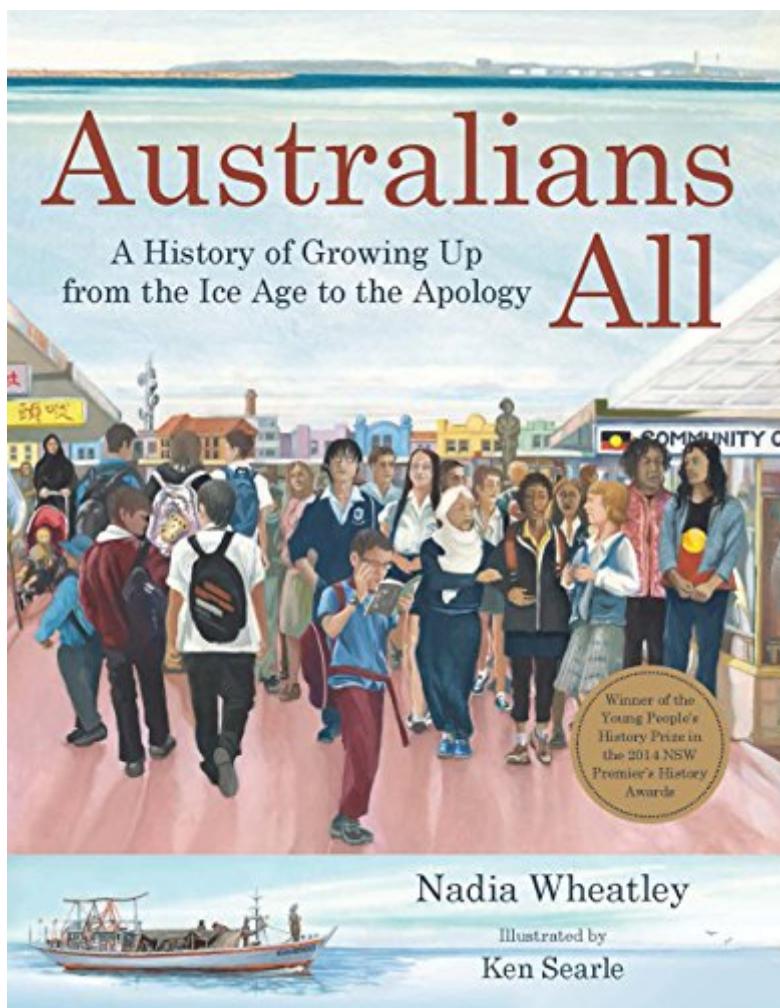


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Australians All : A History Of Growing Up From The Ice Age To The Apology



Synopsis

'I love history because it is story, but the very best thing about this story is that it is not finished. All of us are making history every moment of our lives.' Nadia Wheatley *Australians All* encompasses the history of our continent from the Ice Age to the Apology, from the arrival of the First Fleet to the Mabo Judgement. Brief accounts of the lives of real young Australians open up this chronological narrative. Some of the subjects of the eighty mini-biographies have become nationally or even internationally famous. Others were legends in their own families and communities. Meticulously researched, beautifully written and highly readable, *Australians All* helps us understand who we are, and how we belong to the land we all share. It also shows us who we might be.' In Australian histories there is a particular group whose tales and presence and concerns are rarely narrated. These are the children and adolescents. They are depicted as mute sufferers of the decisions of elders (as were the children of the Depression), helpless victims of policy (the Stolen Generations) and the children of the Second World War (of whom I was one). They appear in most writing of history as mere passive accessories to what adults do. But their stories are our stories too, and their stories are our history, and Nadia Wheatley, that great writer, tells that wide-ranging story in a way so imaginative and colourful that it would attract any young person, and make young readers feel that many of their personal struggles have been faced before, by children of the past and present. Nadia has performed an essential service to history and the young.' - Thomas Keneally

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Customer Reviews

I found this book whilst browsing through the Australian History section at my local public library. My first impression was to flip through the book and seriously consider buying it. And I did. This is the history book that eclipses any and every Australian history book written for children. As you read my review please understand that I am only part way through the book. Ideally I would have liked to have finished the book prior to submitting a review, but it's going to take a few months for me to get to the end. For followers of Charlotte Mason among you, this is definitely a 'living book'. Chapters span a period of tens years, with concise introductions explaining the political and social climate of the era, in an easy to understand, conversational style. Wheatley truly does a fantastic job at painting word pictures, with rich language (ie not dumbed down) and brief but memorable mini biographies that are only a page long. One can easily sit down with a mob of children and read through one or two pages in twenty minutes without losing focus. As mentioned above, the layout of the book is fantastic. The watercolour illustrations just add to it's beauty, without distracting from the written content. Additionally, it contains artwork of the era and other pertinent historical illustrations, eg. a newspaper cartoon persuading families to emigrate to the Australian colonies. It is wonderful to have suitable primary resources presented for the children to explore and pore over. Each chapter concludes with a brief timeline of events. I really do love this book. Really, truly. The author has done a fantastic job from start to finish. I am learning a lot and my children, who range from middle primary to lower middle school, can all listen and comprehend on their own level. She manages to tell the darker aspects of our history with sensitivity. However I do have some criticisms. Firstly, there is an emphasis on the negative aspects of colonisation. My intention is not to defend the manner in which Australia was colonised, or want for a white washed version of history. I just think it is a shame that people are going to get the impression that the Colonialists and the indigenous tribes were always antagonistic towards one another. Perhaps balance comes further on in the book. I will read on and see. Secondly, I cannot give this book to my children to read on their own. Rape and sex are mentioned, as is the first Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras...and I'm only part of the way through the book. Again, I don't dismiss the truth of it, I just don't think it's

appropriate to include so overtly in a children's book, particularly when there is no introductory warning. My seven year old daughter can read this book, but I don't want to have to explain what rape is, let alone sex. It was rather confronting for me. I wouldn't have minded so much if these aspects had been alluded to rather than defined as such. Call me a conservative prude, I don't care! From what I have read, this is a liberal, leftist perspective of Australian history. There will be those who love it and those like me who, whilst embracing most of it, have reservations and am disappointed by what has been omitted. But you get that with History, don't you? This book has heart and humanity, which is why I can disagree with aspects but nevertheless endorse it. yes. Buy the book. But don't let it be your only source of Australian history. I'm sure even Wheatley would agree with me on that.

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