Gough Whitlam: His Time

Jenny Hocking

Gough Whitlam, Australia’s twenty-first prime minister, swept to power in December 1972, ending twenty-three years of conservative rule. It was an ascendency bitterly resented by some, never accepted by others, and ended with dismissal by the Governor-General barely three years later—an outcome that polarised debate and left many believing the full story had not been told.

In this much anticipated second volume of her biography of Gough Whitlam, Hocking has used previously unearthed archival material and extensive interviews with Gough Whitlam, his family, colleagues and foes, to bring the key players in these dramatic events to life.

Who was ‘the third man’ who counselled the Governor-General, Sir John Kerr, in his decision to sack the twice-elected Whitlam government and appoint Malcolm Fraser as prime minister? How much did the Palace know about what was happening? And what drove the Kerr to take the unprecedented action of removing an elected government from office?

This definitive biography takes us behind the political intrigue to reveal a devastated Whitlam and his personal struggle in the aftermath of the dismissal, during the unfulfilled years that followed and his eventual political renewal as Australia’s ambassador to UNESCO. And of course, through the highs and the lows of his decades of public life Whitlam depended absolutely on the steadfast support of the love of his life, Margaret. For this is also the story of a remarkable marriage and an enduring partnership.

The truth of this tumultuous period in Australia’s history is finally revealed in this engaging narrative.