

Book

Climate Change Denial: Heads in the Sand

Haydn Washington and John Cook
Earthscan, London, 2011

Reviewed by
Janine Kitson

Climate Change Denial explains how, as climate science has become more certain, denial has increased.

Dr Haydn Washington and Dr John Cook are two Australian environmental scientists committed to communicating to the public the crisis of climate change and debunking the arguments of global warming 'scepticism'. John Cook's website www.skepticalscience.com is an excellent resource for teachers to calmly and systematically debunk the arguments used by climate deniers.

Washington and Cook argue that denial has become dangerously pathological because it endangers the ecosystems humans rely upon. Species are threatened with extinction, cities with floods, and many more in the world will suffer water and food insecurity. The book examines the nature of climate change denial, its history, the attacks on the integrity of climate scientists, and how society needs to combat these negative forces and immediately act on addressing the crisis of climate change.

The book examines not only the main climate-change denial arguments; it reveals how there have been lobby groups, funded by fossil fuel companies, that have systematically set out to confuse the public.

Climate change is, according to climate historian Naomi Oreskes in her foreword to the book, "an established scientific fact. In over 10,000 peer-reviewed scientific papers, as well as thousands of pages of summary produced by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), scientists have demonstrated that atmospheric CO₂ has increased, and global temperature has increased too." Yet despite this information being available, public apathy remains. There are many educated people who will not accept climate change despite the availability of information. Washington and Cook argue that this is because of psychological, emotional and behavioural barriers.

Climate change denial began in the 1980s, and it continues to this day. It has been systematic, well-organised, well-funded, and essentially argues for 'business as usual' based on growth, consumerism, pollution and fossil fuels. It is not based on science but is an ideological and economic argument rooted in free-market principles and opposed to government regulation. Many of the same groups and individuals who challenge climate change use similar methods that the tobacco industry used to debunk the health dangers of smoking. Denial lobby groups have found willing scientists to pose questions, make counter claims and cherry-pick evidence to create a culture of confusion which the media has supported.

David Suzuki has written for years that our affluent consumer society does not take into account the environmental damage and loss that future generations will have to pay. Climate change is an acknowledgment that our industrial consumeristic society cannot continue forever. Washington and Cook regret that schools represent a huge missed opportunity to combat consumerism, and fail to teach a basic understanding of ecology.

Despite Australia's recent floods and 'Inland tsunami' very few are willing to make the connection with climate change. Leading US climatologist James Hansen believes that the forces for 'business-as-usual' and fossil-fuel interests will seek to ensure that any climate-change agreements reached will be minor steps. He concludes that the real battle by young people for their future is just beginning.

This is a crucial book to read before runaway climate change is truly beyond our control. One can only hope that this book will be read by climate deniers so we can start the challenging journey to an ecologically sustainable future. The book finishes on a positive note:

"Climate change action is not about doom and gloom: it's about a new future, new technologies, new markets and a new world view of how we can live on Earth. It won't be simple or easy, but if we can face and conquer our denial, then our future is exciting as we make a better world."

Janine Kitson teaches at West Ryde PS.

Corkscrew

Reviewed by
Jim McMahon

Part of the fun of judging at the San Francisco International Wine Challenge is getting together with the many friends I have made over the years.

After the show we often hit the bars and restaurants of San Francisco or I visit them at their respective wineries and taste their wines first hand. It's always great to pop up to the Napa, Sonoma or Russian River valleys to seek out small vineyards hidden away and then taste the wines. One such vineyard is Amuse Bouche on the top of Atlas Peak. The road leading to it comes off the famed Silverado Trail (Hwy 128), a road running parallel to the main Napa Hwy 29. At night you can see Sacramento in the distance and it has vineyards on all sides of the peak with the main house sitting majestically in the centre of the property. The wines emanating from this vineyard and others in the Napa generally go to private sale or are consumed by savvy Chinese or Japanese buyers who know what's what when it comes to buying fine Napa Valley wines.

Another winery you should visit if you find yourself in this part of the world is Duckhorn which is situated at Lodi Lane, St Helena. Duckhorn is one of the top wineries in the Napa Valley with wines that are simply sublime, for example, their 2007 Golden Eye cabernet sauvignon which is so rich and multilayered with fruit it will leave you in awe, as will their 2007 Golden Eye merlot.

Another vineyard is Sterling at the top of the Napa Valley (if heading north from San Francisco). This vineyard could be something out of Disneyland — you take a cable car to the top of the hill and when you alight you tour yourself through the winery with pit stops of cellar door people offering you wine samples each step of the way. Like all things in California, a fee is involved but the view down the valley is spectacular.

If sparkling wine takes your fancy then Schramsberg winery situated in Calistoga is the place to visit. This winery has arguably the best sparkling wines in the US which have been served to many American presidents over the past century. The tour of the winery goes on the hour and is fantastic.

Over in Sonoma Valley (west of Calistoga, 40 minutes away by car), you must visit the cellar door of Sebastian. In addition to the wine tastings, the wine paraphernalia available here will blow you away.

Kendal Jackson is another winery you should visit; the cellar door of the rambling old house is a must for wine tasting.

Should you not have the time to visit each winery, the Sonoma main square offers tasting shops where many wines are available. Expect to pay anything from US\$20–\$120 for a flight of four wines.



The Westend Estate 2009 3 Bridges durif is a full bodied wine which, while not part of the usual lexicon of red wine grapes, is enjoyable all the same. Deep inky blackpurple in colour with an inviting pink hue, the nose offers spicy blackcurrant fruit with plummy flavours showing through. The palate is rich with rhubarb, spice and Bramble berry fruits together with hints of dark chocolate and vanilla playing a deft hand with the nicely balanced oak. The finish is firm with silky, soft tannins. With careful cellaring, this wine will go the distance for a decade or more (rrp \$20).



The Westend Estate 2009 3 Bridges Golden Mist botrytis is another style of wine that Westend Estate is famous for — a dessert style botrytis wine. A bright amber colour gives way to an aroma of marmalade, apricots and citrus.

The palate is richly textured without being drying in the mouth. The honeyed tropical fruit flavours abound on the palate as does the acidity. It's a wonderful wine if you like this style during the winter months. It's also a great wine to have with soft and firm cheeses or something to pour over the top of your dessert (rrp \$20).



The De Bortoli Windy Peak 2010 pinot grigio is made from fruit taken from their Yarra Valley vineyards and is everything you want it to be. Vibrant lemon in colour, the nose offers green apple and pear flavours. The palate is refreshingly crisp with citrus and pine-

apple flavours backed up by firm acidity on a dry, crisp finish (rrp \$15).



The Windowrie The Mill 2010 merlot is from Cowra based Windowrie wines which has a wide variety of wine styles and also sources fruit from other regions within a 100 mile radius of their vineyards. Here I offer you their 2010 merlot. Purple in colour, the nose offers blackberry and redcurrant fruit with a whiff of cinnamon. The palate is soft and fruity with red/blackcurrant fruits coming through. I also got some plum and vanilla flavours extending on the palate. The oak tannin structure is nicely handled leaving this wine with a silky, soft dry finish (rrp \$17).



The people at Thom Clarke have done an excellent job with the Thom Clarke Sandpiper Barossa Valley 2010 shiraz. This style is typical of what the Barossa Valley does best. It's a deeply coloured wine of intense black/purple with that lovely pink hue which I must admit endears me to red wines. The nose is showing jammy red and blackberry fruits with eucalypt and liquorice flavours jumping out of the glass. The palate offers a myriad of fruits and is almost syrupy with jammy red/black fruits which immediately make you sit up and take note. It's a rich, layered, voluptuous drop, with spicy oak on a soft, long finish. Excellent (rrp \$18).



Canowindra based Swinging Bridge winery recently released a 2009 chardonnay from Orange. Here I offer you their 2009 chardonnay. Lemon straw in colour with green hues, the nose shows citrus and pineapple flavours with hints of white peach. The palate is nicely textured with no hints of oak but with plenty of white peach and copious amounts of citrus and green apple flavours. It has a firm acid finish with prevalent fruit aplenty (rrp \$18). I wasn't particularly enamoured with the 2010 merlot. I found it raw and lacking intensity on the palate.

Jim McMahon teaches hospitality at Sutherland TAFE.

What's happening at your school?

Is your school doing something to promote environmental education or combat global warming? If so, Education would like to know about it. Please send your story to

journal@nswtfe.org.au

