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Grenville's story not glossed over

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AUSTRALIA'S violent European settlement history is uncomfortable but something the nation must come to grips with if it is to progress, according to the nationally renowned author of *The Secret River*.

Kate Grenville's 2005 book brought the issue of white settlers taking land from Aboriginals to the fore when it was published in 2005, with a two-part drama based on the book, aired on ABC TV last month, catapulting the issue further into the public's consciousness.

Grenville, who was in Orange promoting her latest book *One Life: My Mother's Story* on Tuesday, said she was pleased the often glossed-over part of Australia's history had reached a wider audience.

But she said many people still refused to acknowledge Europeans had stolen land from Aboriginals and committed violent crimes against them in the early years of settlement from 1788.

"I think there's much more understanding even since I wrote the book 10 years ago, but it's still a really uncomfortable thing for many people to face up to," Grenville said.

"It's the truth, it's better if we acknowledge it and move forward." Grenville said it was vital to recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the original inhabitants of Australia and agreed with the push to change to Australian Constitution to reflect this.

"Clearly something should be done. I'm not sure what though, as I'm not an expert. Clearly we have to recognise them as the original inhabitants of this land," she said.

Promoting *One Life* at Orange City Library to a crowd of 80 book lovers, Grenville said the memoirs of her mother's life reflected the lives of so many 20th century Australian women.

She said she had been bombarded with letters from readers who had been delighted by reading the story of an "ordinary" person, and were reminded of their own mothers or grandmothers.

alexandra.king@fairfaxmedia.com.au It's the truth ... clearly we have to recognise them as the original inhabitants of this land.