



AWA's Water Education Network presents...

the 2nd National Water Education Conference

'From the Waters Edge to the Red Centre'



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Alice Springs Convention Centre, Northern Territory

**National Water Education Conference
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**Deconstructing Environmental Education
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Education is never simple. Like health education and health warnings, the rational part of the brain may understand that a change in behaviour is necessary, but triggering that change doesn't occur naturally.

Environmental Education is more difficult because of the time gap between the investment in modifying the environmental behaviour and the results – which is more often than not, multi-generational.

With the benefit of hind-sight we see the profound shift in attitudes towards the environment over the last 50 years. From the days of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*, which in 1962 exposed the hazards of the pesticide DDT, eloquently questioned humanity's faith in technological progress and helped set the stage for the environmental movement, to today's billions dollar organic farming industry, environmental protection regulators and international protocols, we see the path that has been trodden.

However, the challenge to educate our future generations on the fragility and balance of our environment in the face of a constant barrage of consumerism is a never-ending one.

The conundrum is how to promote a sustainable change in behaviour. In targeting the next generations, I have recognised the need to address not just the facts, so that materials will be acceptable in the school curriculum but also the need to engage students' emotions. It's not just a question of embedding the data, but rather to convey the belief that the activity of the individual student can actually make a difference.

An essential part of this paper is to help environmental educators rethink how they package the materials for students. To do this I will explore a current water issue and illustrate how the narrative non-fiction genre differs from the traditional didactic approach.