This pocket-sized book is written by a pair of human rights advocates and researchers to help us understand the foundations, history and strategies of the human rights movement. In 135 pages it introduces the remarkable progress in recognising human rights since World War II, the international laws that have developed and the struggle to uphold them. It offers principles and stories that helped me grapple with the issues behind contemporary politically hot questions:

- Does the war-on-terror justify human rights transgressions (rather than committing to respecting human rights as part of an anti-terror strategy)?
- Should torture be allowed under extreme circumstances?
- Why are some northern world leaders concerned about arrest for war crimes if they travel internationally?
- How can Australia justify the shunning of refugee and climate change protocols?
- How can nations protect human rights during modern war? (The Red Cross estimates 10% of those killed in WWI were civilians, 50% in WWII, 83% in Korea, 95% in Vietnam and 84% in Iraq!)
- When is it appropriate to walk in the shoes of Gandhi and Martin Luther King and practice civil disobedience and non-violence to protest escalation of war?
- How can poorer countries balance human rights and environmental protection (e.g. when 8.5 million cubic metres of wood was needed to rebuild Banda Aceh after the Tsunami, but neighbouring orang-utan habitats of Sumatran forest are under threat).

Understanding and responding to human rights abuses is a complex matter. These writers appeal for rigorous research, collaboration with governments, corporations and non-government organisations, enforcing laws as well as utilising trade sanctions, advocating for economic and social rights alongside civil and political rights, and valuing Truth and Reconciliation Commissions and human rights education.

This No-Nonsense Guide underlines the powerful idea that every person has equality, dignity and inalienable rights that should not be ignored by governments, corporations or other individuals. It is a concise primer for students of human rights and for concerned citizens who want to understand issues our politicians might prefer us to ignore.