

***First Nations peoples' profound knowledge and deep connections to the land we inhabit is transmitted and embodied in their language, art, dance, songs, stories and ceremony.***

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In March 2018, Bruce Pascoe was presented with the Australia Council Award for Lifetime Achievement in Literature. Bruce is an award-winning Yuin, Bunurong and Tasmanian author who has written over thirty books spanning fiction, non-fiction and children's titles. Seven in ten Australians agree that books by Australian writers about Australian subjects help us understand ourselves and our country. The Australia Council has long supported Bruce's work, which is helping a national and international audience understand the strength of Aboriginal culture and knowledge, and its centrality to Australia's history.

Bruce Pascoe's award winning non-fiction book *Dark Emu*, published in 2014, is a monumental work of scholarship that disproved the long-held myth that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples were nomadic hunter gatherers before European colonisation. *Dark Emu* reached No. 11 on the Independent Booksellers best-seller list and after 16 reprints it has sold over 35,000 copies. UK and US editions of *Dark Emu* and a new Australian edition are due for publication in 2018.

*Dark Emu* was published by Magabala Books, based in Broome, which the Council supports through Four Year Funding. One of the most remote publishing houses in the world, First Nations-owned Magabala Books is one of Australia's leading small publishers. Magabala Books has been publishing important First Nations stories since 1987 and has participated in a number of the Council's strategic market development programs including the Visiting International Publishers Program and the India publishing delegation. The organisation has a national and international reputation for the quality of its titles and for nurturing First Nations artists, authors, illustrators and storytellers to bring their stories to publication.

In 2017 Magabala Books published nine new titles, sold more than 93,000 books throughout Australia and overseas, and achieved sales that were 24% over forecast. Six authors and illustrators made their publishing debut. With philanthropic support, Magabala piloted a new commissioning strategy, starting with the engagement of an educational specialist to work with Bruce Pascoe to develop a primary edition of *Dark Emu* and secondary educational resources.

*Dark Emu* has also been adapted for the stage by Bangarra Dance Theatre, touring nationally from June 2018. Through dance, the production celebrates Aboriginal peoples' strength, resilience and profound knowledge of agriculture and aquaculture.