would contribute to both regional and national prosperity; and about Australia's uncritical adherence to British-derived philosophies of economic organization. It analyzes the complex subject of race relations at Australia's margin: the pearling industry relied for its survival on cheap indigenous and imported indentured labor from Papua New Guinea, other Pacific islands, and Asia. It was the only industry exempted from the provisions of the White Australia Policy and the importer of indentured labor until thirty years ago, far longer than is generally realized. (The postwar struggle to retain this exemption, documented by Adrian Cunningham in his MLitt thesis, 1992, from the Australian National University, makes for interesting reading.) These long-standing problems were recognized, but each solution tried—shell-bed closures, size limits, license restrictions, and a Commonwealth marketing board—proved too radical to be implemented for long.

Anyone interested in natural resource management and the consequences of laissez-faire and self-serving administration, will find ammunition here against critics of conservation and sustainable development. I recommend the book also to readers with an interest in race relations and labor history in Australia, and the historical roots of Australia's Asian and Pacific interconnections.

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This volume is one of a series initiated by the National Centre for Development Studies at the Australian National University that "seeks to highlight the consequences of failing to recognise and plan for the effects of population growth in the island states of the South Pacific over the next two decades." The series is directed at "island leaders" and those "in the industrial countries responsible for the design and delivery of . . . development assistance." This particular volume states that it covers the Melanesian countries of Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu and seeks to "address some strategic questions about the longer-term development of Melanesian agriculture, . . . and suggest how agriculture needs to change." It is based on the premise that agriculture "must provide the fundamental driving force for long-run economic transformation" and be "the engine for general economic development."

There is no doubt that the volume contains much good advice for policymakers in the region. The underlying and frequently reiterated messages are that Melanesian governments have been unsuccessful in most of their attempts to use policy instruments to
foster agriculture in the overlapping subsistence and export sectors and that the dualistic forms of agriculture (smallholder on the one hand and plantation on the other) should be reduced, with emphasis placed on the smallholder mode. Belief in the efficacy of the market and the private sector is strong. Prescriptions include the need to resolve land issues “once and for all”; for governments to leave marketing, both internal and export, to the private sector; for governments to encourage more research and more appropriate research in marketing as well as other aspects of agriculture; and to be cautious about trying to pick winners or seeking niche markets. There is no doubt good sense in such recommendations, but I am left in doubt whether they will be heeded by those at whom the book is aimed. The reasons for my doubt stem from several features of the book.

The authors take a curiously detached approach to their topic. The text reads like a general guide for planning agricultural strategies for almost any developing region—a set of broad and general lectures outlining the basic issues that need to be addressed. It would be possible to replace the term “Melanesia” with “Polynesia,” or even “central Africa,” make remarkably few other changes in the text, and have a volume setting out strategies for these other regions. The sense of detachment is enhanced by the relative lack of specific examples of the problems described. For example, readers are told frequently of policy failures on the part of Melanesian governments, but very few concrete examples are given. Analysis of such failures showing where the faults arose would have been much more instructive than statements of principle. Equally there is little about any successful cases.

Detachment from specifics also arises because the text is almost totally generalized to the level of the whole region. There are only 7 specific references to Fiji in the whole book (3 being to the export of ginger); 5 to Vanuatu; and 13 to Solomon Islands. Papua New Guinea fares a little better with 28 references, but such detachment from the region’s great variety of agricultural practices, specialities, and contexts leaves the book very short on specifics and means that readers are likely to have difficulty in tying its recommendations to the agricultural and marketing realities they know. Equally puzzling is the omission of any discussion of some of the more successful agricultural operations in Melanesia. For example there is no reference at all to the smallholder-based sugar industry of Fiji within which a very significant number of Melanesian Fijians are successful farmers, and which illustrates success in the use of many of the principles the authors advocate. A further feature which may put off potential users among policymakers is the lecturing, almost hectoring, prescriptive tone of the book.

In summary, anyone who wants a checklist of things to consider when involved in strategic planning for agriculture will find this book useful. But for planning in any particular country or place, policymakers will need to delve much deeper into the realities of the local agricultural, environmental,
social, marketing, and related systems if their policies are to be any more than statements of grand principles.

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This collection celebrates twenty-five years of scholarly effort by the most distinctive of geography departments in, rather than of, the Pacific, at the University of the South Pacific, Lau­calagi Bay. Within the broader frame of Pacific studies and in the apt metaphor of Epeli Hau'ofa, its thirteen essays bear testimony to divers rather than to surfers. As divers, students of an oceanic realm display a multidimensional concern with past, present, and future that makes them more given to reflection, perhaps slower moving, always searching for what lies beneath the easy visibility of a contemporary world. But at times, even for some runs of years during the university’s history, it has been the surfers that captured more scholarly attention, for theirs is an intense preoccupation with knowledge and its passing fashions, with the shine of a momentary present, and with amassing vast quantities of evidence—before speeding on. . . . Divers, not surfers? Then how many metropolitan departments of geography can harness so much collective energy and so much spirit of common purpose to display their academic accomplishments between the covers of one volume for a considerable range of years—in this case, from 1968 until 1993.

Throughout, there is an integrated concern with people, land, and sea, with an interlocked humanity of islands. Although the parent “geography” is invoked, the overriding sense is that to follow disciplinary convention and deconstruct that parent to the various kith and kin present in this volume (agricultural geography, biogeography, cultural geography, economic geography, geomorphology, marine geography, social geography, urban geography) would be to demean and to make trivial the more compelling whole. The emphasis, instead, is on issues in which theory and praxis, personal philosophy and scholarly commitment, are two sides of the one coin rather than of different currency. In the largest sense, of the sustained use and sensitive management of environmental and human resources spread unequally across a sea of islands and, beyond that, of biodiversity, cultural identity, geopolitics and aid, marine and foreshore economics, rural land use, urban and industrial dynamics.

The sixteen authors and commentators in this collection range from those associated with the geography department’s early and formative years (Rajesh Chandra, Edward Simpson, Konai Helu Thaman, Randolph Thaman, Crosbie Walsh) through to Eric Waddell, coeditor with Patrick Nunn