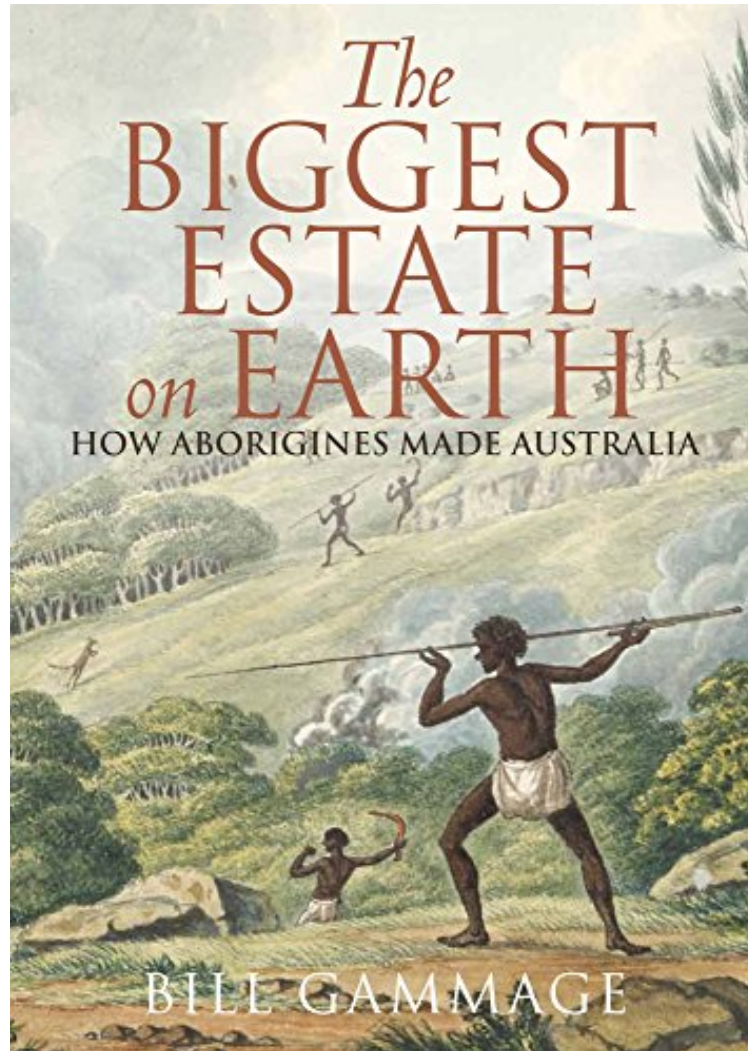


(Read ebook) The Biggest Estate on Earth: How Aborigines Made Australia

## The Biggest Estate on Earth: How Aborigines Made Australia

Bill Gammage

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**Bill Gammage : The Biggest Estate on Earth: How Aborigines Made Australia** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Biggest Estate on Earth: How Aborigines Made Australia:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Skilled managers of a vast and complicated landscape By Ed Kanze This book is gorgeous to hold and peruse. I picked it up with great expectations. Unfortunately, reading it, at least for me, has been a slog, the material circling back on itself again and again, proving, proving, proving its central thesis that the Aboriginal people of Australia were skilled managers of a vast and complicated landscape, not crude, ignorant savages. Still, for anyone interested in Australia and its original inhabitants, this is a must read. The author

has worked hard to deliver a treatise on Aboriginal land management, finding the bulk of his support in paintings and accounts by early European settlers. A revolution is underway in our thinking about how the Aborigines, American Indians, and other early peoples interacted with the landscapes they so boldly colonized. On this subject, I most highly recommend Tim Flannery's excellent "The Future Eaters." 5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. The Biggest Estate on Earth By Mr. Dallyn L. Birrell This is a serious examination of history, so it is not a page turner. However, it is time someone was able to now put aside all the political correctness involved in recognising Aborigines in Australia, to demonstrate the intensive management of the whole continent before white settlement. White Australia had a vested interest in denying that Aborigines managed land, and Aborigines had an image issue revolving around their fire stick hunting, still seen by many white "conservationists" as destructive to the environment. This book seeks to show that the Australia whites settled in 1788 had been much altered by Aboriginal burning, to create abundant food resources and safe passages from place to place. Their practices were dependent on a close and detailed knowledge of each area by its inhabitants. The cessation of Aboriginal fire stick management across much of the continent has seemingly rendered it prone to large and destructive bush fires. Whether this knowledge can help with the prevention of our too frequent catastrophic fires is something the reader should ponder. 4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Rethinking Australia By John Stackhouse Bill Gammage, let's face it, is a humble name for a venerable Australian historian. The Biggest Estate tells a fascinating story of how thousands of generations of the First Australians shaped our land. Now in just five or six generations of white settlement, we have damaged it, hopefully not irretrievably. My first doubts about the vandalism of settlement came after my mother retired to Alice Springs in the centre of Australia. In those days cattle runs came to the edge of town. It was a sad and dusty place. Over the last 20 years since the cattle were blocked out, the desert scrub returned, the dust eased off and, dare I say it, "The Alice" is now a pretty place, well worth visiting. Fire became a problem with the regrowth. I had the instinctive fear of fire which regularly ravaged the coastal states. Wild fire still does, even though we have learned to burn off to ease the danger in our summer of dry fuel build-up - such as leaves, bark, dead scrub under the giant Eucalypts. Gammage draws on hundreds of sources, many in the years after first settlement in 1788. The Australian landscape then resembled a cultivated "gentleman's park". The Aborigines gardened the open landscape with selective fire. Perhaps once a year for grassland, every two years to clear low scrub, every four years to thin wattle and every 20 to open up tall timber. In my latest book (unpublished but coming out as a Kindle soon, I hope) I trace the global migration of the First Australians out of East Africa, across South and Southeast Asia, along the Indonesian islands to northern Australia and New Guinea. It was a time when sea levels were about 150 metres lower so they could drift, taking perhaps 10,000 years to reach and settle an empty Australia 50,000 years ago. Since, as Gammage shows, they learned broad cultivation by fire. Some time in the future we must redevelop these skills and make Australia truly beautiful again. I bought "The Biggest Estate" as a Kindle but have bought two copies of the print edition for my older children for Christmas. The print edition is a treasure. It will be the responsibility of them and their children to carry out this mission.

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

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