

Chapters 5 and 6 delve deeper into out-of-home food consumption and explore food consumption in canteens in businesses and universities, and the way the catering sector influences the lives of Dutch people of all ages and from all walks of life. It is interesting to note that around half of all Dutch employees have access to canteen facilities, which amounts to approximately 2 million meals being served in Dutch workplace canteens every day. The catering study is discussed over the two chapters in some depth as the author investigates both the opportunities and challenges in the procurement and provisioning of sustainable food in these workplace canteens.

This book offers interesting perspectives on food consumption and thoroughly explores the question of how sustainable food consumption can be encouraged.

*Sustainable Food Consumption: A Practice-Based Approach* is strongly recommended for tertiary courses in environmental policy, urban sustainability, urban studies, planning, geography, and marketing. Its quality emanates from a well-ordered structure and well-paced text that carries its story by providing an appropriate level of detail, with links and connections made between the chapters. It is, in fact, the 11th volume of an environmental policy series.

### Reviewer Biography

Angela is the Director of Angela Colliver Consulting Services. She has written over 30 educational resources for schools, particularly in relation to using student-centred and interactive teaching and learning approaches. She uses a teaching and learning model based on the current philosophy that knowledge is a social construction, highlighting how people's ideas and explanations create new knowledge. The teaching and learning model is also based on the idea that learning is a process of personal construction and reconstruction of ideas, rather than the absorption of a hierarchy of taught facts and concepts. Her most recent work is creating curriculum-linked resources designed to introduce young people in Australian schools to the production of food and fibre and primary industries in Australia, which emphasise the relationship between food and fibre industries, individuals, communities, the environment, and our economy.

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

Bill Gammage Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 2011, 434 pp., ISBN 9781743311325  
doi: 10.1017/aee.2015.42

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This is a wonderful book that brings together the two Australian Curriculum cross-curricula themes of sustainability and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and culture. According to the author, Aborigines managed the Australian land mass for thousands of years in a way that preserved both the ecology of their country and the

spirituality of their culture in an ingenious way. One reinforced the other — each clan belonged to their own ‘country’, which they knew intimately. Bill Gammage won the Prime Minister’s Literary Award for Australian History and also the Victorian Prize for Literature in 2012 for his book. The project was assisted by the Australia Council for the Arts.

The Australian landscape the early European settlers saw, traversed and painted resembled an English park, with widely spaced mature trees, luxuriant grasses and copices of trees with distinct edges and cleared ceremonial (or bora) grounds. This unique, Australia-wide landscape was sculpted and maintained by fire. The book is well illustrated with early colonial paintings and photos showing the landscape features described above. The number of examples of land management sourced from historical documents is truly astounding and very convincing.

There have been a number of reviews of the book so far. While most reviewers acknowledge the huge amount of work that has gone into researching and writing it, some have been critical of the assumptions of the author in regard to the importance of firestick farming for sculpting the Australian landscape. That said, the rest of this review suggests how various themes in the book could be used to enhance sustainability thinking or perspectives in subject disciplines at school.

### *English*

A whole raft of terms, unknown to this day in English, were used by the Aborigines to describe the different requirements of ecosystems at different times of the year in order for firing to maintain its integrity. For example, terms could refer to the readiness of vegetation for burning — for example, ‘almost ready to be fired’, ‘three months off firing’, ‘just fired’; or to the heat of the fire required, for example, ‘a cool burn’.

### *Human Society in its Environment (HSIE)*

One of the key themes in the book is the responsibility that Indigenous Australians took for ‘caring for country’. Their custodial approach to the land recognised their reliance on the abundance of nature to supply their needs well into the future (*intergenerational equity*). This abundance was reliant on their knowledge of when to fire the landscape (*wisdom of the elders*) to promote appropriate plant growth that would sustain the entire ecosystem. This responsibility for ‘caring for country’ was taken so seriously that Aborigines would continue caring for their land even when dispossessed of it. Their belief system reinforced sustainable land management: the spiritual wellbeing of present and future generations was dependent on their caring for country. Nothing was done to potentially damage the resources they relied on for their survival (*precautionary principle*).

Other sustainability issues discussed or alluded to in the book include:

1. Population control: Aborigines understood the potential of each ecosystem to support them and undertook appropriate birth control to guarantee a continuing food supply.
2. Sharing surpluses: Excess food supplies were shared among neighbouring tribes.
3. Differing worldviews: The interaction between two cultures with ideologies worlds apart has led to serious land degradation and loss of ecosystem integrity in many parts of Australia, and explains many features of the Australian landscape today; for example, the predominance of secondary growth forests and the loss of drought-free farm land.

*Science*

Indigenous Australians were the ultimate adaptive environmental managers. They understood natural systems and anticipated cycles of drought and flood, and designed the landscape to ensure plentiful supplies of food during both scenarios. Where the early European settlers saw lush plains for sheep grazing, the Aborigines saw plains supporting tall grasses for the native animals they hunted. The firestick farming methods they employed moulded the landscape into a sustainable food bowl, which was subsequently destroyed by early farmers who had no understanding of, nor interest in, the ecology of the Australian landscape and how to maintain it. Related issues could include the importance of remnant vegetation for ecosystem health, the dangers of fracking, and how Australian native plants have adapted to fire.

*Art*

The book has reproductions of many colour paintings from earlier times, clearly showing the Australian landscape the early settlers encountered. These could be compared to photographs of the landscape today in the same locations.

*Values*

Indigenous Australians lived simply and sustainably in Australia for thousands of years. They did this through looking after their 'country', which was central to their spiritual identity, cultural life, and value system. A comparison between our consumerist culture and their way of life provides an opportunity for students to explore the concept of sustainability from an ethical and moral point of view, and also to consider how worldviews differ across time and cultures.

The book is a hefty tome at 434 pages, but the colour plates and maps and glossy pages make it a pleasure to read, especially if you like to settle down with a good printed book rather than read one on your Kindle.

**Reviewer Biography**

Sandra Nichols is a sustainability education consultant who currently runs professional development workshops for teachers in integrating sustainability into Australian Curriculum subject disciplines under her business name, Education for Sustainability ([www.educationforsustainability.com.au](http://www.educationforsustainability.com.au)). She has previously worked at Macquarie University in higher education skills and sustainability education research, and in state and local government in environmental project management, and was a secondary social science teacher for 20 years prior to that.

## **Community-Based Adaptation to Climate Change: Scaling It Up**

E. Lisa F. Schipper, Jessica Ayers, Hannah Reid, Saleemul Huq, and Atiq Rahman (Editors) Routledge/Earthscan, Abingdon, Oxon, 2014, 304 pp., ISBN 9780415623704 (PB), 9780415623698 (HB)  
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