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The Good, The Bad And The Unlikely: Australia's Prime Ministers



Synopsis

Since Australia's birth in 1901, twenty-nine politicians have run the national show. Whether their term was eight days or eighteen years, each Prime Minister has a story worth sharing. Edmund Barton united the bickering states in a federation. The unlucky Jimmy Scullin took office days before Wall Street crashed into the Great Depression, while John Curtin faced the ultimate challenge of wartime leadership. John Gorton, Gough Whitlam and Paul Keating each shook up their parties' policies so vigorously that none lasted much longer than a single term in office. Julia Gillard overthrew Kevin Rudd and Kevin Rudd overthrew Julia Gillard, thus paving the way for Tony Abbott until he was overthrown by Malcolm Turnbull. Will we see a full term served for the first time in many years? Or is Australia's thirtieth Prime Minister just around the corner? With characteristic wit and expert knowledge, Mungo MacCallum brings the nation's leaders to life in this fully up-to-date new edition of a classic book. This is the most informing and entertaining book about Australian politics since Don Watson's *Recollections of a Bleeding Heart*. Sydney Morning Herald "MacCallum captures the essence of each incumbent and his/her prime ministership brilliantly." Courier Mail "The irrepressible Mungo MacCallum has for decades been one of our most entertaining political journalists. This breezy book is vintage Mungo." Australian "Informative and entertaining." Inside Story "This book is packed with all the charm, wit and expert knowledge readers have come to expect from MacCallum's writing." Bookseller + Publisher Mungo MacCallum has long been one of Australia's most influential and entertaining political journalists, in a career spanning more than four decades. Mungo has worked with the Australian, the Age, the Financial Review, Sydney Morning Herald and numerous magazines, as well as the ABC, SBS, Channel Nine and Channel Ten. His books include the bestselling *Mungo: The Man Who Laughs*, *Poll Dancing* and *Punch & Judy*.

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Customer Reviews

Mungo MacCallum has written a very readable and enjoyable account of Australia's past prime ministers. I very much enjoyed his account of the early PM's and the fact that during the first 15 years Australia was beset with regular changes in leader as members of Parliament changed sides more often than they changed their underwear. As Churchill was reported to say if you have ratted on your party you might as well re rat. Mungo's account of the more recent PM's is restrained but deals with their backgrounds succinctly.

This book I read with great interest but some frustration. On the early Prime Ministers there was a wealth of material that was new to me and gave me a new understanding of who they were and what they achieved. On the later ones there seemed very little that was useful. I wanted more from a Canberra veteran commentator. Mungo writes well and is easy to read. I just felt he could have done better - and I wish he had.

Mungo MacCallum is always good value and this is a very useful historical document, summarising all of our Australian Prime Ministers including some who only lasted for a few months and others who are probably best forgotten.

Mungo is of course a Labor man. Certainly he attempts to be even handed throughout, but when the book reaches the era in which he has been involved, from about Menzies on, his own views start to show through a bit too often.

Considering it's about politics it is still a good read thanks to Mungo McCallum. Once read you will understand our politicians behaviour. History makes sense of the presences and helps us to be more patient with what we are facing with the ALP & NLP at the moment.

Thought this Mungo effort lacked his usual bite and it was too brief thereby lacking/omitting detail. It was a pleasant read and I would recommend this to anyone whom enjoys Mungo's version of politics summation.

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