewable energy to fuel a techno-industrial civilisation. Hence, there is a narrative of climate protesters, especially the activists, teachers and academics behind them, as civilisation wreckers, unconcerned about the havoc and misery from unemployment that would be produced if their radical demands, such as those stated by Greta Thunberg, were taken seriously.

The data corpus of the study has consisted of an analysis of opinion/commentary articles from eight major newspapers during 2018 - 2019: (1) *Sydney Morning Herald* (Nine Entertainment Co.); (2) *Daily Telegraph* (News Corp); (3) *Herald Sun* (News Corp); (4) *The Age* (Nine Entertainment Co.); (5) *The Australian* (News Corp); (6) *Courier Mail* (News Corp); (7) *Australian Financial Review* (Nine Entertainment Co.); and (8) *West Australian* (Seven West Media). It was found that News Corp publications, *The Australian*, *Daily Telegraph* and *Herald Sun*, gave strongly negative portrayals of the School Strike for Climate movement, with the percentage of negative articles from those published by *The Australian* being 83.33 percent, *Daily Telegraph* 84.62 percent, and *Herald Sun* 66.67 percent. The vast majority of these articles adopted a climate change scepticism position, if not denying the existence of human-caused climate change, then minimising its effects. There was considerable anxiety about the environmental movement harming the economy. Some commentators saw this as part of a vast left-wing conspiracy that had already taken over the universities and now directly threatened the economy, especially the fossil fuel industry with demands of a transition to ecologically sustainable renewable energy sources.

It was found that newspapers associated with Nine Entertainment Co. were significantly more positive about the School Strike for Climate. Thus, for example, the two leading newspapers,

the *Sydney Morning Herald*, in all opinion/commentary pieces examined were 100 percent positive, and the same for *The Age*. However, the *Australian Financial Review*, also part of Nine Entertainment Co., had 66.67 percent negative articles. That newspaper, though, is Australia's leading economic and financial paper, and is thoroughly within the paradigm of corporate profits and continuous economic growth, as is *The Australian*. These papers are thus producing the discourse that readers expect, as most readers are therefore going to embrace a neo-liberal growth paradigm as well, to various degrees.

Thus, the research results suggest that papers with an orientation towards the right, and with a pre-dominant economic focus, were highly critical of the School Strike for Climate, seeing this as an existential threat to their paradigm since the movement represented a significant number of young people, and hence future consumers. Other papers, which were not bound by this strong economic rationalist editorial imperative were thus freer to offer a diversity of opinion, since a substantial number of readers of the *Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Age* would have more of a left-wing orientation and be more open to the critique of the growth economy made by Thunberg.

The discourse analysis presented here starkly shows a fundamental clash of two world views of the economic and the ecological (Hamilton, 2010). As both the ecological and economic crises of capitalism intensifies in the future, this conflict will intensify (Dilworth, 2009). Furthermore, while this study aimed to investigate media representations of eco-anxiety as a possible cause or motivating factor for the climate protests, media coverage was poor, with often only a passing mention in one or two sentences, quoting survey research, and passing on without further discussion. As climate change is a global threat, and continuing, impacts upon psychological wellbeing will also continue. Future research will hence need to address the longer-

term significance of eco-anxiety, and public and media representations in discourse, in the context of the climate crisis.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Extracts of Supplementary Newspaper Articles

Part 1: Sample of Newspaper Articles that Construct School Strikers Negatively

Extract 1: Furedi, F. (2019, October 25). *In a Peter Pan World, a Little Child Shall Lead Them.*

Retrieved from: <https://www.theaustralian.com.au/inquirer/in-a-peter-pan-world-a-little-child-shall-lead-them/news-story/9dd81ac75b07d7dd12d42d92dda559fd>

Lines 1-11 omitted.

12. The invention of the word adulating is symptomatic of a culture that increasingly portrays the
13. identity of an adult as one no sensible person would enthusiastically embrace. In the Anglo
14. American world, adulthood is portrayed as disagreeable and the responsibilities attached to it
15. as an impossible burden. Young people routinely are warned about the difficulties of making
16. the transition to adulthood. It is no longer what comes naturally.

Lines 17-24 omitted.

25. The unravelling of the authoritative status of adulthood is most strikingly communicated
26. through the increasingly influential narrative that insists “the older generations are to blame
27. for everything” that has gone wrong. Instead of serving as role models, adults often are
28. castigated for setting a bad example to children.

Lines 29-35 omitted.

36. The flip side of Western society’s depreciation of adulthood is its adulation of the supposed
37. wisdom of children.
38. It has become common to invite children to condemn the moral status of the older generation.
39. “Adults have ruined our world” is the headline of an article published by an online magazine
40. targeting children. It warns that “adults are ruining the world we are growing up in” and asks:
41. “How is climate change going to affect us as the next generation?” In recent months the

42. idealisation of the children involved in the school strike for climate movement is justified on
43. the ground that adults have failed to take responsibility for dealing with the problem of the
44. environment. “Adults are failing us on climate change, that’s why I am striking” is the bold
45. headline of a post on the Friends of the Earth website. Youngsters have been more than ready
46. to respond to these invitations to mistrust their elders. Posters stating “You’ll Die of Old Age,
47. We’ll Die of Climate Change” point the finger of blame at slothful adults who supposedly are
48. responsible for the early deaths of their offspring.

Lines 49-75 omitted.

76. Encouraging children to revolt against their irresponsible elders is the inevitable outcome of
77. adult blaming. That is why the former head of the University of Cambridge’s department of
78. politics and international studies could call for children as young as six to be given the vote.
79. David Runciman advocated this proposal on the ground that young people were “massively
80. outnumbered” by the elderly and that this created a democratic crisis that had to be put right.
81. You know intergenerational-relations are in deep trouble when six-year-olds are assigned the
82. responsibility for determining society’s future while their elders are having a laugh about
83. avoiding adulting.

Lines 84-85 omitted.

Extract 2: Bolt, A. (2018, December 2). *Climate Change Protest Kids Need to Hit the Books.*

Retrieved from: <https://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/opinion/andrew-bolt/climate-change-protest-kids-need-to-hit-the-books/news-story/c5495ec53764f9c13171bc2049c2785d>

1. I admire the children who showed such guts and brains during last week’s students’ strike for
 2. “action” on global warming.
 3. No, I mean the tens of thousands — the vast majority — who stayed at school.
 4. I mean the ones who resisted mob pressure, the cheap flattery of the media and the lies of
 5. teachers and green politicians.
 6. As for the students who marched in this new children’s crusade through our cities, their
 7. chants — “ScoMo sucks” — and abusive and poorly spelled signs said it all.
 8. “Scott Morrison you’re so full of sh.t the toilet is jelous [sic]..” read one.
 9. “Princess MoFo,” (Google it) read another, with a picture of the Prime Minister with rouge
 10. and lipstick.
 11. “We’ll be less activist if you’ll be less s..t,” said one (expletive not deleted).
 12. “F... ScoMo.” “FU @ ScoMo.” “F... Adani.”
 13. And with a picture of a melting polar bear: “Act now before they dissappear (sic).”
 14. Yes, many other signs were witty, but at the heart of this protest was a deep ignorance,
 15. shielded by an impenetrable and arrogant self-righteousness.
- Lines 16-55 omitted.
56. That’s what scares me most about this children’s crusade. Students who show no real interest
 57. in the truth, have trouble even spelling and are intoxicated with their moral superiority cannot
 58. be reasoned with.
 59. Argument is their enemy, which is why so many resort instead to abuse and even bullying.
 60. At the Sydney rally, Jean Hinchcliffe, just 14, read out the Prime Minister’s phone number to
 61. the nearly 2000 students and asked them to call it for at least the next week.

62. That's is not reasoning but harassing.
63. But what do you expect when an army of children is on the march, drunk on their power and
64. righteousness?

Extract 3: Shearer, P. (2019, March 18). *Climate Change Rally Triggers Strong Disapproval from the Federal Member for Bowman*. Retrieved from:

<https://www.couriermail.com.au/questnews/redlands/climate-change-rally-triggers-strong-disapproval-from-the-federal-member-for-bowman/news-story/7a2802ce27f54a8cea6bfc1cad48360e>

1. Federal Member for Bowman Andrew Laming has added his voice of disapproval to the
2. students who cut classes to participate in the School Strike 4 Climate on Friday.
3. Thousands of students and supporters poured into Brisbane's CBD calling for action over
4. climate change.
5. But Dr Laming said it was a "complex matter" and the best way for students to understand the
6. issue was with "professional teachers delivering curriculum resources or invited speakers
7. where appropriate".
8. "I'm happy for students to protest outside of school hours but I strongly discourage the
9. politicisation of schools and students," he said.
10. "It is disappointing to see Labor encouraging our young minds to skive off school and rally.
11. Today it's about climate change but where does it stop?"
12. Dr Laming described the protest as "primarily an inner-city rally" and said students from the
13. Redlands Coast had not shown any interest.
14. "The rally only benefits the organisers, not climate," he said.

Lines 15-25 omitted.

Extract 4: Gillezeau, N., & Boyd, T. (2019, September 27). *Cyclone Greta Shakes up the Climate Change Debate*. Retrieved from: <https://www.afr.com/policy/energy-and-climate/cyclone-greta-swedish-teenager-shakes-up-the-climate-change-debate-20190925-p52uo4#:~:text=Hundreds%20of%20thousands%20of%20young%20protesters%20on%20the%20streets.&text=After%20travelling%20to%20the%20United,climate%20summit%20in%20New%20York>

Lines 1-18 omitted.

19. Some business executives were particularly critical of Thunberg's claim that “we are at
20. the beginning of a mass extinction and all you can talk about is money and fairytales of
21. endless economic growth”.
22. Bernard Arnault, chairman and chief executive of luxury giant LVMH, reportedly told an
23. event this week that although Thunberg was a "dynamic girl", this was "catastrophism”.
24. He said economic growth had lifted many out of poverty and should be pursued alongside
25. solutions for climate change.
26. Prime Minister Scott Morrison's response was to warn against fuelling “needless anxiety”
27. among Australian children, whereas Atlassian co-founder Mike Cannon-Brookes
28. encouraged his employees to join the strike.

Lines 29-64 omitted.

65. School Strike 4 Climate national organiser Varsha Yajman, 17, says such engagement is
66. crucial if they want to negotiate with politicians over their core demands: no new coal, oil and
67. gas projects, including the Adani mine; 100 per cent renewable energy generation and exports
68. by 2030; and funding towards a just transition and job creation for all fossil-fuel workers and
69. communities. They are tailoring their communications strategy to be as relevant as possible to
70. each platform and target audience. Yajman, who has just finished year 12 at Gosford High

71. School, says it is all about reaching older demographics, and a promotional video for the
72. strike deliberately included more about the economic aspects of a transition.

Lines 73-95 omitted.

96. But whether you agree or disagree, Thunberg has become the face of a movement of young
97. people protesting against inaction on climate change. They have put an issue of global
98. political, economic and ecological importance firmly back on the agenda.

Extract 5: Hatley, W. (2019, October 17). Thomas Queries Climate-Change Kids. Retrieved from:
<https://thewest.com.au/news/augusta-margaret-river-times/thomas-queries-climate-change-kids-ng-b881354343z>

1. The Liberal Party's Margaret River-based shadow environment minister says last week's
2. school holidays clearly killed the fervour of student climate activists after rolling protests in
3. Perth only "attracted something over 300 people".
4. "Where were the thousands who were glad to skip school in September, today, when the
5. protest was on their own time in school holidays?" Steve Thomas MLC asked.
6. "And does the wider community have any respect for Extinction Rebellion and their antics?"
7. The Liberal MLC said despite small crowds, protesters still "caused significant
8. inconvenience" and "had probably lost more support for climate change than they had
9. gained".
10. Dr Thomas said climate change was an important issue, but the right to protest should be
11. balanced against "public nuisance (that) cheapened the issue and reflected poorly on the
12. organisers".
13. "The Liberal Party takes the issue of climate change seriously," Dr Thomas said.
14. "The Morrison Government is spending billions on emissions reductions."

Lines 15-36 omitted.

Extract 6: Donnelly, K. (2019, March 15). *Climate Strike Proves Educators are Indoctrinating Students*. Retrieved from: <https://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/news/opinion/kevin-donnelly-climate-strike-proves-educators-are-indoctrinating-students/news-story/818a8dc5f8da2fe23d442c80d28f9ef6>

1. That so many primary and secondary students are wagging school for today's climate day
2. strike perfectly illustrates how cultural-left, deep green ideology and group think now
3. dominates the education system.

Line 4-5 omitted.

6. 8 to 15 year old students, many barely able to write a grammatically correct sentence or
7. mentally add, divide, multiply and subtract numbers, are now experts in anthropogenic
8. global warming and are convinced, unless politicians including Prime Minister Morrison
9. act, the world will soon end.

10. Even though the science is complex, contested and far from settled children have been
11. taught to mindlessly repeat slogans like 'coal is poison', 'renewables by 2030', 'half the
12. barrier reef is dead' and global warming is an 'existential threat'.

13. And visit the schoolstrike4climate web page and it obvious where this radical view of
14. climate change originates. Behind today's strike and the push to stop the Adani mine and
15. force costly and unreliable renewables are groups like the Sunrise Project, the Australian
16. Youth Climate Coalition and teacher unions like the Australian Education Union.

17. Not surprisingly, given the AEU is a cultural-left bastion of political correctness, the
18. union fully supports students wagging school on the basis that education is now about
19. promoting student engagement, activism and authenticity.

Lines 20-26 omitted.

27. That education, instead of dealing with controversial and contentious issues in a balanced

28. and impartial way, is now more about indoctrination and group think is proven by the
29. over 600 Australian academics who have signed an open letter supporting students
30. wagging school and taking to the streets.
31. The academics, after stating that the Arctic Ocean is about to be free of ice because of
32. man-made global warming, tells students they must act “to counter the ubiquity of
33. corporate interests and climate denialism in Australia”. So much for educators remaining
34. neutral and not forcing their views on unsuspecting students.
35. Dr Kevin Donnelly is a Senior Research Fellow at the Australian Catholic University and
36. author of How Political Correctness Is Destroying Education.

Part 2: Sample of Newspaper Articles that Construct School Strikers Positively

Extract 1: Biddulph, S. (2019, October 1). Morrison a 'Bad Dad' for Denigrating Young Climate Protesters. Retrieved from: <https://www.smh.com.au/national/morrison-a-bad-dad-for-denigrating-young-climate-protesters-20190930-p52w63.html>

1. Scott Morrison failed an entire generation last week. He dismissed the 300,000 young people
2. and their parents who filled our city streets in the School Strike 4 Climate, as lacking "context
3. and perspective".

4. It was an outrageously insensitive response, and if young Australians were anxious before,
5. they will be doubly so now. They are the most science literate generation in history, and the
6. science says this is the most dangerous time our world has faced. But the leaders of the nation
7. think everything is fine.

8. I was among those young people. They are the generation raised while I was this country's
9. leading voice on child-rearing, and I was so proud of them it brought me to tears. They struck
10. me as the mature ones, their speeches were wonderful, their manner dignified and their
11. demands (no new coal, cutting exports and fair treatment of workers) were moderate and
12. thoughtful. They were the prefects, sports kids, and the thoughtful nerdy ones who get their
13. facts right. Their parents and grandparents were supporting them.

Lines 14-32 omitted.

33. If Scott Morrison were to follow his own advice, he'd pull his children out of school right
34. now. He had better not have any television, newspapers or internet in their lives. They'd
35. better not talk to other children, or there will be awkward questions. Their dad is in charge,
36. and climate inaction, despite some sharp accounting, is not remotely a priority for his
37. government. We are now world pariahs.

Lines 38-46 omitted.

Extract 2: Burgemeister, B. (2019, May 4). 'I want my Childhood Back': Young Climate Activist's Letter to Australia. Retrieved from: <https://www.theage.com.au/national/i-want-my-childhood-back-young-climate-activist-s-letter-to-australia-20190504-p51k2i.html>

1. My name is Bella, I'm 13 years old and I'm a climate change activist and organiser.
2. Growing up in the beautiful South West of WA, I've always been really passionate
3. about the environment.
4. But when I saw a video by the world's youngest Nobel Peace Prize recipient –
5. Pakistani woman Malala Yousafzai – about the global challenge of tackling poverty,
6. inequality and climate change by 2030 I decided I needed to do something about it.
7. You don't have to be an adult to do something positive, so I decided to write a book that
8. would help kids my age to understand the importance of these issues.

Lines 9-19 omitted.

20. So, when I see our Prime Minister tossing around a lump of coal in the Parliament, I know I
21. have to fight back. When I hear both future potential future prime ministers say they support
22. the Adani coal mine, I know I have to fight back.
23. When the state government here in WA opens up an area two-thirds the size of Tasmania to
24. gas fracking, I know that I have to fight back. And I'm not the only one.
25. I'm just one of tens of thousands of kids across Australia giving up part of their childhood to
26. fight for our future because we have so little time to turn around this human made disaster.
27. We've got until 2030 to get serious – that's just three more elections – so we can't waste
28. another term of government.

Lines 29-41 omitted.

42. I want to stop worrying about my future and I want my childhood back.

Lines 43-44 omitted.

Appendix 2: Extracts of Additional “Eco-Anxiety” Newspapers Articles

Extract 1: Titelius, R., & Delalande, J. (2019, September 20). *Perth Students Prepare to take Part in Global Climate Protest March*. Retrieved from:

<https://thewest.com.au/news/environment/perth-students-prepare-to-take-part-in-global-climate-protest-march-ng-b881327614z>

1. Almost one in five high school and university students are losing sleep because of anxiety
2. about climate change.
3. As Perth’s school students prepare to take part in today’s climate strike, a survey by
4. ReachOut Australia and Student Edge reveals 17 per cent of 14 to 23-year-old students are
5. being kept awake at night because they worry about the climate.
6. About 80 per cent of the 1500 students surveyed said they were “somewhat” or “very
7. anxious” about climate change, a condition known as “ecoanxiety”.
8. Dr Kerrie Buhagiar, a spokeswoman for online mental health service ReachOut said it was
9. important for young people to talk about their concerns but said it was crucial to “take a break
10. from social media” to avoid over-exposure to “alarming messages all the time”.
11. Simon Mirauda from national student organisation Student Edge said the effects of climate
12. change were “not just harming our environment” but also creating anxiety for young people
13. “facing an uncertain future”.
14. Australian Medical Association WA president Dr Andrew Miller said while advocacy by
15. children was important, it was a clear sign for parents to “tone it down” if children were
16. becoming anxious about environmental issues.
17. “If kids are feeling extreme emotions (about the environment) they need to take a step back
18. from it,” he said.
19. Children as young as 10 are receiving psychological help over their climate change fears.

20. Leading Australian adolescent psychologist Dr Michael Carr-Gregg said he saw children
21. every week who were afraid about the end of the world.
22. “When your brain is not fully developed there is a tendency to catastrophise,” he said.
23. Perth psychologist Dr Marny Lishman said young children should not be over-exposed to
24. “doom and gloom” and instead required “dosing” or filtering of information about climate
25. change.

Lines 26-33 omitted.

Extract 2: Levin, D. (2019, September 29). *I'm Stressed my Child isn't Stressed about Climate Change*. Retrieved from: <https://thewest.com.au/opinion/rendezview/im-stressed-my-child-isnt-stressed-about-climate-change-ng-769e76b5432883ce57e7c3d391402b28>

1. My eight-year-old daughter doesn't stress about climate change, and it's kinda stressing
2. me out.

Lines 3-24 omitted.

25. If I woke her up every morning with some fun climate facts would it shock her into
26. action? Or would it just make her more anxious about something beyond her control?

Lines 27-40 omitted.

41. I'll cross that bridge when I come to it, but for now I'm pretty happy with my kid not
42. giving a stuff about the climate crisis. That's not to say I don't support Greta Thunberg's
43. efforts, or the thousands of kids she inspired to take the streets earlier this month. It just
44. means I'm not going to be guilted into transferring my climate anxieties onto my child.

Line 45 omitted.

Extract 3: Powell, D. (2019, September 25). *'We're not going away': Patagonia Australia Boss Rebukes Alan Jones*. Retrieved from: <https://www.smh.com.au/business/companies/we-re-not-going-away-patagonia-australia-boss-rebukes-alan-jones-20190925-p52uor.html>

Lines 1-14 omitted.

15. Mr Jones said on Wednesday: "It is irresponsible to be spooking kids (and adults) with
16. claims the earth is facing extinction in their lifetime, like Patagonia did with a full page ad
17. on Friday.
18. "Reputable psychologists in Australia are reporting seeing children regularly who have
19. mental health issues because of climate fear."

Lines 20-43 omitted.

Extract 4: Sahlberg, P. (2019, March 15). *Let the Children Strike as a Lesson to all who Live on this Planet*. Retrieved from: <https://www.smh.com.au/environment/climate-change/let-the-children-strike-as-a-lesson-to-all-who-live-on-this-planet-20190314-p5149j.html>

Lines 1-19 omitted.

20. Third, young people enjoy similar rights and freedoms as we all do. Therefore, we should
21. listen to children carefully when they speak to us about their lives. In fact, increased
22. depression and anxiety that have led to dramatic erosion of children's mental health and
23. well-being around the world is, at least partly, due to their worries about the state of our
24. planet. Active citizenship means having a voice about things that affect their lives.

Lines 25-39 omitted.

Extract 5: Fletcher, A. (2019, March 22). *Humans in the Headlights: Frozen in the Path of a Climate Catastrophe*. Retrieved from: <https://www.smh.com.au/national/humans-in-the-headlights-frozen-in-the-path-of-a-climate-catastrophe-20190320-p515uv.html>

Lines 1-7 omitted.

8. There are many people grappling with this existential crisis. It brings up a cocktail of
9. feelings. Sometimes confusion, sadness and rage. Or numbness, disbelief, and a detached
10. curiosity about what the future holds.

Lines 11-62 omitted.

63. Eco-anxiety and climate grief are becoming a syndrome of sorts, a ‘pre-traumatic stress
64. disorder’, though I think it’s a realistic response to a massively overwhelming and
65. terrifying situation.
66. The scale and pervasiveness of the problem may be so grand that human psyches are
67. simply not equipped to cope. This could explain the general lack of fear, urgency and
68. action in mainstream society. The danger hasn’t quite filtered through to our
69. consciousness – or it has, but our shell-shocked brains are engaging every defence
70. mechanism possible to avoid facing it.

Lines 71-101 omitted.