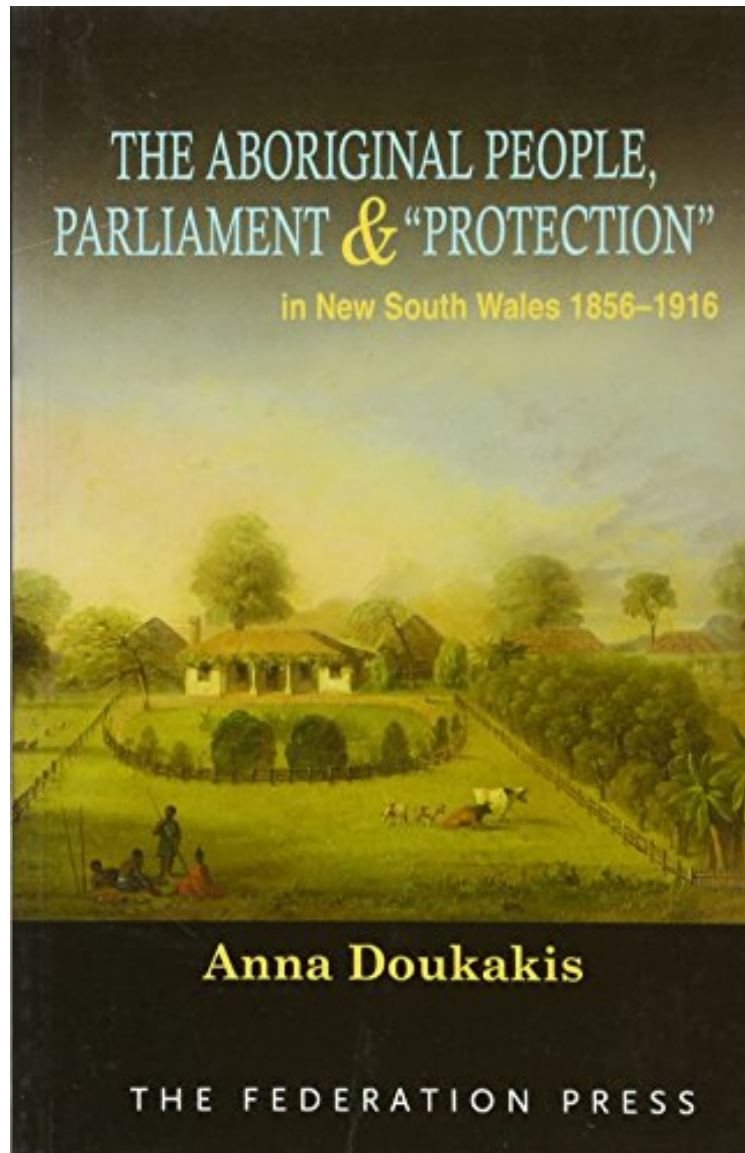


(Library ebook) The Aboriginal People, Parliament and 'Protection': In New South Wales, 1856-1916 (NSW Sesquicentenary of Responsible Government)

## The Aboriginal People, Parliament and 'Protection': In New South Wales, 1856-1916 (NSW Sesquicentenary of Responsible Government)

*Anna Doukakis*

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**Anna Doukakis : The Aboriginal People, Parliament and 'Protection': In New South Wales, 1856-1916 (NSW Sesquicentenary of Responsible Government)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be

worth my time, and all praised *The Aboriginal People, Parliament and 'Protection': In New South Wales, 1856-1916* (NSW Sesquicentenary of Responsible Government):

Doukakis draws upon 60 years of NSW parliamentary debates to investigate early attitudes towards Aborigines, and towards policies and legislation which affected them. She shows that the men elected to the first democratic Parliament in NSW in 1856, and their successors to 1916, held wide-ranging views on Aborigines. Some even actively supported their inclusion in colonial society. Their debates ranged from the right to vote to the provision of blankets, from wages to the settlement of Aborigines. The book shows that no one group of politicians dominated policy or debate. This encouraged an openness which most notably enabled Aboriginal participation in the political process. Some politicians spoke in Parliament on behalf of Aborigines who had approached them with their grievances. This openness, and the book, end in 1916, shortly after the NSW Parliament passed legislation empowering the State to remove Aboriginal children from their parents. By shedding light on the men who made up the NSW Parliament, *The Aboriginal People, Parliament and 'Protection' in NSW 1856-1916* provides an unusually nuanced picture of parliamentarians and, through them, colonial society.

[This book] draws on 60 years of NSW parliamentary debates to show the attitudes during the period and the policies and legislation that was shaped. It covers a wide range of debates from the right to vote to wages and highlights the diversity of opinion amongst parliamentarians at the time and some issues related to Aboriginal grievances that were raised with them; but they also introduced the legislation that allowed for children to be removed from their parents. This is an interesting, well-researched historical text. - National Indigenous Times, Issue 5, 05 Nov 2006 The parliament of the nineteenth century was different from the parliament of today in at least one important aspect: it had the liberal ideal of the independent representative whose primary responsibility was to his constituents. There were parties, of course, but the vicious discipline of the modern political unit was largely absent. It is this aspect which informs two of the four major difficulties which Ms Doukakis has faced and dispatched in this admirable monograph. There was no party line, no published policy on "the Aboriginal question". Nor, conversely, was there an Aboriginal constituency in the understood sense. The third difficulty is the lack of primary material, and a lack of organisation of what primary material there is. For example, many pages of debate over the fitness of Aborigines for suffrage during an 1891 debate on an electoral bill were not indexed under 'Aborigines'. All of which informs the final difficulty, indifference. In the popular (white) mind, the Aboriginal "problem" was one which by definition was going away, as ideas of frontier and conquest were replaced by those of the dying race and social Darwinism. ... The focus of the book is the parliamentarians, and there is an excellent appendix which shows who spoke when, and from what perspective. The book appears well-referenced, and the debates themselves have been well used... Ms Doukakis does not preach; rather, the book is a sober assessment. - Law Society Journal (NSW), February 2007 [A] clearly articulated and well-organised work that will be of interest to anyone seeking a better understanding of the historical context of Aboriginal policy and decision-making in New South Wales. - Anthropological Forum , vol 17(2), July 2007