

NATIONAL BREAKING NEWS

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Whitlam's legacy resonates today: Shorten

AS Bill Shorten leads the Labor party out of a crushing federal defeat, he often thinks of former prime minister Gough Whitlam.

Speaking at the launch of the new book, *The Whitlam Legacy*, Mr Shorten said the Labor legend was the navigator who steered the party out of 21 years in the wilderness and "back into the business of making history".

"It has been much on my mind in the past 10 weeks as I have watched the hectic dismantling by this present bunch of the legacy of Rudd/Gillard administrations," the opposition leader said on Tuesday.

Without the Whitlam era, Australia would have no national health service, no universal access to tertiary education and no film industry, he said.

The now 97-year-old had also re-imagined the country and forged Australia's connection with China, while teaching the valuable lesson of patience in opposition, Mr Shorten added.

"I know that what he learnt in six years leading the opposition I must learn. How to stay visible; how to connect with an electorate who are exhausted by leadership squabbles; how to hold an always fractious party together; how to make allies of old enemies; how to embrace the future without insulting the best of the past."

The book, edited by Troy Bramston, combines essays from 40 contributors, including Bob Carr, Michael Kirby and former minister Kep Enderby.

In the foreword, the former prime minister, who took power in 1972, says people could learn from the mistakes and successes recorded in the book.

In the relentless 24-hour news cycle, Mr Whitlam says party members should "never forget the primacy of parliament as the great forum for developing, presenting and explaining policy".

"If we develop, define and defend our policies thoroughly before their implementation, we will be much less likely to be blown off course," he writes.

SOURCE: <http://www.news.com.au/national/breaking-news/whitlams-legacy-resonates-today-shorten/story-e6frku9-1226768609251>