

A CHANGE IS IN THE AIR



Tim Flannery is a paleontologist, scientist, documentary maker, 2007 Australian of the Year, climate change champion, and surely one of Australia's most respected citizens. With the release of his new book, **Atmosphere of Hope**, INCITE took the opportunity to chat with him about how the LIS sector can get involved in educating our members about climate change.

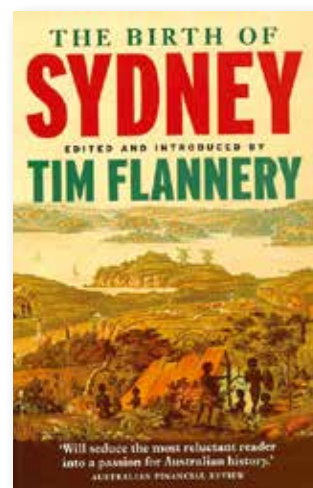
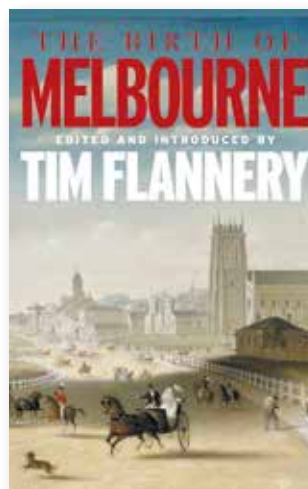
Libraries, for Tim Flannery, were a saviour when he was a child, and they played a big part in putting him on a path that eventually led him to become one of Australia's leading scientists.

'When I was a child we didn't have many books at home. I had a pretty difficult time at school and don't remember using the library there, so our community library was a very special place for me. I remember borrowing and reborrowing a book on hermit crabs called *Pagoo* when I was seven or eight. A little later Arthur Grimble's *A Pattern of Islands* became a favourite.

'I must have looked on the librarian as a sort of professor of everything, because when I found a fossil on Black Rock Beach, I took it to the librarian and asked him to identify it for me! Thinking back, I'm astonished that he researched it, and when I returned to the library he gave me its scientific name. He also said that I should take it to the museum – sage advice, which I now see as the origins of my life as a paleontologist.'

Libraries have continued to feature throughout Tim's academic career as he wrote what would become an impressive range of books.

'I've used libraries extensively to research my science as well as my books. The library of the Australian Museum in Sydney was a special haunt while I was a scientist there. And the Mitchell was also much visited. Without the help of their staff, especially in obtaining interlibrary loans, I could never have written *Mammals of New Guinea*, *The Birth of Melbourne*, *The Birth of Sydney* and many other titles.'



Tim thinks that libraries are the centres of vibrant, informed and engaged communities and that they enable the best in us to develop. But do libraries have a role in helping students and members to learn about climate change? Tim responds emphatically: 'Libraries are also at the centre of our learning, as well as being places for communities to come together. Without that, we could not rise to the climate challenge.'

But what practical things can libraries do to help people understand and reduce the impact of climate change?

'Small exhibitions, discussion groups, making books on climate change easily accessible', Tim says, are all positive actions to enable your library play a key role. And he also says that he is sure there are many more ways that are evident to librarians.

If Tim had the resources of all the different types of Australian libraries and the people who work in them at his control for a time, how would he utilise them to best help librarians with their efforts to counteract climate change?

'Organise a libraries' climate week. I'd also use libraries to lead – by installing solar panels, and deploying energy efficiency. I'd show the bills to the public. After all, it's all money they will be saving from rates and so on.'

For Tim, his commitment to informing people about climate change has been an ongoing process, but there are sceptics who drive a different opinion. We asked Tim why he thought some people were sceptical about climate change, despite the compelling scientific evidence.

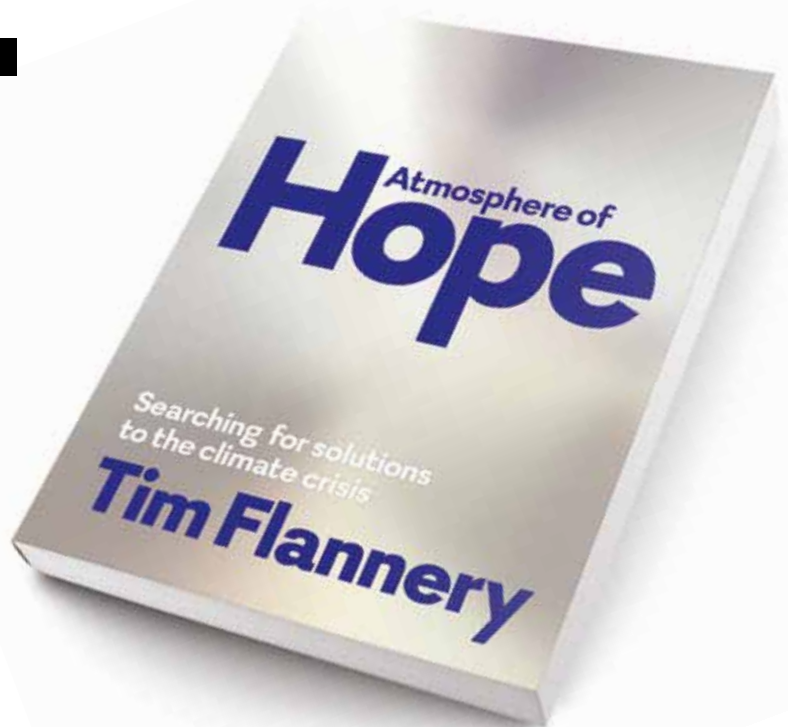
'A small percentage of people never change their minds, regardless of the evidence,' said Tim. But he says that despite the sceptics, people throughout the world are rallying.

'We are making big inroads. Divestment, legal action, protests, energy efficiency, rooftop solar. It all adds up.'

Organisations such as libraries play an important role, but individuals within those organisations also can help. Tim says any individual can do three things: 'Be a leader – in discussion, engagement and action'.

After so many decades of trying to educate and prod our government into action, Tim Flannery's energy is still undiminished. What continues to give him hope for our future?

'My fellow human beings. When we come to understand the issue and what's at stake, we are capable of taking the appropriate action.'



ATMOSPHERE OF HOPE by Tim Flannery is published by Text, rrp \$29.99

Key websites
climatecouncil.org.au
skepticalscience.com

Further reading
 THIS CHANGES EVERYTHING: Capitalism vs the climate by Naomi Klein



Goals A+N has successfully planned and managed numerous library relocations – both large and small. We pack and unpack sequentially, replicating your preferred shelving system. We can also help with interfiling, archiving or changing to a new shelving system.



GOALS A+N
 PLAN + MANAGE + MOVE



Call 1300 35 36 37 or visit www.goalsan.com.au