



OUR ICE MAN

Adventurer on big mission for climate change

MICHAEL MCGUIRE

TIM Jarvis understands the public's fatigue when it comes to climate change. But that doesn't mean he is going to accept it.

The Adelaide-based adventurer, who today is announced as *Australian Geographic's* Environmentalist of the Year, has travelled to six continents since January to spread the message about the dangers of climate change.

It's been a big week for Jarvis. He also climbed the 6263m Chimborazo peak in Ecuador as part of his 25Zero project to highlight the disappearing glaciers from the highest mountains spread across the equator. The name of the project derives from a combination of the 25 glaciers that exist at zero latitude — the equator.

Surprisingly his mission to climb the high peaks where the glaciers survive is not about preserving these shrinking slabs of ice. He accepts it's already too late to save them.

Which brings us back to talking about climate change exhaustion.

"The idea is to use interesting content to try to breathe new life into what is essentially getting a tired old story," he says.

"People are very fatigued with climate change. They don't want to see an Al Gore presentation.

"They are fed up with the guilt trip."

As Jarvis sees it, the problem continues to worsen.

"Most people would agree we are starting to see the pointy end of some extreme weather," he says.

"There's stuff off the scale all over the planet, extremes of highs and lows, of rain and drought, cold and hot. It's climate change."

Climbing the soon-to-be-extinct glaciers is Jarvis's way of illustrating this reality.

Last year, he was atop the 4884m Carstenz Pyramid in West Papua during the Cop21 UN climate change conference in Paris.

At the same time, other mountaineers were climbing glaciers in Kenya, Tanzania and Colombia to reinforce the point of 25Zero, with Jarvis beaming a message from the mountain top to the conference.

Jarvis has taken some heart from the outcome of that conference, but retains a level of scepticism about how some of the decisions taken will be implemented.

The good news was almost 200 nations agreed in Paris to take action to limit emissions with the aim of keeping temperature rises below 2C above pre-industrial levels.

Jarvis is delighted an agree-

ment was made — especially one that included developing countries for the first time — but also retains concerns about its implementation.

"At least we have the agreements," he says.

"We have a rough boiler plate, it is flexible, but we have a rough boiler plate of what needs to be done."

The idea for 25Zero was born out of Jarvis's most epic exhibition, when in 2013 he recreated the famous survival journey taken by polar explorer Ernest Shackleton after his ship was crushed by pack ice.

The trip involved a 12-day, 1480km trip across the treacherous seas of the Southern Ocean, travelling in a 7m boat that was not designed to cope with the open sea, to reach South Georgia Island.

Then, when he and his crew mates arrived, they faced another three days traversing the island's mountainous peaks before reaching their destination.

When Shackleton completed his journey in 1916, he had to cross three glaciers which were several kilometres wide.

When Jarvis followed in his footsteps, he found one of the glaciers had melted.

It planted the seed of an idea in his mind.

Jarvis wants to use 25Zero



to reach children in particular. An app has been created that will allow them to climb somewhere like Mt Lofty and have that elevation measured against somewhere such as Mt Kilimanjaro.

As certain goals are achieved, the app will provide information on the local culture, or the people being affected by climate change. It may also be used as a fundraiser to help raise money to help climate change projects around the world.

Jarvis sees in his own two sons — seven-year-old William and five-year-old Jack — a curiosity about the environment and what can be done to help the planet. And Jarvis believes parents, who may be more cautious, can be influenced by their children.

“You could reach 80 per cent of Australians through the kids,” he says.

“There are any number of questions a kid asks (that) can influence the behaviour of the parents. ‘What about solar? Have we done this? Do we buy stuff with palm oil?’ ”

The ever-restless Jarvis has many irons in the fire. He is still lecturing globally on the Shackleton expedition, he has more climbs planned and is keeping busy for a bloke who had pledged to give away the exploring lark after Shackleton.

As he sees it, it would be a dereliction of duty to retire to the quiet life.

“Without sounding really pretentious about it, when you realise you have the opportunity to create some change, you can’t just sit back,” he says.

“What are you going to do? Just sit back and watch things deteriorate when you had the opportunity to do something?”

Which leads on to the topic of leadership.

One of Jarvis’s next projects is to write a book on the subject

of leadership with an expert in the business world. The idea being the expert provides the theory, while Jarvis gives the real-world applications, much of it based on his study of Shackleton and his own experiences.

Jarvis laments the lack of political leadership shown globally, especially when it comes to difficult subjects such as climate change.

He also believes a lack of bipartisanship between political rivals, coupled with the rise of the 24-hour media cycle, the instant judgments of social media and the sheer complexity of the interconnectedness of global problems have cowed political leaders.

Politicians, he says are dealing with long-term problems yet, “are being judged on shorter and shorter lead times”.

“It leads to a situation where you just don’t want to demonstrate much leadership, keep your head down and keep your nose clean and play to the short media cycle and hope the big problem gets inherited by someone else,” he says.





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Page 3 of 3

