

ABORIGINAL people were the first bakers. They were making and baking meal into a meal in stone ovens 15,000 years before the ancient Egyptians.

Aboriginal people were not just hunter gatherers; they had agriculture, engineering, building construction, grain storage, wells, dams, irrigation, animal husbandry and a pan-continental system of government. They sowed and sewed. Aboriginal society had no class division and no property and income inequity.

In 2011, Australia's greatest historian, Bill Gammage, wrote about the sophistication of Aboriginal land management, sustainability and animal husbandry in *The Biggest Estate on Earth*.

He faced no serious opposition. Professor **Bruce Pascoe's** award-winning book *Dark Emu* is the most important Australian book this century. It redefines and reinstates Aboriginal civilisation prior to white invasion.

Importantly, he cites many of the 19th century explorers' and settlers' accounts of what they observed of Aboriginal civilisation. Prof Pascoe writes that "Australia has been so fixated with Aboriginal incapacity that any thought of a sophisticated Aboriginal civilisation undermines the validity of the colony itself".

It suited white invaders to see Australia as "terra nullius" ("nobody's land") – one of the great lies of world history.

Evidence of Aboriginal civilisation was quickly destroyed, followed by the people themselves. They were best dead, diminished, devastated, denied, hidden and then their children were stolen.

Prof Pascoe is a 73-year-old celebrated author. His 2014 *Dark Emu* upsets the ruling class status quo. There's a book and an entire carping website devoted to destroying Prof Pascoe's reputation and scholarship.

Because he is pale-skinned, even his Aboriginality is being questioned. He been reported to Home Affairs Minister Peter Dutton and the Australian Federal Police although, happily, the Minister for indigenous Australians, the indigenous Australian Ken Wyatt, defends him.

Prof Pascoe was too busy fighting fires in Mallacoota to initially respond to this latest slur, but he had claimed Aboriginal heritage 40 years ago and also **Cornish** heritage. Why are people so suspicious? I can claim both Irish and German heritage without being reported to Peter Dutton and the AFP. What is crucial is Prof Pascoe says his Aboriginality is "the pulse of my life".

White Australia seems absurdly jealous of Aboriginal people in the mistaken belief they are being favoured.

They have a lot of catching up to do. The life expectancy of an Aboriginal person in the APY Lands is 48 years. It's 88 years in Unley. Now, we want to continue to deny Aboriginal civilisation.

We need to share the pride in the oldest living civilisation on Earth. Aboriginal songlines are the world's oldest literature.

History is written by the victors who also get the spoils of the plundered and humiliated. Think about that today.

Australia Day? Let's appreciate the need to reconcile. Or we just continue to invade, deny and demean.

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#### CITATION (AGLC STYLE)

Peter Goers, 'Day to take pride in Aboriginal history', *Sunday Mail* (online), 26 Jan 2020 66 <<https://infoweb-newsbank-com.ezproxy.lib.uts.edu.au/apps/news/document-view?p=AUNB&docref=news/178B1E0FC0EAAA38>>

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