

Levine, S (Ed.) (2016). *Pacific ways: Government and politics in the Pacific Islands* (2nd edn.). Wellington, New Zealand: Victoria University Press; 416pp; pbk; ISBN: 978-1-77656-068-4; NZ\$40.

The 2016 edition of *Pacific ways* follows up on the success of the original 2009 book by the same title. It provides an introduction to the political structures and institutions of 27 territories and states of the Pacific island region. Its range includes the major metropolitan countries of Australia and New Zealand as well as the contested provinces of Indonesia that are commonly referred to as West Papua. The collection also includes material on Timor-Leste, one of the world's youngest countries (a new addition, along with West Papua). Its main focus, however, is the island Pacific which includes some of the world's smallest countries, whether in terms of landmass or population size. The coverage that the collection provides is sufficiently wide to allow the reader to gain a sense of the diversity of the region, even without a detailed consideration of culture, language and ethnicity.

Unsurprisingly, the influence of history is very significant in a collection of this type with its focus on government and politics. In particular, the impacts of colonialism are evident. A number of the countries that are covered are ones where the departure of colonial masters is still within living memory. In these cases, colonisers left their mark on constitutional documents, legislation and institutions that form the political and governance architecture that exists today. Describing these institutions is the core aim of the book. In doing so, it also covers those territories with unique sovereignty arrangements, including countries that are in free association with a larger country, such as New Zealand (e.g. Cook Islands) or the USA (e.g. Federated States of Micronesia), and political entities that are still colonies, such as French Polynesia and Wallis and Futuna.

This collection provides a very useful and, overall, comprehensive introduction to some of the key political and governmental aspects of the Pacific region. It will be of benefit to students and researchers who are new to the field of Pacific studies. It also provides a very useful starting point for anyone who is looking to work in the region, whether as a researcher, in business, or as a development partner. Its utility is enhanced by the inclusion of additional readings that appear at the end of each chapter.

There are, however, some significant limitations to the collection. One is that the sections that are covered by the chapters are not consistent. So, for example, the chapter on Cook Islands includes a section on the judicial system (p. 46) but this does not appear in the chapter on Solomon Islands (pp. 291-306). Some of the apparent inconsistency can be explained by the need to address issues that are particularly important in the context of an individual country or territory. Nevertheless, this does not explain all of these disparities.

There is also a lack of consistency in the quality of the analysis between the various chapters. Those chapters that are written by people who live in the countries they are writing about (or who have visited them relatively recently) are definitely stronger than those written by authors who do not fall into those categories. So, for example, in the chapter on Vanuatu there is no reference to the role of the Supreme Court, which plays an important role in ensuring that political instability does not lead to more serious consequences. Nor is there any mention of the introduction of temporary special measures to ensure women's participation in politics as members of municipal councils. This is a crucial part of any conversation about women in politics in the region and requires adequate consideration in a volume of this kind. The landmark events of late 2015, when 14 MPs were jailed, are mentioned cursorily in the

conclusion of the chapter: this is quite astonishing, given their significant impact at both national and regional levels.

Fraenkel's concluding chapter, entitled 'Political institutions in the Pacific Islands', goes some way to providing a comparison between different entities considered elsewhere in the book. Pleasingly, this chapter makes some (albeit too brief) mention of the participation of women in politics in the Pacific; this issue is largely underserved in the earlier chapters. This chapter would be stronger if there was greater focus on analysis rather than description.

Now that we have two editions of *Pacific ways*, they can, to some extent, stand side by side. By drawing on them both, it is possible to chart the significant political developments that have affected the countries and territories that are covered in the volumes. We now look forward to a third edition that will allow for an expanded timescale and a greater sense of how the politics and governance of the region are changing. I would like to see issues of political activity around foreign policy given greater attention in the next iteration. This could include an analysis of bilateral relationships, regional political arrangements and, increasingly, global activity with a particular focus on climate change politics. Footnotes rather than endnotes would also make the volume more readable.

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