



The Crisis Down Under

Julia Greenway, Sophomore
PHOTO MANAGER

Over the past few months, a series of intense bushfires have been destroying homes and land across Australia. Bushfires have always existed in Australia, and citizens have found ways to manage them, but due to high temperatures and ferocious winds this year, they cannot be contained.

Just as in California, the fires did not just begin due to climate change, but the effects have been amplified by it. The extremely high temperatures in the country certainly do not help. 2019 was the hottest year on record in Australia, which beat the average temperature by 1.5°C. On December 18th, the temperature reached 41.9°C, or 107.4°F, which was the hottest temperature ever recorded. The carbon dioxide released from the fires traps heat in the atmosphere, which will only make temperatures rise as time goes on.

Every state in Australia is experiencing the fires, but New South Wales and Victoria have been hit the hardest. Nearly 15 million acres have burned so far and do not appear to be stopping anytime soon. Dust from the fires has traveled over 2,000 kilometers to New Zealand. The skies in Australia have turned fiery red and orange hues due to the smoke particles interacting with light in the atmosphere. The toxic air is putting hundreds of thousands of human lives in danger. The included picture shows an example of this apocalyptic scene.



A boy, 11, fleeing the site of fires in Mallacoota, a popular holiday spot in Victoria, Australia. He is one of thousands who had to take shelter on or near the water to escape the blazes.

There are around 70,000 members of the New South Wales Rural Fire Service working to put out the fires and around 3,000 firefighters working everyday, but most of these people are volunteers who are working long hours to fight for their homes. American and Canadian firefighters have been flown in to help the brave citizens of Australia.

In addition to thousands of people being displaced, the wildlife in Australia has been deeply affected. The environmental minister has stated that up to 8,000 koalas, or one third of the koala population in New South Wales, have been killed from the fires. Koalas have already been on the brink of being functionally extinct, and they are now one step closer. It is estimated by ecologists at the University of Sydney that

almost half a billion mammals, birds, and reptiles have died since the fires began. Experts fear that after more devastation from fires, there might not be enough habitat and animals for the species to recover. Smaller species like insects and rodents have been very affected, which could impact the ecosystem in larger ways than expected because the whole system relies on them.

Though it's not likely that the fires will end soon, there are many ways to help both those who have been forced out of their homes and the wildlife in Australia. Celebrities have been begging for help from their fans and have been extremely successful. Celeste Barber, an Australian comedian, has raised over \$27 million for the NSW Rural Fire Service and Brigade. If you are able, please donate to this extremely deserving cause. Any contribution will help.

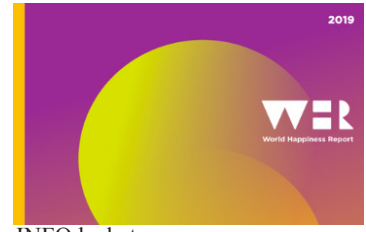
Ranking Happiness

Zoe Gast, Freshman
REPORTER

When the year comes to a close, the Sustainable Development Solutions Network sector of the United Nations publishes a report on the world's happiest countries titled, *The World Happiness Report*. They base rankings on GDP per capita, government-based support, life expectancy, personal freedoms, and government corruption. This year, the UN declared Finland the happiest country of 2019, which keeps the country on top for the second year in a row. The top ten still feature the famed four, Finland, Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, all located in the dark and dreary north. These countries have completely dominated the top of *The World Happiness Report*, and in the last 5 years, none of them have appeared outside of the top 10. With these countries vastly outperforming their peers, the world is left asking: why?

One aspect of life that these citizens enjoy is their government's plentiful resources that help them remain healthy and happy. For example, Denmark, a number one country in the past, has free hospital treatment. Neighbors Norway and Sweden also have co-pay systems that reduce health care costs enormously. This raises general happiness alongside another commodity that the United States lacks: paid maternity leave. All four of these countries rank in the top twenty for government-mandated paid leave in the world. This practice leads to decreased risk of depression in parents and reduced rates of infant hospitalization, both things that result in a lower overall happiness score.

The governments in these countries are able to offer such generous health care because of the way they are set up. These countries work within a system called the Nordic model, which encompasses social and economic policies and reforms. This includes having 30 percent of the jobs in the public sector, as well as a majority being unionized. This cradle-to-grave system of raising taxes to

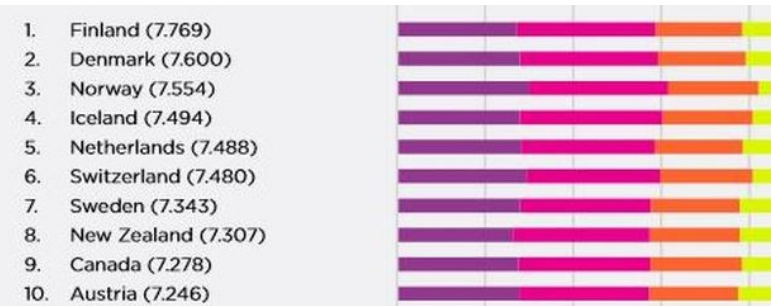


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make medicine and education cheaper also seems unheard of in countries such as the United States. The socialist governments are all rated as some of the most transparent and least corrupt democracies, which is also one of the things measured when the United Nations created *The World Happiness Report*.

Another factor going into the creation of the list is GDP per capita, which is the gross domestic product of the country divided by the total population. A rising GDP is a sure sign of growth and economic prosperity, and it is usually combined with a decrease in the unemployment rate. Thanks to their stable and democratic governments, along with their vast resources like oil and lumber, all four of these countries rank among the top 15 for GDP in the world. Norway is beating even the United States, with all four beating other global superpowers like Germany, France, the United Kingdom, and Japan.

Although these countries definitely still have their problems, they demonstrate a way of life that has its upsides and is benefiting the rest of the world. Since their economies are facing pure prosperity, they're donating foreign aid to help other countries. This year, Sweden spent a higher percentage of their GDP towards aid than any other world superpower, and the country is leading the fight against climate change. Hopefully, the rest of the world will follow in these countries' tracks to help the needy and the Earth, making the world an overall happier place.



The World Happiness Report Ranking from european-views.com

New Year's Resolutions: The Yearly Struggle

Talia Schwartz, Freshman
REPORTER

Have you ever made a New Year's Resolution?

It's January 1st again, so it's time to make your annual New Year's Resolution. In the past, you've been extremely unsuccessful and gave up on your resolution within the month. According to *The New York Post*, only eight percent of people actually achieve their goals, while 80 percent of people fail before the month is over. To me, these statistics are not surprising at all. Through past experiences, I've learned about the difficulty of sticking to these strenuous goals.

Looking back at my previous years, I've never kept a resolution past February, if that. My resolutions have always been pretty basic, yet I can't seem to find success in my annual commitments. For example, my resolution last year was to not cram for tests the night before. At the beginning of the new year, I attempted to stick with this goal. Eventually, I went back to my old ways of frantically trying to study for a potentially hard test at 9 p.m. the night before. I wonder if any of my peers have made a resolution? Let's ask some other freshmen:

Interview #1: Magdalena Rieper

Me: Have you ever made a New Year's Resolution? When?

Magdalena: Yes. I made a resolution last year.

Me: What was that resolution?

Magdalena: To stay on top of my schoolwork.

Me: Did you keep this resolution?

Magdalena: Shockingly, yes. I kept the resolution throughout the rest of the school year.

Me: What is your resolution this year?

Magdalena: To keep my schoolwork more organized.

Interview #2: Ailish Moran

Me: Have you ever made a New Year's Resolution? When?

Ailish: Yes, every year!

Me: What was that resolution?

Ailish: Stop procrastinating with school work.

Me: Did you stick to this resolution?

Ailish: Kind of. I was good for the first two months.

Me: What is your resolution this year?

Ailish: I haven't come up with a resolution yet. I think I'll strive to go to bed on time.

Interview #3: Lauren Bull

Me: Have you ever made a New Year's Resolution? When?

Lauren: Yes, I've made many resolutions throughout my life.

Me: What was that resolution?

Lauren: To eat healthier. I've made this resolution each year since 2016.

Me: Were you ever successful in sticking to this resolution?

Lauren: No. Last year, I gave up during the second week of January.

Me: What is your resolution this year?

Lauren: Don't dwell on the future or the past. Live in the moment!

As you can see, some people are more successful than others in keeping their resolution. Magdalena stuck with her resolution, and it still benefits her today. On the other hand, Lauren failed to achieve the very popular goal of eating healthier. Finally, Ailish was successful at first, but she became less motivated as time went on. Lauren's resolution is very common; studies show that over 55 percent of people who have resolutions set goals related to health and exercise. No matter which resolution you choose, any aspiration is tricky to stick to! I inspire you to participate in striving to make a New Year's Resolution. Good luck!

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