



○ Pick of the week



For those baffled by the competing claims of climate scientists and strident sceptics, this accessible book puts arguments into perspective. The writer is neither scientist nor sceptic but an everywoman concerned by what the future might hold for her children.

Chandler embarks on a journey that takes her from Antarctica to Queensland rainforests and coral reefs in search of answers. She talks to the men and women who work in the field, often under the most trying conditions, gathering the data on which science depends. She captures the camaraderie, characters and complexity of life at the planet's extremes of heat and cold, frozen dry wastes and lush wet.

There are some scary stats, not just that 74 per cent of rainforest birds in Australia's east will be threatened in the next century. But these are interwoven with lyrical reflections on the natural world. On a nocturnal excursion through the rainforest, she notes poetically how: "The tiny diamond-green sparkles are watching spiders. This night really has a thousand eyes."

A Walkley-winning journalist, Chandler worries that in an era of news lite, the most complex story of our time has broken, one she fears a disintegrating media is ill-equipped to tell and in which the weed of disinformation and vested commercial interest thrives.

Having reported from the world's political flashpoints, the author ponders how the deadly ingenuity of war could be harnessed to stop climate change. Writing with head and heart, she neither overloads with dry facts nor slips into misty romanticism. Her tone is measured and elegant, making her conclusions all the more unsettling.

Reviews by Joyce Morgan