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# Ruth, Roger And Me: Debts And Legacies (BWB Texts Book 27)

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Legacies

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Andrew Dean

BWB Texts



## **Synopsis**

A time of major upheaval now stands between young and old in New Zealand. In *Ruth, Roger and Me*, Andrew Dean explores the lives of the generation of young people brought up in the shadow of the economic reforms of the 1980s and 1990s, those whom he calls 'the children of the Mother of All Budgets'. Drawing together memoir, history and interviews, he explores the experiences of 'discomfort' and 'disconnection' in modern Aotearoa New Zealand.

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## **Customer Reviews**

I lived through much of this same period, including paying for education when the standard was to not have a loan - and have watched, but never really consider the broader implications of the changes to our society. As I read this, the New Zealand economy is starting to sputter, based on the massive inflation of Auckland house prices (combined with the mostly ignored impact of a poor quality housing stock), ongoing issues about making Christchurch livable again (after the earthquake), a realisation of just how dependent we have become a single company exporting dairy

products, and the slowly rising unemployment figures (with youth being particularly well represented). Lets be honest - it's not the most interesting subject in the world. But it is an well written experiential examination of one of the significant economic shakeups in New Zealand, and the lasting affects of those changes on our society. I found it a book that made me think about the past in a different way, and added a perspective to the present. The author has done this in a way that kept me engaged enough that once I started this book, it went straight to the top of my current reading pile. If I am going to read non-fiction, I want to come away a little more informed, and with new perspectives. And this book, in a quiet and well told way, did exactly that.

Interesting view point on the huge changes brought to NZ in the early 90s from someone who has come through the "system" since. Anyone who had a mortgage with a 20% interest rate at the time will find it quite ironic the naivety that it's now harder to buy a house. And yes I went through the system when there were no fees- but there were certainly no jobs when I graduated. Of our graduate class of 12 - 2 of us got jobs in the industry - and I got mine in Australia. Not that much has changed ...

A good read, even if using 'that' too much. The unyielding, some would say callous attitudes and theories held by former NZ Ministers of Finance, and a large part of the elite of NZ society were particularly striking and revealing. It can be strongly argued time and better statistics have revealed their serious shortcomings. In my opinion, they are naive and a load of codswallop. There is pervasive poverty nowadays in NZ, driven by rising inequality. Both major political parties really do not give a toss about the plight of poor people. People are suffering, the young especially. Most of the latter have little hope of owning a house, unless they can access the bank of "Mum and Dad." Still, there is now some hope the pernicious influence of neoliberalism is fading, despite Ayn Rand, Economist Hayek, Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher's efforts to bed in change.

Within the confines of its size Andrew Dean outlines with care, integrity and in an easily-read style the more than three decades of calculated NeoLiberal politics creating our current societal division and hurt, political blandness and predictability. Many New Zealanders feel disconnected from their fellows. This has lead to poor participation, especially by the young and impoverished (often one and the same) in our Democracy. What is needed, Dean suggests, is a political upset the size of the Christchurch earthquakes to inject vision for a different future.

Great book, highly recommended - especially if, like me, you are still paying off your student loan, wondering how you will ever afford a house and skeptical as to whether universal superannuation will still be available when you retire.

A clear explanation and description of the damage created in New Zealand by new right economic policies in the years between 1984 -1999 and 2008- 2015.

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