To the leaders of the world,

My name is Jack Rowland. When I was twelve, doctors told me I had a degenerative disease called Muscular Dystrophy that would prematurely end my life. At first, I refused to believe it; denial was easier than facing reality. I was in shock. I told myself the doctors were wrong, so I could continue as if nothing had changed. But denial wouldn't give me more time, it wouldn't make me better, and it would, instead, accelerate my degeneration.

I had two choices: keep pretending and ignore reality or fight for my life. I chose to fight; doing nothing was not an option. So, I decided to live my life filled with hope, joy, and authenticity and do whatever I could to slow down the degeneration of my body. I refused then, and I refuse now to let that fear paralyse me. I researched scientific journals tirelessly; I interned at a biotech company in Boston to learn more about the search for a cure; I changed my diet and lifestyle; and launched a GoFundMe campaign to create a website called vitalitypod.com to bring hope and inspiration to others like me.

Today, I am studying for a Master of Public Health degree and have started an internship at Muscular Dystrophy Foundation Australia to positively impact as many people as possible in Australia and the world. I can't control how long I have, but I can control how I use my time and how much I love my life. And I will not waste it. Sadly, I cannot regenerate my body; I can only slow down the degeneration unless a cure is found.

Australia and the rest of our planet are also facing a degenerative disease caused by human overconsumption, pollution and ecosystem destruction. We treat our planet like it's disposable and will take care of itself no matter what we do. But it won't. The science is precise: Earth is heating up, people are suffering the health consequences from ecosystem collapse, those least responsible for the environmental crisis are suffering the most significant impacts, and we are running out of time. You know this. You have seen the reports. The fires. The floods. The mass extinctions. And still, you delay appropriate action. You make promises, but you don't act, or if you do, it isn't fast enough or with the urgency required to make meaningful change. You talk about solutions while approving more coal, more gas, and more destruction. That is not leadership. That is a betrayal of the future generations. We cannot afford denial; we need bold action, and we need it now!

Climate change is not a distant threat; it is happening now. Our planet is running a fever, and we keep pretending it will break on its own. It won't. And so, our oceans have more bits of plastic than fish; our forests are falling silent as species collapse; the ice sheets are melting; our atmosphere has more greenhouse gas than ever in the last million years; and air pollution is killing thousands every day.

It seems you are still in denial. I was in denial, too, but I snapped out of it; we need the same for our society. Most people think we can go on as we have, that someone else will fix it, and that the consequences won't be as dire as the scientists say. But I know what happens when you ignore a diagnosis; it gets worse the longer you leave it, and if we don't act now, our planet will reach a tipping point where no treatment is enough.

I have learned something powerful through my own experience: action matters. Small steps, when taken together, can change everything. I could have given up, but I didn't. And I am pleading with you not to give up on us and our future generations. We need bold leadership. We need policies that stop treating the planet like an endless resource. We need renewable energy, clean air, and protected wild spaces. We need you to act like time is running out—because it is.

I wish I could regenerate my body through effort, but sadly, I can't. That is why it is heartbreaking for me when you have the chance to regenerate our planet but do not take the opportunity to do so.

We all need to do everything we can to support our current and future communities. I decided to overcome denial and take the most positive action I could with my time. What will you do with your time for this and future generations?

Yours sincerely,

Jack Rowland

Fighting for life and our future.

March 12th, 2025