Household Sustainability
Challenges and Dilemmas in Everyday Life

Chris Gibson, Carol Farbotko, Nicholas Gill, University of Wollongong, Lesley Head, University of Melbourne and Gordon Waitt, University of Wollongong, Australia

The authors engage critically, and constructively, with the proposition that households are a key scale of action on climate change. They confront dilemmas of practice and circumstance, and cultural norms of lifestyle and consumerism that are linked to troublesome environmental problems – and question whether they can be easily unsettled. The work also illuminates the informal and often unheralded work by households – frequently the poorest – in reducing their environmental burden. This important book is critical to understanding both the barriers to household sustainability and the ‘unsung’ sustainability work carried out by householders.

‘The question Chris Gibson and his colleagues answer in this book is simple: “Why is it not easy being green?” In 20 concise, focused and accessible chapters – from birthing to dying, from toilets to Christmas – they unveil the ambiguities, instabilities and paradoxes of affluent household living in the 21st century. In so doing, they temper the easy rhetoric of sustainable lifestyles with some authentic realities drawn from the affluent world. Earth system science is showing us the deep complexity of our material planet. This book brilliantly reflects back to us the complex materiality of our cultural lives.’

- Mike Hulme, University of East Anglia, UK

‘The strength of this book is the sound academic research combined with an extensive literature review. Both add significantly to our understanding of the material nature of what and how much we take from the natural environment . . . The engaging style adopted by the authors makes this an engrossing and thought-provoking read.’

- Erika Altmann, Journal of Environmental Policy & Planning

Edward Elgar Publishing Ltd. is registered in the UK at: The Lypiatts, 15 Lansdown Road, Cheltenham, Glos GL50 2JA. Registered number: 2041703