sure of the heavily aid-funded Te Mautari (the national “commercial” fishing company) may have been a blessing in disguise in that its workers subsequently became more committed to working for the company. What if more aid were to be withheld or rejected?

The book’s comments regarding distributions of the earnings of the Revenue Equalization Reserve Fund should take account of the nature of this asset, where the country has few other “earners,” as well as the nature of the I-Kiribati commitment to forgoing consumption. As the president states, “the Reserve Fund is seen as an insurance which should not be squandered. It is a sort of security which the country has built up over several years with great sacrifice” (306). The real issue then is when, and for which investments, can the fund feasibly finance a direct investment in the domestic economy? For example, while social welfare can be improved, the fund cannot provide US standards of health and education.

Policy compromises may be postponed and development myths may prevail, but it is encouraging to read the candid overviews by two of the longest-serving cabinet members, President Teannaki and Vice President Iuta. Overall the book makes a substantial contribution toward a more complete understanding of the vulnerability and strengths, trials and achievements of Kiribati politics and development.

STEPHEN J POLLARD
East-West Center


This book is the second in a series, edited by Rodney Cole of the Development Studies Centre at the Australian National University, of “doomsday” forewarnings about the Pacific Islands. The series is funded by the Australian International Development Assistance Bureau, a government agency. With luck, many of us will still be around to see whether the forewarnings come true. The prime focus of the series, as indicated by the editorial note, “highlights the consequences of failing to recognize and plan for the effects of population growth.” The target audiences are island leaders and “those in metropolitan countries responsible for the design and delivery of Overseas Development Assistance.”

With the publication of this policy-related series, Australia seems poised to join Hawai‘i, including the Pacific Islands Development Program at the East-West Center, as a second major source of advice for Pacific Island leaders who may, of course (and this is sometimes not fully recognized), also defer to their own departmental advice, their own consultants, and their own regional bodies and universities. The insider-outsider research field is spiked with mines that may prevent the Australian National University
message getting through. Collaborative work often treads more softly.

The book, a joint effort from the University of Sydney, is by population geographer John Connell, whose major input is likely to have been the population chapters—population and urbanization, urban primacy and regional development, and urban economy and society—and urban planner John Lea, whose background suggests a greater input in the remaining chapters—on urban management and planning, land policy, and housing, water supplies, and sanitation. Each chapter provides an overview of the issue at hand and a commentary on the individual countries of Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, and Fiji. The authors have endeavored to maintain a reasonable balance between countries, but the uneven availability of the secondary data on which they rely has meant that this was not always possible. The omission of French-speaking Melanesian New Caledonia does not imply that its towns have no problems.

The book is useful in providing general information, not available elsewhere under one cover, for those unfamiliar with the Pacific or those who have not thought through the population problem in urban terms—and this could well include the two target audiences. For those more familiar with the local scene, the book must still be classed as “a good read,” but it has not broken new ground. A book aimed at the “establishment” may not be the best place to talk about subordinate global relations and internal class and sectional interests, but something of causal complexity should have come through. How, otherwise, are Pacific leaders to debate the merits and demerits of the limited options available to them?

The root of the problem is not simply population increase and rural—urban migration. Most of the internal “ingredients” of the impending disaster are mentioned, but separately. There is no mention of external causes. In the opening chapter, appropriately called “A Call to Action,” lack of will, poverty, problems of infrastructure, the physical environment, and management are presented. Later is discussion of urban employment, “high” wages, land shortage, and the small rateable base, each of which is important but relative, connected, and perceivable from other perspectives. The situation is described but not analyzed, and it is doubtful that it can be without new research, new data, new perspectives, in the islands. It is just not possible to research such a book by excursions out of Sydney.

I learnt most from the urban management chapters, perhaps because I knew less about this area in the first place, but perhaps also because Connell’s broad sweeping brush paints no new scenes, and his position is not always without contention. One example may suffice. I am not convinced by his figures on primacy in Papua New Guinea or Fiji. For Papua New Guinea (and this is not sour grapes) he seems unaware of two major monographs I wrote for the Department of Statistics (Inter-Provincial Migration in Papua New Guinea, 1985; Migration and Urbanization in Papua New Guinea:
The 1980 Census, 1987), and an important paper in a special 1980 census edition of Yagl-Ambu (10[3]: 47–58, 1983) that showed how different measures of employment-type primacy produced different hierarchies. For Fiji, even apart from a miscount of towns and an inaccuracy in Suva’s true share of the 1986 population (57 percent, not “just over half”), he states that Suva’s primacy has declined relative to Lautoka. His estimate excludes Lami, which was part of Suva in 1976. A more accurate estimate, including Lami at both census dates, shows Suva to have increased its share of the urban population between 1976 and 1986 from 53 to 57 percent, and its primacy (measured against Lautoka) to have increased from 4.1 times larger to 5.7 times larger.

These and other factual inaccuracies are not too important in themselves, but they do cast doubt on other assumptions and conclusions. The claim, for example, that differences in rural and urban wages cause migration has some general validity, but wage differences do not explain the persistence of migration when urban work is not available (eg, Walsh, Honiara: 1986 Census Atlas, 1992) or considerable differences in provincial migration rates where rural wage levels are similar (Walsh, Asian and Pacific Migration Journal 1(2): 196–219, 1990). Sour grapes at being uncited again? I hope not.

The book has its uses, and those of us who could have written it and didn’t will be grateful to its authors for taking important issues to a wider public; it is just that we may have expected a little more that is new, some greater depth of inquiry, and somewhat more care. Would I recommend it to its target audiences? Definitely yes. And a wider audience? Yes, but with caution.

No book is perfect.

A CROSBIE WALSH
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The close reading Michael Webb gives of contemporary urban musical expression in Papua New Guinea separates this book from reams of ethnomusicological studies in the Pacific Islands that fixate on “traditional” music cultures (invented or otherwise). Virtual fringe on the fringe, for music scholarship itself has been marginal within Pacific Islands studies—witless, for example, the absence thus far of music articles in this journal. Locals Musik merits the attention of the more disparate community of Pacific Islands scholars, for it illustrates vividly the power of contemporary popular musical means to resonate broader social concerns.

Webb focuses specifically on songs with lyrics in Tok Pisin, a regional lingua franca. His concerns are threefold: “the particular ways in which T[ok]