PRESENTED TO THE SECOND MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE MONTREAL PROTOCOL ON
SUBSTANCES THAT DEPLETE THE OZONE LAYER, LONDON, 27TH JUNE 1990, BY THE
AUSTRALIAN YOUTH DELEGATION REPRESENTATIVE SUSANNAH BEGG (AGE 17).

We are speaking on behalf of the young people of Australia. We are
here because we have a right to be involved in these decisions.

Over the past week of negotiations, we have been watching you. It
has been at times fascinating, at times confusing, at times horrifying. We
have had to keep reminding each other that what is actually being debated
here is the future of the ozone layer. This debate has been largely guided
by short sighted commercial gains and national self-interest. There has been
more concern for semantics than substance. There has been more self-congrat-
ulation than self-examination. We are appalled that countries like Britain
are claiming to have led the world in international environmental cooperation,
when in reality they have been hindering moves for faster phase-out dates.
If this debate is setting the precedent for tackling the global warming problem
then we can have little hope of avoiding the greenhouse effect.

The scientific imperatives are clear. Only an immediate end to the
use of ozone depleting chemicals will truly reflect the urgency of the situation.
Even if we do this it will be a further sixty years before the Antarctic ozone
hole is repaired. We came to the conference with this knowledge, but it seems
you did not. Your diplomatic compromises are compromising our future.

We have a right to demand a safe future for ourselves and all
generations to come. Shifting money and technology from one side of the
globe to the other is not enough. What is required is a fundamental change
in attitudes, values and lifestyles, particularly in the developed nations.
We insist that over the next three days you make decisions which reflect
intergenerational equity and an active concern for the environment. Remember
that we will inherit the consequences of your decisions. We cannot amend
the Montreal Protocol – you can. You will not bear the brunt of ozone
depletion – we will.

We demand that you think in the long-term. Even the best proposals
on the table now sanction an unacceptable increase in the chlorine loading
of the stratosphere. Your rhetoric is not being matched by your action. Will
you condemn us to a future fraught with skin cancer, eye cataracts, immune
deficiency, depleted food sources and vanishing biodiversity?

At the moment we are afraid. Do not leave our generation without
hope.

Our fate lies in your square brackets.
You are making history.
Have the courage to save the ozone layer.

Thankyou.