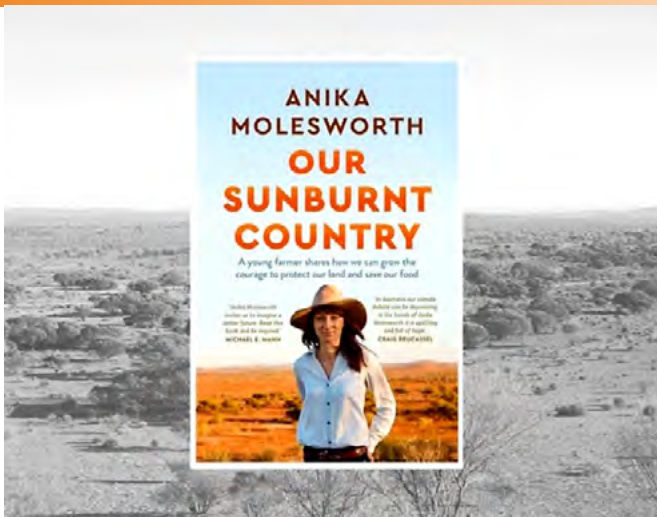


HOPEFUL GEOGRAPHY: BOOK REVIEW



OUR SUNBURNT COUNTRY by Anika Molesworth

A review by Simon Mustoe, author of *Wildlife in the balance*

August 20, 2022 – <https://simonmustoe.blog/my-sunburnt-country-by-anika-molesworth-a-review/>

Our Sunburnt Country is Anika Molesworth's story about hope and the potential to build a better world. Based on her own story of living on a remote Australian farm near Broken Hill Anika has a deep understanding about the impact of climate change on the land.

A scientist specialising in agriculture and environmental management, Molesworth has built a career on innovation. She has seen first hand, both the beauty and harsh reality of how climate change affects land. Molesworth is now on the board of **Farmers for Climate Action** and founded the organisation **Climate Wise Agriculture**. Both organisations seek sustainable alternative farming methods, to respond to, and address, climate change.

Imagine a better place to be

Our Sunburnt Country sprouted from the raw imagination of a child who grew up living in a place they learned to love. What it became was a manual for healing, both Molesworth's own mind, and the land she is connected to. The book is an extraordinarily personal account and thoughtful insight of someone striving to be a good citizen of Earth. Best of all, it challenges us all to do the same, to put our raw imagination to work and make things better.

Poverty of imagination and inability to tell better stories locks us into a world of despair from ecological ruin ... when we believe something is possible, then we act like it is too. So, we must practise telling different narratives, better narratives, ones that illuminate an inspiring vision in ourselves and the people around us.'

Anika Molesworth, 'Our Sunburnt Country'

'Courage is not to shy away from reality. Courage is to know reality. To learn it and to still imagine something better'

Global food systems are **inextricably linked to wildlife and ecosystems**. Molesworth explains that "we have ... most remarkably, managed to deceive ourselves that the fitness of **ecosystems** and population of wild plants and animals does not affect what we find on our plates".

In a series of short chapters, **Our Sunburnt Country** steps the reader through problems and then the solutions, to protect our land and save our food.

Have the courage to do something

Despite the complexity of the world around us, the solution to environmental problems is not unimaginable. A landscape that is replete with wild animals and plants, where our food system shares a space with shade-trees, rich grasslands, bountiful rivers and thick soil, can be remade.

Without this. Without the food we eat, we are nothing. Our consumption is what connects us to the land. It's our reason for existing and our need for survival at the same time. *There is hope as long as we believe we can still make a difference.*

May your courage inspire the world.
Anika

Inside the cover of the book Anika had written 'may your courage inspire the world'.

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'Courage is not to shy away from reality, block our ears and bury our heads. Courage is to know reality. To learn it. To stand with it. To mourn it. To have one's heart broken by the horror, the injustice, the pain, and to still imagine something better – an alternative reality.'

Anika Molesworth, 'Our Sunburnt Country'

Act now

Our fear of the future makes us hold onto the past, without thinking about the present. Our global food production is vulnerable to collapse, but we can – and must – build a better world. Courage is how we confront fear. Despair is the enemy of innovation.

Each day that goes by we are all subjected to the algorithm-fuelled echo-chamber that is social media. Here, most people share their despair about the world. It's an addiction. But the future is in our hands. **There's no point despairing about what might be.** We know what to do and when to do it. As Molesworth says:

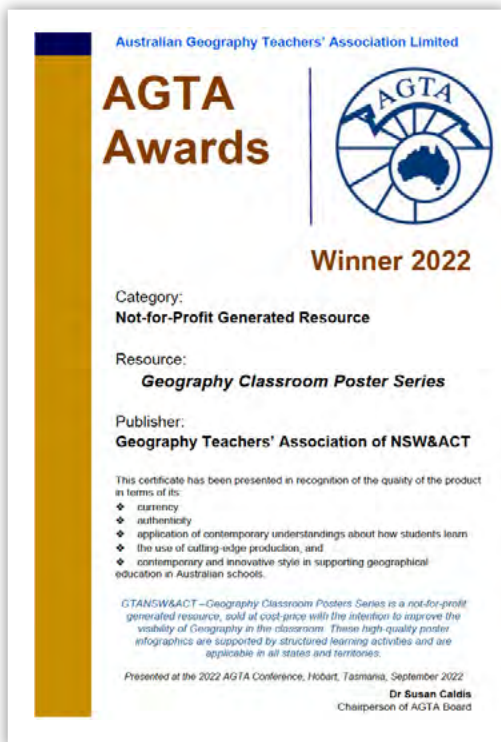
'Learning from the past and looking to the future, we realise that we need to act now.'

There are plenty of books out there about the problems in the world. The less well-known reads, the ones we need most of all of our own health, sanity and future, are written by people too busy making a difference.

Thank you, Anika Molesworth for having the imagination and courage to write a rare book. One that gives hope and offers a new way of thinking, with thoughtful and practical insights into things we can all do.



Image source: <https://twitter.com/AnikaMolesworth>



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