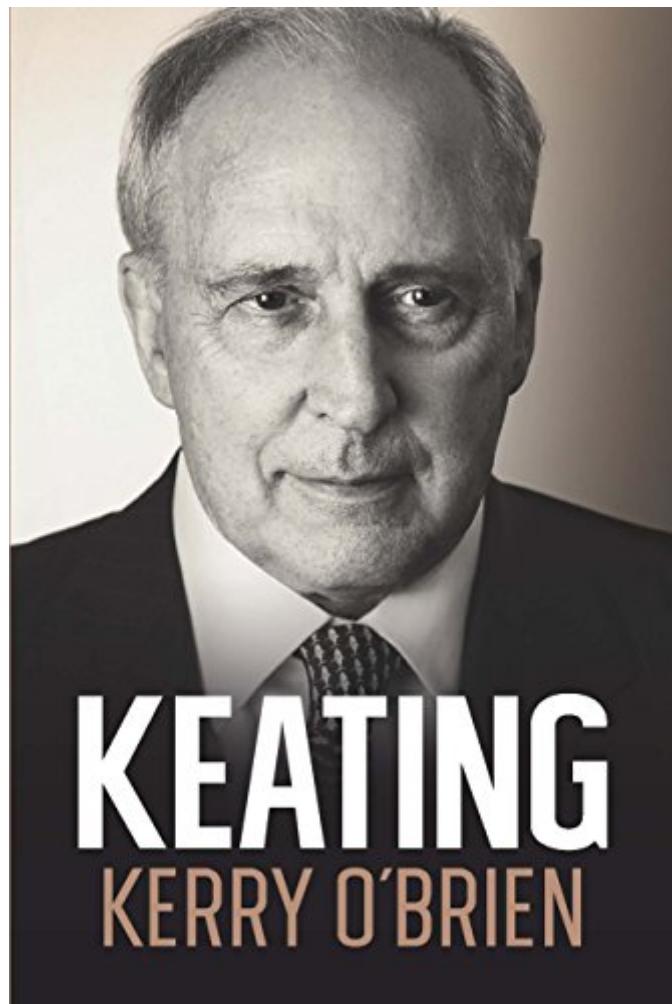


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# Keating



## **Synopsis**

Paul Keating is widely credited as the chief architect of the most significant period of political and economic reform in Australia's history. Twenty years on, there is still no story from the horse's mouth of how it all came about. No autobiography. No memoir. Yet he is the supreme story-teller of politics. This book of revelations fills the gap. Kerry O'Brien, the consummate interviewer who knew all the players and lived the history, has spent many long hours with Keating, teasing out the stories, testing the memories and the assertions. What emerges is a treasure trove of anecdotes, insights, reflections and occasional admissions from one of the most loved and hated political leaders we have known - a man who either led or was the driving force through thirteen years of Labor government that changed the face of Australia. This is a man who as prime minister personally negotiated the sale of a quarter of the government-owned Qantas in his own office for \$665 million, then delighted in watching the buyer's hand shake so much that champagne spilt down his shirtsleeve. He tells of his grave moment of doubt after making one of the riskiest calls of his political life, and how he used an acupuncturist and a television interviewer to seize the day. There are many stories of this kind. The revealing inside stories and even glimpses of insecurities that go with the wielding of power, from a man who had no fear collecting his share of enemies and ended up with more than enough, but whose parliamentary performances from 25 years ago are watched avidly on YouTube today by a generation that was either not yet born or in knee pants when he was at his peak. We'll never get an autobiography or a memoir from Keating. This is as good as it gets - funny, sweeping, angry, imaginative, mischievous, with arrogance, a glimmer of humility and more than a touch of creative madness. Keating unplugged.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

This is an amazing book - really it is only a collection of Kerry O'Brien's observations and his interviews with Paul Keating on his political life. BUT what an overwhelming insight into the politician and to the Australian political scene it gives us. The photograph on the front page shows us a man not looking than at us, but obviously focussing on his own thoughts. One of the most important contribution's of this book in my view is the insights we are given into a man dedicated to making changes which made Australia a better place to live for all Australians. What a contrast his values, vision and contributions are to most of his successors who focus on realising their political ideology and have no vision for Australia beyond that. Their limitations as political Leaders are highlighted by comparison.Keating's political contributions tend to divide opinions, probably mainly on party lines. However I would recommend this book to everyone who has an interest in politics and the contributions that political leaders have made to the history and development of democracy in general and to Australia's in particular. Well done Kerry O'Brien! My favourite book of 2016.

Such a wonderful insightful book. Sadly because Keating has committed never to writing an auto-biography because he considers them all to be self-serving (and who could argue with him there, just look at Howard's awful deception filled screed for proof) then this is the closest we will ever get. Whilst O'Brien is a sympathetic interrogator he still does challenge Keating at key points in the narrative in ways that lead to deeper more revealing answers. In an age of political books written by arm-chair psycho-analyst's this book is refreshing for its focus mainly on policy and the political battles required to get the policy changes through. Keating is engaging throughout and the old Keating feistiness is apparent at key points and the scars of his battles with Hawke still clearly haven't totally healed the overall vibe of the book is reflective. 2 decades on from his time in office and the passage of time having led to a greater appreciation for the massive changes that he

bought to the economy now more respected than they were when he was still being used as a political punching bag by a Liberal Party that was reaping the economic rewards of the tough changes that Keating forced through he speaks with the confidence of a man who has seen his decisions justified by the arc of history.I really cannot recommend this book highly enough even if you have watched the 8 hour TV Series that the book has been drawn from, there is a deeper insight in the book than the TV show with more time given to the political than the policy, so we do get an insight into not just the fights that were won but how the fights were won.Keating may be a Lion in Winter, but he is still a Lion and the few times when he decides to settle some old scores he still has the old Keating sharpness of wit and viciousness of tongue.It was said during his time in office that 30% of the country loved him (my group) 30% couldn't stand him and the rest might not have agreed with him but respected him. For those remaining 40% who have spent 20 years reaping the economic rewards of the Australian miracle that Keating was the architect of should read this book with an open mind and get an understanding of the political skills required to make the big changes happen, then look at our current Cabinet and just weep at their rank incompetence and lack of vision for the country.Even the 30% who hated him had to admit that Paul Keating was not driven by Newspolls, this book shows clearly how if you have a politician who is focused on the long-term challenges of a country the big changes can be pushed through that make the big differences in a National Life and the lives of people within it, sadly when we look to Canberra today we see lazy announcements of \$500,000 feasibility study's and they lead the news for a week because that is the closest thing to long-term thinking journalists get from today's government. 25 years ago the issues were huge ones, engagement with Asia, The Republic, National Identity, opening up the economy, floating the dollar, changing the entire country from an inward looking protectionist corporatist model to a free-trading, open-economy transitioning from a Commonwealth focus to one focused on Asia, Australian Foreign Policy creating an entire regional diplomatic Architecture through APEC and a focus on resolving the original sin of this country, namely the treatment of its indigines. Whether you agreed or disagree with these changes, they were big, era defining changes that showed the power of strong leadership in The Lodge, compared the pygmies in The Lodge today it really is depressing

Hard to put the book down. An enthralling read, the personalities come to life. Many interesting anecdotes from others add value. But what really comes thru it all is how the exhaustion factor influenced events. This is only alluded to by PK but with this book, it's hard work just reading about the hard work. Strangely enough, I ended up feeling a certain sympathy for PK. He's like a horse

who'll work itself to death, doesn't know when to ease off, he & his family paid a heavy price for his superhuman efforts.I met the man once, & even before I recognized him he was already noteworthy for doing something odd. He'd come in to the office to offer this unusual (& nicely designed) cornice that he'd found in a house that he was stripping out. On account of it's artistic merit, he'd gone around cornice manufacturers offering it to them free of charge, as a template. His only stipulation: that it actually be used.

This guy is a colossus! Has more visionary ideas and observations than every PM since put together. The book is well written and I enjoyed the structure of historical lead-in followed by interview. Keating speaks for himself; uninterpreted and without political judgment. Recommended reading for anyone who has the misfortune of living only through the dreariness and insularity of Howard, the bombast of Rudd x 2, Julia's struggles and the eccentricities and stupidity of the Mad Monk. Jury out on the present one.

I don't think it matters what side of politics you prefer it's undeniable that the Hawke/Keating area is one of the most fascinating from an economics and hence political perspective.An excellent book both from the sections Kerry wrote setting the scene for the interviews on each that follow and of course the insights of Keating himself.Highly recommended for followers of #auspol

I read this book in rehab hospital while I was recovering from a knee reconstruction. It is a good place to read such a book as it detailed and long. The Q&A format is interesting but can make the continuity a little jumpy. While Keating's achievements are plenty the ego does get in the way on many occasions. Worth a read by anyone interested in Australian political history.

It's an interesting read. Kerry O'Brien asks the right questions, and sets the context well, and Keating provides interesting responses. It's a one-sided insight into Keating's - remarkable - achievements, but no less interesting for that.Bill Sloman

Enthralling and engaging. Keating the man has a depth and eloquence beyond the sharp sound bites and witty comebacks that reached the public while he was Treasurer and Prime Minister. This is not a written autobiography but a spoken interview. A must-read for understanding the Hawke years and the Keating government.

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Keating Paul Keating: the big-picture leader: 1

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