

Book Review:

Light Pollution—A Global Discussion

Nona Schulte-Römer, Etta Dannemann, Josiane Meier

Helmholtz Centre of Environmental Research, 2018, 248 pages

Free download from www.lightpollutiondiscussion.net

Reviewed by **Jennifer Long**

Artificial light allows us to see at night, but too much light or the wrong type of light can have consequences for our health, for the natural environment, and for our ability to see the night sky.

Light Pollution—A Global Discussion holistically explores the contentious issues surrounding our use of artificial light. The authors interviewed a range of experts (including astronomers, lighting designers, engineers, ecologists and lawyers) to learn their perspective and opinion about light pollution and possible solutions.

The e-book is divided into three sections:

- Dark skies—How can they be protected in the long run?
- Street lighting—What colour temperature should we choose?
- Commercial lighting—do we want hard law?

It is presented as a conversation with each of the experts, and concludes with the results of an online international survey about light pollution (205 people, including experts, citizens and policy makers) together with examples of how light has been successfully managed in the built environment.

Section 1 was fascinating. I was amazed to learn that dark skies are now being marketed as a tourist attraction for people who wish to observe and photograph the night sky in all its glory, as well as for city people who may never have experienced natural darkness. Section 2 was more technical in its discussion about the colour temperature of street lighting and how there is a conflict between providing safety for people versus light's adverse effect on wildlife. The technicalities could be a barrier for some readers, but the question and answer format of the book allows the reader to skip portions without losing the thread of the argument. Section 3 discussed moves to legislate light pollution from commercial buildings (such as façade lighting, billboard advertising and window illumination) and how this has been addressed in different regions around the world.

Prior to reading *Light Pollution—A Global Discussion* I was aware of some of the issues associated with light pollution. I think the book's strength is that it juxtaposes the many disparate issues related to light pollution and presents them cohesively in one easy-to-read volume. This is a clever approach because light pollution is a complex problem that requires a holistic solution to satisfy many different stakeholders.

My rating:



Many people worldwide have not observed the Milky Way in the night sky because of light pollution.



Light affects insects, birds, fish, mammals and plants. LED with high ultraviolet radiation and blue light output are thought to be most disruptive to ecosystems.



PO Box 645 Katoomba NSW 2780 · +61 (0) 409 951 802
jloug@visualergonomics.com.au · www.visualergonomics.com.au

PLEASE CONTACT ME IF:

- You want to know more about the services I provide
- You wish to be added to the mailing list.

Next Newsletter:

Christmas gifts