

PUBLISHED VERSION

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Four degrees of global warming: Australia in a hot world. Edited by Peter Christoff.
Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2014, 268 pages, paperback, ISBN 9780415824583
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bring richness to the alluvial soils and are sources of water, but they can also be dangerous” (p. 7).

Four key flood events and their impacts on a specific town and its surrounding region are examined in detail. These are Gundagai 1852, Bourke 1890, Mildura 1956, and Cunnamulla 1990. Another important focus is how attitudes and approaches to managing floods have changed over time.

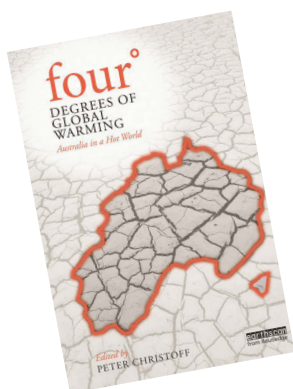
Clearly labelled subheadings and a comprehensive index makes locating relevant material easy. The introduction contains a very good description of the geographic characteristics of the Murray-Darling Basin while the text is supported by a range of visual materials including maps, and black and white and colour photographs.

Flood country is a thorough and comprehensive resource. It is definitely a teachers’ resource, especially for teachers in Victoria who may be looking for different case studies to use in Victorian Certificate of Education Geography Unit 3. The spatial concepts of location, movement, spatial interaction, region, and spatial change over time in particular are very well covered.

Relevant topics include the differing perceptions of how water in this region may be a resource to various groups including graziers, irrigators, engineers and townspeople, how this scarce resource should be managed, and the conflicts that may arise. The issues of sustainability and future resource management in Australia today and in the future are also addressed.

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Four degrees of global warming:

***Australia in a hot world.* Edited by Peter Christoff. Abingdon and New York: Routledge,**

2014, 268 pages, paperback, ISBN 9780415824583.

<http://www.taylorandfrancis.com>

This edited review of the current knowledge of Australian climate change projections, potential impacts, and adaptation opportunities provides a unique summary of current knowledge on the topic. The specific focus on Australia makes it an excellent resource for educators wishing to draw from a single text to support a unit of enquiry at senior high school or university undergraduate levels.

While there are numerous strengths in this highly relevant book, in my opinion there are also limitations which would need to be acknowledged within an education setting. In particular, the book meets its central aim of making “us aware of the likely social, ecological and economic implications of the catastrophic climate change for Australia and its region” (p. 1). However, as a compendium realised by the Australian climate establishment, it needed to do more than that to be the vital educational text on the topic – it needed to also engender a sense of hope that there is a place for young Australians to engage with and transform society to mitigate climate risks and adapt to change.

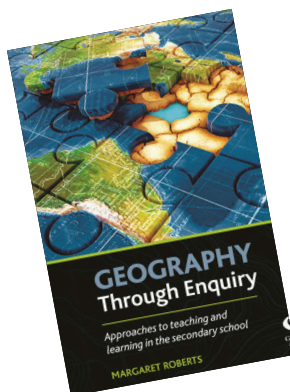
The book’s great strength for use in geographical education is that it brings together papers from elite Australian climate change researchers, each presenting a summary review of issues within their respective fields. The well-structured chapters are generally highly readable and relevant to Australian students. That said, at times a strongly academic writing style is used and more could have been made of figures, tables and diagrams if the work wished to engage younger readers. In fact, several of the black and white figures are difficult to interpret.

That brings me to my major criticism – the work does not innovate significantly beyond freely available material on climate change in Australia. As such, *Four degrees of global warming* presents an excellent review of climate change risks for Australia, but leaves the reader with a sense of impending doom. The book does not sufficiently develop the agenda for reversing contemporary governance failures at Australian or international scales and the reader is left with the feeling that if key Australian academics in the field are not articulating an effective response to this catastrophe, then who is? For that reason, a teacher would need to carefully frame learning around the text to avoid the *death* geographies of climate change and bring students to an understanding of the implications for their local places and systems.

I think this is a valuable, succinct review of climate change for Australia, but it is surprisingly conservative given the editor’s outstanding history in pushing the envelope in environmental politics. The awful future presented by this book needs a manifesto to support young Australians – who have the most to lose – lead a revolution in thought and action that will allow them to survive and thrive through a period of climate change. Perhaps that will be the theme of Professor Christoff’s next book!

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Geography through enquiry:

Approaches to teaching and learning in the secondary school.

By Margaret Roberts. Sheffield: Geographical Association,

2013, 208 pages, paperback, ISBN 9781843773375.

<http://www.geography.org.uk>

A compelling contemporary read given that enquiry underpins many learning areas and subjects in curriculum frameworks around the globe such as in England, Singapore and in the Australian Curriculum. This textbook is primarily for teachers and pre-service teachers and it is “written for people interested in the geographical education of students aged 11–18” (p. 4).

The author notes inquiry is undertaken in many areas in addition to geographical education. Indeed this book is highly relevant for all teachers interested in further honing their knowledge and skills in teaching and learning using enquiry