

Tread gently for the future

New book provides plenty of tips to minimise impact on the environment

Angela Crocombe considered herself environmentally aware. She recycled, caught public transport and took green bags to the supermarket. Yet when she took an ecological footprint quiz online, she discovered it would take 13.8 hectares planted with trees to offset the carbon generated by her lifestyle.

"None of us are doing as much as we could be doing," she says. "It doesn't cost a lot of money; a lot actually saves money and can be good for our health."

At the time the East St Kilda resident was undertaking a writing course at RMIT and was required to come up with a concept for a non-fiction book.

"I was really depressed watching the news ... and climate change was starting to really hit the headlines,"

she says. "I wanted to make a difference. I went on a journey to find out what I needed to know and put the information in a form to help other people."

Her book, *A Lighter Footprint* (Scribe), was launched last week at a carbon-neutral event at the 60L building in Carlton.

Crocombe attributes her passion for the environment to an "idyllic upbringing" on the outskirts of Sydney on the edge of a state forest.

"I spent days running around in the bush, and as a result I appreciate the natural environment and animals," she says.

Crocombe became a vegetarian at a young age – she now eats seafood and describes herself as a vegequarian. She is concerned with animal welfare issues and has hiked extensively in

New Zealand, Tasmania and Victoria.

"Although I live in the city, I am passionate about protecting the environment ... on a global scale."

While science is not her field, Crocombe is familiar with the publishing world. By day she works for Penguin selling overseas rights to Australian titles, and by night she freelances – she has written eight children's titles for Harcourt Education and numerous magazine articles.

A Lighter Footprint is organised in sections, enabling readers to "dip in" and "dip out". Crocombe covers areas such as water, energy and building and renovation, but also looks at personal care (including cosmetics, toiletries and fashion), purchasing appliances, organising events, carbon offsetting, travel and investment. Since writing the book, Crocombe says



TIM BARKER

Snapshot

LIVES East St Kilda

CAREER Has worked in a factory cutting cloth for police uniforms, and worked on an assembly line at IBM

FAVOURITE FILM *An Inconvenient Truth*

HOBBIES Going to arts and theatre performances and bushwalking

INSPIRED BY Al Gore and Tim Flannery, author of *The Weather Makers*

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the major change she has made to her own lifestyle involves travel.

"When I fly I offset the aeroplane emissions," she says. "And I don't fly unless I absolutely have to."

According to Crocombe, the easiest changes that people can make are to stop using plastic shopping bags and to make the switch to Green Power.

She says the book provides links to further information for the more environmentally aware.

"There will be radical changes to our environment in the next 20 to 50 years; it's not long at all," she says.

"We are approaching the tipping point and need to become aware and start pressing politicians on this