



The Biggest Estate on Earth: How Aborigines Made Australia

By Bill Gammage

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Reveals the complex, country-wide systems of land management used by Aboriginal people in presettlement Australia

Across Australia, early Europeans commented again and again that the land looked like a park, with extensive grassy patches and pathways, open woodlands, and abundant wildlife. Bill Gammage has discovered this was because Aboriginal people managed the land in a far more systematic and scientific fashion than most people have ever realized. For more than a decade, he has examined written and visual records of the Australian landscape. He has uncovered an extraordinarily complex system of land management using fire, the life cycles of native plants, and the natural flow of water to ensure plentiful wildlife and plant foods throughout the year. Aboriginal people spent far less time and effort than Europeans in securing food and shelter, and this book reveals how. Once Aboriginal people were no longer able to tend their country, it became overgrown and vulnerable to the hugely damaging bushfires Australians now experience. With details of land-management strategies from around Australia, this book rewrites the history of the continent, with huge implications for today.

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Review

"A beautiful and profound piece of writing, one that has importance for us all." —*Age*

"This bold book, with its lucid prose and vivid illustrations, will be discussed for years to come."
—*Australian Book Review*

About the Author

Bill Gammage is a historian and the author of the *The Broken Years: Australian Soldiers in the Great War* and *Sky Travellers*.

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