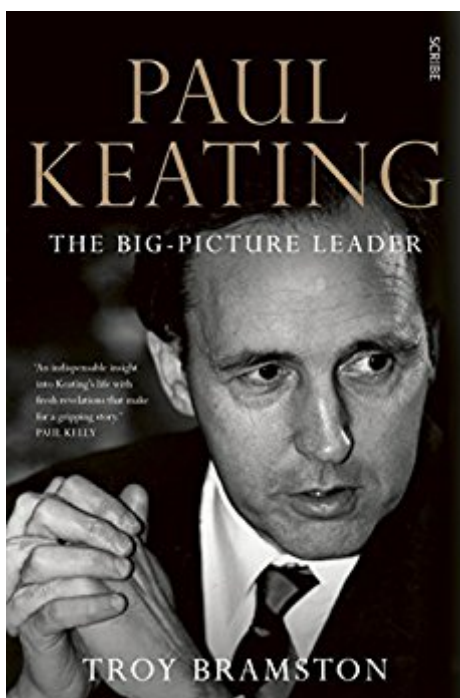


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Paul Keating: The Big-picture Leader: 1



Synopsis

LONGLISTED FOR THE 2017 AUSTRALIAN BOOK INDUSTRY AWARDS, BIOGRAPHY BOOK OF THE YEAR Paul Keating: the big-picture leader is the definitive biography of Australia's 24th prime minister, and the first that Keating has cooperated with in more than two decades. Drawing on around 15 hours of new interviews with Keating, coupled with access to his extensive personal files, this book tells the story of a political warrior's rise to power, from the outer suburbs of Sydney through Young Labor and into parliament at just 25 years of age; serving as a minister in the last days of the Whitlam government; his path-breaking term as treasurer in the 1980s; his four-year prime ministership from 1991 to 1996; and his passions and interests since. Bramston has interviewed more than 100 people who know and worked with Keating, including his family, parliamentary colleagues, advisers, party officials, union leaders, public servants, and journalists. This book includes interviews with Gough Whitlam, Malcolm Fraser, Bob Hawke, John Howard, Kevin Rudd, Julia Gillard, Tony Abbott, Doug Anthony, Bill Hayden, Andrew Peacock, Ian Sinclair, John Hewson, Alexander Downer, Peter Costello, Kim Beazley, Simon Crean, Cheryl Kernot, and Bob Carr. Bramston has secured access to Labor archives, and he also documents key debates in once-secret cabinet papers, reveals caucus minutes for the first time, draws on the unpublished diaries of Neal Blewett and Bob Carr, discloses meeting records from the archives of US presidents George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton, talks to former British prime minister Tony Blair, and shares his new discoveries from the personal files of Gough Whitlam, Bill Hayden, Bob Hawke, and John Howard. Paul Keating saw political leadership as the combination of courage and imagination, a belief that powered his public career and helps explain his extraordinary triumphs and crushing lows. Keating blazed a trail of reform with a vision for Australia's future that still attracts ardent admirers and the staunchest critics. This book chronicles, analyses, and interprets Keating's life, and draws lessons for a Labor Party and a country still reluctant to fully embrace his legacy. PRAISE FOR TROY BRAMSTON Warm [and] massively researched | This consistently compelling biography demonstrates Paul Keating was a leader like no one else. The Age [Bramston's] achievement is to provide a fresh account of Keating's career | The result is a work that renders homage to Keating and to his ideas about leadership, power, and the nation. The Weekend Australian

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Customer Reviews

A really terrific book. There are times where I would have liked more explanation of how Keating won the fights, particularly the 80's fights at conferences, a period where Keating won many internal battles to help modernise the Labor Party, sometimes they are described as if they were a fait-accompli where as I think an explanation of the tactics and messages he used to win what were real tough battles would have helped give a deeper understanding of what made Keating, Keating. However, this is nit-picking, in totality, this is a terrific book. Admittedly I am biased but I really do believe that Keating is such an inspiring figure, so unique in his personality, a personality combining epic self-belief, strong convictions and a faith in the intelligence of the Australian People that is combined with an apparent melancholy, delivers a subject that I believe it would be difficult to write an uninteresting book that has him as its subject. Having said that this book does a particularly good job of describing what motivates this complex and important man. The book does a great job of explaining what drove Keating to push forward with his reforming zeal in the face of political headwinds and a tough economic environment, in these times of politicians struggling to look further forward than the next Newspoll, to read about a political figure focused on long-term challenges and

long term opportunities is really inspiring. Without falling prey to that most awful trope of modern political writing, the armchair psycho-analysis (a type of writing poisonous to modern political coverage that the likes of Mark Halperin & Maureen Dowd pioneered in America and that to her shame, Annabel Crabb has brought to Australian Journalism*) Troy does give us an insight into what drives Keating but more importantly and usefully he actually covers the policy areas that made Keating the important historical figure he is. This focus on policy then does a great job of explaining why Keating will be one of those few Prime Ministers who will be remembered 100 years after his time in office. His time in Treasury and The Lodge saw a fundamental re-ordering of the post-WW2 Australian Political Settlement and Bramston by focusing on Policy sprinkled with some focus on the political skills that were necessary to give him the power to push through the policy changes, helps describe the importance of the Keating era in a way that a lazy focus on personality never could. Finally and equally as importantly, unlike so much of what passes for political writing these days, particularly in the United States, Bramston doesn't rely on that most untrustworthy of things, the anonymous quote. Names are attached to all the important quotes and shared anecdotes in the book, lending a credibility to the work that would not exist if he was relying on 'Senior Labor Party figure' or 'powerful faction leader'. By not allowing cowards to hide behind anonymity Troy gives us insights that can be believed and shows that you can get a revealing portrait of a man and his time without allowing people to hide behind anonymity. A truly terrific work, you should buy this book if you are at all interested in how the Australian economy was opened up in the 80's and how the Australian Peoples view of themselves was challenged, expanded and given a new depth in the 1990's. The Keating era will be remembered long after many of his contemporaries and the politicians who preceded and followed him are long forgotten and this book will be an important work in not just the Keating Oeuvre but also a fantastic portrait of the era that Keating did not just exist within but did so much to help shape.

A must read about a far sighted person with a big picture view, clear economic goals, building industries, growing wealth, taking business, political parties, unions and people along a challenging path, with a competent leadership to deliver Australia to a higher standard of living and quality of life.

The reason some people disliked Paul Keating was that he told it how it was and a lot can't handle that. This is how it should be. A pity all politicians cannot be like this. Keating could also see the "Big Picture" which most politicians cannot.

Most interesting. Pity Paul was not a nice guy he would have been one of Australia's great Prime Ministers

Great treasurer; great prime minister; great book.

Paul Keating was Australia's 24th Prime Minister, and held office from 20 December 1991 to 11 March 1996. He won office (from Bob Hawke) in a Labor Caucus ballot, and lost it (to John Howard) in a federal election. Paul Keating was Treasurer from 1983 to 1991. He was first elected to Parliament in 1969, aged 25. While a number of books have been written about Paul Keating, according to the book blurb, this is the first biography Paul Keating has co-operated on in more than two decades. Troy Bramston has drawn on around fifteen hours of interviews with Paul Keating, has had access to his personal files, and interviewed many people who know and worked with him. Troy Bramston has also had access to Labor archives and other records. All of this makes for a hefty 786-page book. There are biographical details, a chronology of Paul Keating's political life, and snippets of the personal, but the primary focus is on leadership. It's a book that I, as an admirer of Paul Keating and with a keen interest in Australian political history, had to read. Some twenty-one years after the end of the Keating government, it's interesting to read about. The achievements I primarily remember from the Hawke/Keating years were the reform of the financial system and the economy, the floating of the dollar. While those reforms have undoubtedly benefitted Australia, many of us also remember a period of very high mortgage interest rates, of economic recession. But what I see as Paul Keating's most important achievement was his speech in Redfern in December 1992, at the launch of Australia's celebration of the 1993 International Year of the World's Indigenous People. Especially this aspect: the starting point might be to recognise that the problem starts with us non-Aboriginal Australians. The passage of the Native Title Bill 1993, on 21 December 1993, is a credit to Paul Keating, Gareth Evans and the others who worked so tirelessly to make it happen. Paul Keating always had a vision for Australia's future. He wasn't always able to deliver on that vision, but he never stopped articulating it. I'd have liked more detail as to how Paul Keating did some of these things, in addition to the detail provided of what he actually did. Surely it wasn't all intuitive and instinctive? Surely the structures of government were part of the delivery mechanism? And what

about today? Where are the political visionaries today? Leadership is not about being popular, it is about being right and about being strong. True. But I think it is also about being effective, about ensuring that the necessary mechanisms are in place so that they can outlast the individual leader. Whether you like Paul Keating or loathe him, it's worth reading. I recommend this book to anyone interested in Australian politics, to anyone interested in political leadership. Jennifer Cameron-Smith

I like a good political book, I just can't get over how one sided this book is. The author did say at the start that he was bias towards Keating, that was putting it mildly. Well written, I'm sure the dates and facts are correct, just too bias towards Keating to the point of being monotonous.

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