

# THIS IS *George*

'This is George' - Supporting Document

*In collaboration with  
the Minor Foundation for Major Challenges*



## Achieving the aims of the Minor Foundation

To paraphrase the Foundation, studies have shown that not enough people truly understand and/or accept the statement: “EMISSIONS FROM HUMAN USE OF FOSSIL ENERGY CAUSE CLIMATE CHANGE”. Our piece surprises, awakens and educates people about the issue. It provides engaging eye-openers which give viewers the following reactions:

### ‘Aha!’

‘This is George’ draws an unmistakable connection between scientific concepts that the audience ascribe to - photosynthesis, plants’ absorption of carbon - and things that they may not yet know to be true: that humanity’s disruptive activity in the carbon cycle is causing climate change.

Our film will move the audience from one common understanding, photosynthesis, to another, the link between fossil fuels and climate change. It does not require any prior understanding of global warming.

### ‘So this is what it is all about!’

Our submission addresses a broad target group. It presents ideas which are common to all people – grandparents, life and death, the sun and flowers - and focuses on simple, everyday activities such as making tea. These are understandable to everyone.

The impact of daily activities such as making tea are illustrated as being cumulative across both time and space, allowing the audience to understand the connection between their immediate surroundings and the global issue.

### ‘Something has to be done about it!’

Based on the present body of literature on the psychology of climate change communication and viral marketing, our idea’s impetus comes from putting people in a gain condition.

Gain condition describes a communication technique where audiences are shown what they have to gain, thus removing psychological barriers which may normally exist in the context of communicating climate change.

Viewers will feel empowered to discuss and engage on climate change because they will have a new-found literacy in the concepts surrounding the issue.

### ‘I have to share this with the people in my network!’

People will have the opportunity to share in a short, fun and high-quality video, which will make the connection between the burning of fossil fuel and change in the earth’s climate. They will be compelled to share their ‘Aha’ moment with their networks.

The script is informative but does not preach to the audience. It plants the seeds of new ideas within their existing frameworks and alongside facts they believe to be true.

The ‘share-ability’ of the piece will be enhanced through the below ideas for the further development of the project.



## Vision statement...

*It is our vision that our simple story of George, his grandparents and a sunflower will communicate the reality of climate change by helping to reinvigorate people's connection to natural things and remind them that we're all in this together (even the sunflowers!)*

### ► Further development of the project

*This is George* will be connected to a website [www.thisisgeorge.com](http://www.thisisgeorge.com) which will house resources and content for further learning as well as a community of people who are interested in the message.

To engage people beyond the animation we will create short pieces of interactive content in collaboration with Change2. Change2 is a specialist digital communications company that aims to inspire, engage and empower sustainable thinking and practises. They do this with online tools, games and active learning content. Change2's clients extend across the government, education, utilities, life sciences and financial services sectors. Their work has won seven major awards in the last 3 years, including the LearnX Asia Pacific award for Best Green Learning three years in a row.

We envisage a game that commences with the player entering their name; the game then becomes 'This is Sally' and the players own profile picture is embedded into the game. They can also select their favourite plant or flower. Beyond this, we have a number of ideas for the nature of this game:

1. The game runs players through the animation, pausing at points throughout, allowing people to select elements of the story to read more information. At these points people can also post to their wall a 'Did you know?' fact or 'What do my friends think?' Facebook poll.
2. Parts of the story are not shown. You can 'unlock' these elements by sharing the content to your Facebook page. Group activities and challenges are completed by collective involvement of your online social network, such as a group commitment to action.
3. Using Facebook login, the player's friends (via their Facebook profile pictures) feature in the narrative. In the game, friends of the player are engaging in behaviour which we wish to inspire.

By integrating a game with the user's social network via social media, each of these ideas seeks to activate the

principles of normative messaging and social norms, proven to be effective in producing socially beneficial conduct.

Gamification has been a key element of much of Change2's work to date and has been used by them to great effect in corporate staff engagement programs with an average of over 85% of staff reporting improved understanding and a desire to get actively involved in sustainability. A game-based program rolled out by Change2 at Bayer's Sydney office resulted in all 200 staff stating that they would recommend the experience to others, and was reported to be the most successful staff engagement campaign in Bayer's global history.

Facebook has been chosen as a platform to integrate with due to it's a reach of 800 million people worldwide (as of September 2011). The game will be simple enough to be played by children and people new to computer technology. It is engaging for a broad audience - school children up to world leaders - because it involves 'you', and your own friends, family and networks.

We will leverage and build on the broad audience of the UNFCCC conference in December by having a website live at this time where people can sign up for updates and stay connected to the project via social media channels (according to the Foundation's guidelines). When the project is further developed, we will be able to reconnect with this audience and further engage them in the distribution of the film.

*“I would not give a fig for the simplicity this side of complexity, but I would give my right arm for simplicity on the far side of complexity.”*

– Oliver Wendell Holmes

## ► Creative Principles

### Simplicity

Clarity among confusion around a complex issue  
Luxury in simplicity and ‘profound’ simplicity

### Nature as character

- Strong natural colour scheme
- Natural beauty
- Examination of the circle or wheel of life
- Celebration of diversity but also commonality between plants, humans and all living beings.
- Sensory experience of soaking up sunlight, water, and air is something felt by all things in nature.
- We would like to help the audience to recall this sensory experience while watching the film.

### Connectedness

- Of humans to nature
- Of one thing to the next - everything comes from somewhere and affects something else: light switch, to electricity, to power station, to mine, to coal, to flower, to sun, to air, to carbon, to tea, to cup to supermarket to farm etc. Everything to everything!
- Employment of visual mechanisms to make these connections

### George

- The ‘everyman’, a person who can be related to universally.
- Moves between suburbia and the natural landscape.
- George is connected to big picture and the big picture connected to George because everything is connected.

### Uplifting

- Assume knowledge and intelligence in the audience, give them benefit of the doubt & let them use their imagination.
- Don’t overwhelm with figures of enormity or scale of the problem.
- End with message that ‘there is a better way’.
- People are smart and deeply knowing, we have simply gone off track.

### Tone

- Matter of fact, deadpan humour.
- “See, it’s simple. It’s simple, see”. Particularly when explaining ‘scientific facts’ eg. photosynthesis or the greenhouse effect.



*The group of people behind 'This is George' is a group of amateur thinkers, producers, designers, animators and artists who do not belong to any organisation but have formed an organic, collaborative yet very dedicated group.*

### ► Our Story

Although the group started with a core team of (4) individuals (Sally, Peter, Jess & Georgia) driving the vision and aims of this project, we have since grown organically into a collective of 15 collaborators working mostly remotely. Each person involved has contributed something unique to the project, all under the expansive vision and creative direction of the core team.

All members of the team also held other jobs, most in full-time employment, while completing the project.

Our communication piece involves primarily animated photographic collage, combined with illustration, typography and data visualisation.

### ► Our Team

The project engaged the following people:

Sally Hill · Producer & Director  
 Peter Bjerregaard · Writer  
 Yvonne Lee · Producer  
 Jessica Leonard · Graphic Designer  
 Georgia Hill · Typographer & Illustrator  
 Mikel Longa · Graphic Designer  
 Marianne Elliott · Graphic Designer & Illustrator  
 Adrien Girault · Animator  
 Ai Ikeda · Animator  
 Monique O'Halloran · Animator  
 Gabriel Virata · Animator  
 Bart Elsmore · Sound Editor  
 Duncan Underwood · Voice Talent  
 Doug McLean · Voice Talent  
 Marko Iljadica · Photo Talent  
 Sunflower from Harris Farm Markets · Photo Talent

