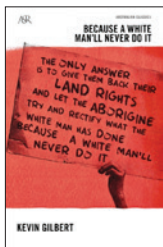


# 10 IMPORTANT BOOKS ON INDIGENOUS CULTURES, HISTORIES AND POLITICS

*Reconciliation News* has put together a list of some of the most significant and influential books on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and politics.



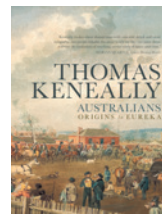
## **Because a White Man'll Never Do It (1973)**

By Kevin Gilbert

Kevin Gilbert's powerful expose of past and present race relations in Australia is an alarming story of land theft, human rights abuse, slavery, inequality and

paternalism. Today considered a classic, the book paints a disturbing image of the impact of the colonisation of Australia and the ongoing problems faced by Aboriginal people.

Written with the hope of provoking a galvanisation of his people, Gilbert makes a plea that white Australia leave black Australia alone. Demonstrating his vision for justice and equality, Gilbert's arguments are still significant and relevant in 21st century Australia.



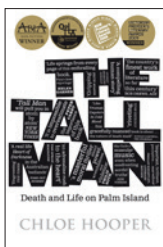
## **Australians: Origins to Eureka (2009)**

By Thomas Keneally

In this widely acclaimed volume, best-selling author Thomas Keneally brings to life the vast range of characters who have formed our national story. Convicts

and Aboriginal people, settlers and soldiers, patriots and reformers, bushrangers and gold seekers, it is from their lives and their stories that he has woven a vibrant history to do full justice to the rich and colourful nature of our unique national character.

Were the first European mothers whores or matriarchs? How did this often cruel and brutal penal experiment lead to a coherent civil society? Tom Keneally brings to life the high and the low, the convict and the free of early Australian society.



## **The Tall Man: Death and Life on Palm Island (2009)**

By Chloe Hooper

*The Tall Man* tells a true story that took place on Palm Island, the tropical paradise where one morning Cameron Doomadgee swore at a policeman and 40 minutes

later lay dead in a watch-house cell. It is the story of that policeman, the tall, enigmatic Christopher Hurley who chose to work in some of the toughest and wildest places in Australia, and of the struggle to bring him to trial.



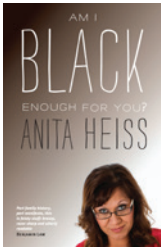
## **Black Politics (2009)**

By Sarah Maddison

Based on original interviews with influential Aboriginal leaders including Mick Dodson, Tom Calma, Alison Anderson, Jackie Huggins, Warren Mundine and Larissa Behrendt, *Black Politics* seeks to

understand why Aboriginal communities find it so difficult to be heard, get support, and organise internally.

Sarah Maddison identifies the tensions that lie at the heart of all Aboriginal politics, arguing that until Australian governments come to grips with this complexity they will continue to make bad policy with disastrous consequences for Aboriginal people.



### Am I Black Enough for You? (2012)

By Anita Heiss

Anita Heiss, successful author and passionate

campaigner for Aboriginal literacy, was born a member of the Wiradjuri nation of central New South Wales, but was raised in the suburbs of Sydney and educated at the local Catholic school. She is Aboriginal – however, this does not mean she likes to go barefoot. And please don't ask her to camp in the desert.

In this deeply personal memoir, Heiss gives a first-hand account of her experiences as a woman with an Aboriginal mother and Austrian father, and explains the development of her activist consciousness. Read her story and ask: what does it take for someone to be black enough for you?



### Treading Lightly: The Hidden Wisdom of the World's Oldest People (2006)

By Karl-Erik Sveiby and Tex Skuthorpe

Aboriginal people taught themselves thousands of years ago how to live sustainably in Australia's fragile landscape. A Scandinavian knowledge management professor meets an Aboriginal cultural custodian and dares to ask the simple but vital question: what can we learn from the traditional Aboriginal lifestyle to create a sustainable society in modern Australia? *Treading Lightly* takes us on a unique journey into traditional Aboriginal life and culture, and offers a powerful and original model for building sustainable organisations, communities and ecologies.



### Talking to my Country (2016)

By Stan Grant

In July 2015, as the debate over Adam Goodes being booted at

AFL games raged and got ever more heated and ugly, Stan Grant – one of Australia's leading journalists – wrote a short but powerful piece for *The Guardian* that went viral, not only in Australia but right around the world. His was a personal, passionate and powerful response to racism in Australia and the sorrow, shame, anger and hardship of being an Indigenous man.

*Talking to my Country* is not just about race, or about Indigenous people, but about all of us, our shared identity. Grant might not have all the answers but he wants us to keep on asking the question: how can we be better?

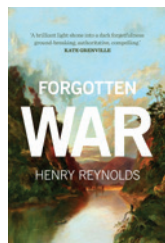


### Dark Emu (2014)

By Bruce Pascoe

*Dark Emu* argues for a reconsideration of the 'hunter-gatherer' tag for pre-colonial

Aboriginal Australians and attempts to rebut the colonial myths that have worked to justify dispossession. Accomplished author Bruce Pascoe provides compelling evidence from the diaries of early explorers that suggests that systems of food production and land management have been blatantly understated in modern retellings of early Aboriginal history, and that a new look at Australia's past is required.



### Forgotten War (2013)

By Henry Reynolds

Australia is dotted with memorials to soldiers who fought in wars

overseas. Why are there no official memorials or commemorations of the wars that were fought on Australian soil between Aboriginal people and white colonists?

*Forgotten War* gives a systematic account of what caused the frontier wars between white colonists and Aboriginal people, how many people died and whether the colonists themselves saw frontier conflict as a form of warfare. This powerful book argues that there can be no reconciliation without acknowledging the wars fought on our own soil.



### Carpentaria (2006)

By Alex Wright

*Carpentaria* is an epic novel set in the Gulf country of north-western Queensland. Its

portrait of family life in the precariously settled coastal town of Desperance centres on the powerful Phantom family, leader of the Westend Pricklebush people, and its battles with old Joseph Midnight's renegade Eastend mob on the one hand, and the white officials of Uptown and the neighbouring Gurfurrit mine on the other.

*Carpentaria* was rejected by every major publisher in Australia before it was published by the small literary house Giramondo. It went on to win Australia's most prestigious literary prize, the Miles Franklin Award.