

have to be seen by the farmer to be profitable or to protect the long-term viability of the farm.

While many landholders are increasingly interested in retaining their remnant bushlands, they need technical information and financial incentives rather than information aimed at raising their awareness of its value. Landholders generally are very concerned by "dieback", the loss of paddock trees now occurring over a vast area of southern Australia. A chapter on this subject identifies the many complex potential causes of "dieback" ranging from waterlogging,

drought, damage by possums and insects. It highlights the essential need for further research to establish the causes of "dieback" in various situations and to identify strategies which would enable existing trees to be protected or to be re-established.

This book is a unique reference for students, teachers and the general reader on the Australian temperate woodlands. It pinpoints the need for further vital research work and above all it is a "wake-up call" at a critical time to inspire the community to action.

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## You are the Earth

**D. Suzuki and K. Vanderlinden, 2000.**  
**Allen and Unwin, Australia.**  
**128 pp. ISBN 1 86508 178 7.**  
**RRP AUD\$18.95.**

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THE communication of basic environmental principles to children should begin at an early age to solidly embed the awareness of human connectivity to the Earth. Everyone is connected to the Earth by the air, the water, and the food they consume. Thus when we degrade the earth, we inevitably degrade ourselves. This is Suzuki and Vanderlinden's strongest message.

*You are the Earth* is a book aimed at teaching young children (5–12 yrs) foundation environmental concepts. The overall approach of the book is based upon connectivity, in that human activities affecting the environment will eventually affect the human population, at the levels of both the individual and society.

Suzuki and Vanderlinden cover topics such as the air cycle, the water cycle and water conservation, soil science and the importance of soils for food, the sun and photosynthesis, and biodiversity and species extinction. Finally, Suzuki and Vanderlinden give a snapshot of the Earth today, and how individuals *can* make a difference.

The teaching of these concepts by Suzuki and Vanderlinden is utilitarian, in that minimizing human effects on the environment will ultimately benefit humans. This focus parallels society's economic focus of maximizing returns from the

environment. I was disappointed that the intrinsic value of the environment, the value just for existing, was not emphasized in this book. The teaching of intrinsic values, a cornerstone to environmental philosophy, should have been a major focus of the book. The failure to cover this results in what could be coined as a failure to teach children a significant segment of morality. Perhaps this viewpoint was the easiest way to rationalize resource conservation to children of a predominantly resource consuming and economically driven society? However, despite this utilitarian viewpoint, the overall message of resource conservation is still very positive and makes a significant contribution to environmental education.

The book finishes with a questionnaire to test children on the environmental concepts iterated in the book, and a series of fun experiments and activities that apply some of these concepts. This final structure enables the book to be used as a text book for primary school students, with learning supported by corresponding activities.

The focus of the book being for young children should not suggest that these foundation environmental concepts would be familiar to adults. When reading this book, I postulated that even my parents would likely not understand basic concepts such as the water cycle or photosynthesis, and thus do not understand how the Earth truly operates. It is likely that environmental awareness among adults, similarly to my parents, fall well below even the basic foundation environmental concepts. Because of this, *You are the Earth* would be an excellent addition to the bookshelf of parents, as well as their children.

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