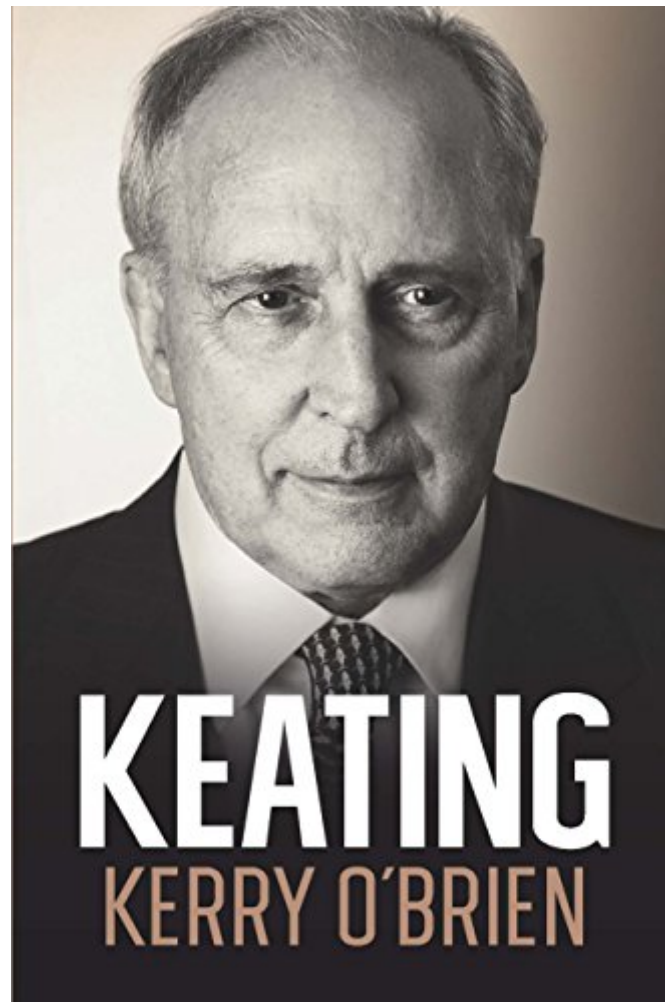


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# Keating



## 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

In the late twentieth century, I would argue that there has been no more influential politician in Australia than Paul Keating. He spent 27 years in parliament in the public eye and significantly changed his country for the better. He was and remains a fascinating individual. Kerry O'Brien's new book is based on the extensive interviews that he had with Keating for the four part ABC television series. Thus, the greater part of the book is a transcript of those interviews. However, in order to provide context, O'Brien has provided introductions to each chapter. Here, he sets the scene. While the book is largely chronological, it is also based around topics. I can think of no political book that I have read that is so lucid as this one. It really was a joy to read. O'Brien is both a gifted interviewer as well as a fine writer. He sets the various scenes cleverly. The biggest take away that I had from the book is that Keating was certainly a man of the big picture. He was no conservative trying not to rock the boat. Rather, he believed that political capital was there to be used. He wanted to make sweeping changes that would lead to greater prosperity while, at the same time, enhancing the social contract within Australia. In addition, the reader is given some insight into just how hard the man worked. Often, his workload was truly prodigious. Australia owes a debt of gratitude to Paul Keating. Thanks are also due to Kerry O'Brien for compiling such a readable book.

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 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.

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.

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

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

Brilliantly told, mostly in Keating's own words but with the structure of a chronology that follows Australia's transformation from backwater to modern economy.

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