

The Pacific Island States: security and sovereignty in the post-Cold War period

Stephen Henningham, Macmillan, London, 1995, ISBN 0 312 12513 5, xxiii+174pp, A\$59.95.

The Pacific is no longer pacific. Perhaps it never was. The military coups in Fiji, the unending Bougainville saga, the Sandline affair in Papua New Guinea, the politically motivated assassinations in New Caledonia, the violent anti-nuclear riots in Tahiti: all these and numerous other such events are powerful reminders of the huge disparity that exists between the hard realities in the newly independent island states and the images of romance and tranquillity they conjure up in western minds. This book attempts to introduce the reader to some of the contemporary complexities in the islands. Stephen Henningham is eminently qualified for the task. A former, diplomat, public servant, academic and diplomat again, Henningham has closely observed many of the issues and problems he analyses in the book. His is a sober, intelligent, level-headed analysis, written in an easy accessible style that makes the book ideal for survey undergraduate courses in contemporary Pacific island politics and development.

After an obligatory map and statistics-enriched introductory section on the Pacific islands region, Henningham discusses complex issues surrounding security, decolonisation, indigenous rights and internal conflicts in the islands, environment, resources and nuclear testing, and the role and influence of external powers in the region. His perspective, he says with admirable honesty, is that of an Australian commentator, and he makes no claim to speak for or on behalf of the islanders (p xi).

Of particular interest to readers of this journal is Henningham's assessment of the role of foreign powers in the region. France comes across in his account as an opportunistic, manipulative player unlikely to be dislodged from its considerable position of influence in the region anytime soon. Its continuing aid to the islands of the region and its quiet diplomatic support for some of their (not so admirable) causes will ensure its presence on the scene. The United States, whose primary strategic interest in the region has been confined to the islands of Micronesia, is likely to continue as a minimalist player in the post-cold War environment. Asian countries (China, Japan, Malaysia) have made overtures to the islands and increased their profile in recent years, but as one island diplomat, Margaret Taylor of Papua New Guinea puts it, 'it's all based on extraction of resources' (p112). Australia and New Zealand, Henningham argues, have less power and influence in the region than is generally assumed, and the trend is likely to continue in view of the changing circumstances, greater assertiveness of island governments through regional institutions, and the internal politics of re-prioritising economic and strategic concerns. It is increasingly clear that it is in East and Southeast Asia, and not the Pacific Islands, that where Australia's larger economic and strategic interests lie.

What of the future? In Henningham's view, 'in the virtual absence of external and intra-regional military threats, domestically-focused and primarily non-military security issues are likely to preoccupy the Pacific island states' (p148), including economic uncertainties, environmental issues, problems of law and order and internal social and political tensions. On the international front, with the ending of the Cold War, the island states will have greater flexibility and opportunity 'to assert their independence

and develop and diversify their external relations more freely, without being subject to the same advice and pressures hitherto brought to bear by their traditional Western partners' (p149).

I have no reason to quarrel with this reasonable prognosis. But I am also aware of the Pacific islands' remarkable capacity to confound all predictions about their behaviour. Fiji is a good example. Writing about that country, Henningham notes the efforts underway to create a more democratic and inclusive order. 'But such change seems unlikely to be either rapid or substantial' (p130). Thankfully, recent developments have proved him wrong. Not only does Fiji now have a new, broadly acceptable constitution shorn of its previous racially discriminatory provisions, it has also resumed its cherished membership of the British Commonwealth! In Henningham's defence, though, it has to be said that he was not the only observer to have a pessimistic view about Fiji's political prospects.

The Pacific islands are not only not pacific, they are also happily unpredictable.

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Fiji Agriculture Sector Review: a strategy for growth and diversification

Asian Development Bank and Fiji Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forests, Manila, 1996, ISBN 9715610951, xxii+98pp.

Too often in the past, governments in South Pacific countries have not selected meaningful strategic options for agricultural development, and have prepared plans of actions that are too optimistic and at odds with circumstances and available resources. Strategies spelt out in development plans

read suspiciously like wish lists rather than realistic decisions about resource allocation in an often difficult environment. This book hopefully heralds a new era of understanding of the limitations of the impacts governments can have in generating agricultural development. It also demonstrates an appreciation of the sorts of things that governments can best do to encourage private sector development in agricultural production, processing and marketing. It is highly recommended reading for people interested in how agricultural sectors in the South Pacific region can move beyond the slow growth rates or stagnation of recent times.

This book is the outcome of collaborative work between consultants, Andrew McGregor and Julian Hamilton-Peach, staff from the Fiji Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Forests and ALTA (MAFFA) and Central Planning Office, and Graham Walter from the Office of Pacific Operations, Asian Development Bank. Its theme is how to reorient the Fiji government's strategy for the agricultural sector to fit the reformed approach to macroeconomic policymaking adopted in 1989 when the government embarked on a new era of 'private sector-led' development.

The book is tightly argued and compact. It contains a 12-page executive summary and a main text of only 67 pages, 13 of which contain a summary table recommending a strategy to exploit Fiji's competitive advantage in agricultural production. A valuable annex is provided in which the current status, market prospects, constraints and requirements are detailed for 18 products or groups of products. A wealth of pertinent information is packed into this annex. A second annex is provided on estimated gross margins for selected crops.

The main section of the book commences with a review of the performance and sectoral contribution of the

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agricultural sector to the economy of Fiji over the past decade. Chapter 2 contains an assessment of the ramifications for agriculture of a change in macroeconomic policymaking in 1989 to a 'private sector-led' approach, in the wake of growing disillusionment with the 'government-led' approach that preceded it. The authors mention changes introduced from 1989 directly affecting agriculture, namely tariffification, followed by decreasing tariff rates, and removal of some trading monopolies. More importantly, they note 'a change in mind set in terms of what government was perceived as being capable of doing and in attitude toward the private sector' (p16). They flag a need for further consolidation of changes to make agricultural industries more competitive in an increasingly competitive economic environment. The major feature of the policy reform was a switch by the government from direction to facilitation of agricultural activities.

Chapter 3 is pivotal to the strategic direction suggested in the book. Fiji's competitive advantage in agriculture is analysed for the purpose of defining which agricultural activities would make best use of scarce resources in a competitive environment. The analysis is generally sound, although one could quibble with the use of the concept, 'competitive advantage' almost exclusively. It would have been preferable to distinguish between competitive advantage and comparative advantage and, in the case of the latter, the comparative advantage in different parts of the country. The distinction is important, and would have strengthened the arguments put in the book about the appropriate role of government as a facilitator rather than director of activities and 'picker of winners' among firms. According to Warr (1994), comparative advantage 'deals with the efficient allocation of resources in an open economy' (p5), while competitive

advantage 'deals with the determinants of the commercial performance of individual firms...' (p13). The two concepts should be seen as complements. Presumably, the gross margins presented in Annex 2 are most relevant to private firms in determining where they might have a competitive advantage. In this respect, it would be useful to know about the derivation of these margins: do they apply to 'best practice' farmers or are they some average over all farmers? For determining comparative advantage, it would have been useful if some measures such as domestic resource cost ratios had also been included.

A government has an important role in aiding the exploitation of comparative advantage by providing an appropriate economic and technical environment, consistent with the general theme adopted in Asian Development Bank's review of the agricultural sector in Fiji. On the other hand, competitive advantage is something best left to individuals and firms in agriculture to exploit. Given the sorts of agricultural activities outlined by Asian Development Bank in which Fiji can be expected to have a comparative advantage (notably, high-value niche products), success rates are going to depend on the ability of private sector decision makers to formulate and implement strategies that enable them to compete, and decide when to put in or withdraw resources in the face of changes in economic circumstances. Governments in the South Pacific have proved inept in making these decisions in agriculture. Too often, institutions and activities have been persevered with beyond their 'use by' date. The cases of NATCO (formerly the National Marketing Authority) and cocoa production in Fiji illustrate this point (p5). Within the same agricultural industry, it is possible, indeed unexceptional, that some participants will succeed while others fail depending on

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how well they manage their resources in a risky environment. It seems fair to deduce from the tone of the book that this is how it should be, rather than governments trying to dictate both comparative *and* competitive advantage as has occurred too much in the past.

A second minor criticism with this chapter concerns the weights given to export and domestic markets. While it is reasonable to expect that most economic development in agriculture in Fiji is to come from exports, production for the domestic market remains very important, as the authors acknowledge (p30). Yet less than two pages out of 15 are devoted to traditional food production in this chapter.

Chapter 4 is an exposition of sector development issues which, along with the analysis of competitive advantage in Chapter 3, sets the scene for outlining the sectoral strategy presented in the fifth and final chapter. As well as the macroeconomic environment, the development issues discussed in terms of their potential and constraints are land resources, quarantine, research and access to technology, extension, rural credit, labour (notably its management and entrepreneurial ability) and air freight. What the authors achieve in this chapter is a judicious selection and outline of those areas in which the government should become involved, and in which it can have a significant positive impact on private activity in agriculture.

The final chapter begins with a 13-point strategic focus on the development of niche market exports and increased production in traditional crop systems. There has been a tendency to take a rosy view of prospects to develop and defend niche agricultural export markets in developing countries. The detail provided in Annex 1, however, shows a realistic approach to the possibilities and pitfalls of niche exporting. To implement the proposed strategy, the authors next outline

a revised role for MAFFA. Changes suggested for research and extension are quite radical, and possibly beyond what is feasible, given existing capacity within government to resist or 'water down' the mooted changes. This outline is followed by a very brief analysis of the need for technical assistance and potential role for aid donors. The book concludes on a practical note with a detailed implementation program—a striking feature being the extent to which MAFFA is expected to work with the private sector in fulfilling the roles set for it.

A sequel to the Asian Development Bank sector review has been the eruption of a controversy over implementation of the strategy proposed in the review through the Commodity Development Framework (CDF) (MAFFA 1996). The CDF has already received Cabinet approval. Although its architects have proclaimed it to have been formulated in the spirit of the Asian Development Bank agriculture sector review, its critics argue that it betrays signs of the traditional approach to agricultural development of planning predominantly by direction. There is little evidence of the change in mind set about limits to government capability and attitude toward the private sector, referred to above. An alternative use of CDF funds was put forward by the private sector (Yee 1997) arguing for the establishment of an Agricultural Investment and Credit Corporation (AICC) which would lend money for agricultural development to the private sector using the funds set aside for the CDF. The key elements in the operations of such an institution, according to the private sector proposal, would be transparency and accountability; and the borrowing decisions of the private sector would reflect investment profitability and risks. These decisions would then determine agricultural strategy, essentially as an aggregation of individual private

agricultural strategic decisions. It remains to be seen whether it would be possible to establish an AICC which would avoid the deficiencies that have bedevilled the operations of other development banks in the region. At the time this review was written, the matter of which proposal would hold sway was unresolved. It is to be hoped that a compromise will be reached, enabling the distribution of funds directly for private sector use and the retention of some funds for MAFFA to improve the discharge of its facilitatory functions. In this way, the amended CDF would be more in line with the philosophy expounded in the book under review.

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Customary Land Tenure and Sustainable Development—Complementarity or Conflict?

Ron Crocombe (ed.), 1995. South Pacific Commission, Noumea and Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, Suva, ISBN 9822034601, 124 pp, US\$12.

This little volume of eight essays, prepared for the 34th South Pacific Conference in 1994, addresses two related questions about customary tenure and sustainability. One, whether customary land tenure and sustainable development are compatible or in conflict. The other, whether customary tenure systems which are now confronted with quite different conditions from those under which they evolved, are themselves sustainable.

Crocombe's introductory essay explores these themes, and identifies some critical concerns for the survival and utility of customary tenure in the present day, including types of use and rates of extraction, and population density and mobility. He points out the diversity of tenure systems in the South Pacific, and the difficulties in all of codifying custom. Crocombe rejects the idea that customary tenure is inherently sustainable because it is traditional, but suggests that with evolution, adaptation, education, and attention to boundary problems, customary and legal tenure frameworks can coexist to ensure sustainability.

The rest of the essays explore these themes in the context of Vanuatu, Fiji, Kiribati, Niue and Papua New Guinea. The authors are for the most part practitioners (lawyers, economists, government officials, or members of land trusts or chiefs' councils) rather than academics. Their essays summarise the history and status of customary tenure in their own country, with particular focus on the

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problems of its adaptation from pre-colonial to modern times. Lakau's concluding essay is the most thoughtful and analytic, and provides a good summary of the issues raised throughout the volume.

One difficulty with these essays is the lack of attention, let alone consensus, to what is meant by sustainable development. The term is used variously to imply tourism in contrast to extractive activities, economic sustainability (but not necessarily environmental sustainability), or inter-generational sustainability in the sense of the Bruntland report.

Most authors are concerned with the problems of meshing traditional tenure systems with the land and tenure requirements of modern economic activities, often initiated by outside investors. Consequently most call for land reform in which at least some lands come under a modern, legal tenure system involving formal title and boundary registration, and tenure conversion, and discuss how custom and chiefly authority can assist in effecting that transformation. Volavola characterises the problem for the Native Land Trust Board of Fiji as convincing traditional land holders to 'surrender forever the control of their land, and entrust its administration, in the national as well as the owners' interest, to a central body' (p50). At the same time, most of the authors make clear that there continues to be substantial social and economic benefits of customary tenure, and advocate a mix of the two systems within each state territory.

As someone who lives on the other side of the world, I found this volume a very useful introduction to the variety and complexity of customary tenure systems in the South Pacific, and to the problems and opportunities currently associated with them. Canadians too are grappling with issues of aboriginal customary tenure, especially in the rural and northern parts of the country (that is, almost all of it).

Having formally 're-recognised' aboriginal and treaty rights after a long hiatus, the problem is now to implement them in a practical way, especially through the ongoing process of negotiating comprehensive land claims agreements.

A critical difference between the Canadian and South Pacific situations is that aboriginal customary tenure in Canada has been largely collective rather than individual. The modern claims agreements thus provide for two types of lands: private aboriginal lands, for which surface and in some cases subsurface title is held by an aboriginal corporation but cannot be sold or traded; and Crown (public) lands which can be managed and disposed of by governments. However, co-management regimes are also established respecting fish and wildlife, environmental impact assessment, and land use planning, which govern these activities on both aboriginal and public lands. Aboriginal peoples and governments are equally represented on these co-management boards. The effect has been formal title registration and tenure conversion, coupled with traditional land and resource management systems and local by-law authority, as well as aboriginal corporate entities capable of conducting or promoting contemporary economic development activities. The system is by no means without problems (many of which would be familiar to the authors of this volume), but it is successful in many respects.

One effect of collective customary tenure is that boundary questions arise not between individual land owners but between neighbouring territorial groups. Also, disputes are less likely about boundaries than about what rights various tenures convey, for example as between an aboriginal group and the government, the local settler population, or large resource corporations.

Some of the volume's authors, particularly Ellum, draw attention to the

legal difficulties of proof of title, including admissibility and weight of evidence. This has been equally problematic in Canada, although over the last twenty years or so, our courts have developed a significant body of precedent and opinion on the subject.

Customary Land Tenure and Sustainable Development concludes with a resolution of the Conference, recognising importance of issue and calling on member governments to document successful experiences and share these with other members. The volume is nicely produced and includes maps and photos.

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Towards Effective Water Policy in the Asian and Pacific Region, Volume One

W.L. Arriens, J. Bird, J. Berkoff and P. Moseley (eds), Asian Development Bank, Manila, xii 328 pp.

This new volume on water policy in the Asian and Pacific region comprises the proceedings of an ADB Workshop held in Manila in May 1996 that was well attended by more than 150 participants drawn from 40 countries, including 24 developing member country delegates and a significant number of NGO and private sector representatives. The meeting was organised to instruct the Bank in the formulation of water policy and looks to have succeeded in bringing together an up-to-date consensus in deciding where some of the regional priorities now lie. It is also an attractively produced volume, though only one third of its 328 pages is actual workshop commentary with the rest being

made up of technical appendices of one kind or another. It should also be seen as the companion to additional volumes covering the country papers (Volume Two) and theme papers and comments (Volume Three).

Four main themes are examined: the country institutional context; the basin management context; the urbanisation context; and the economic and financial context. As one might expect, the attendance and primary focus of the workshop was strongly biased towards water conditions in the populous countries of Asia but the Pacific does receive significant treatment. Although there were only six delegations present from the Pacific region (the book says five but lists six made up of the Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu and Western Samoa), they do represent a good cross-section of island country characteristics.

This report is chiefly useful for the way in which it assists in the comparative generalisation about the institutional situation in regional water management, and advocates seven principles for effective water policy. The first out of five stages in water sector development, for example, is portrayed as the situation where 'no champion exists to initiate water sector development and there is no political will'. Countries like Papua New Guinea and Myanmar with their abundant water resources are listed here, as are some other Pacific countries where major issues are limited to water supply and sanitation. Stage Four is when 'institutional arrangements are in place but implementation is weak'. Here, the Philippines is singled out as an example of a country that has not been able to build on institutional arrangements that were put in place as long ago as 1970. Stage Five includes the Republic of Korea and Singapore as countries which possess 'a framework that is both coherent and conducive to effective action' (p57).

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In spite of these attributes I was disappointed that this important workshop did not manage to convey the sense of urgency and reality that confronts anyone with a good knowledge of the exploding urban centres of the region. Even in the Pacific where urbanisation is in its infancy the problems of securing and maintaining safe and adequate supplies in the dozen or so capital cities are acute. The report on the 'Urbanization Context' (Appendix C), for example, fails in its 22 pages to address any of the significant problems faced by the very poor in the region in securing some measure of equity in treated water provision. Affordability is a crucial issue in small Pacific island countries where all too often new initiatives end up as a clean and expensive supply for a few and a cheap and dirty one for the majority.

For a good overall appreciation of the challenges that must be addressed in improving the standards of regional policy, this book should be looked at in conjunction with reports that acknowledge the *realpolitik* of the water situation. One such source is the recent special issue on water policy of the journal *Asia Pacific Viewpoint* (1996, 37(3)) which includes the following passage in its editorial.

Fortunately for some developing countries, their leaders pursue strategies to match their plight. But those dependent on international assistance have little choice. The popular press is essentially mute on the more serious consequences—economic, social and political instability—of Asia's growing shortage of water. Though manifestations of these impacts are evident in the Middle East, the Ganges basin with its 480 million people, and even within large countries such as India and China, the reports on these consequences are found mostly in a small segment of the academic and professional literature. These consequences are

not the subject of public debate, nor the message of non-government organisations, nor are they prominent in the agenda of national leaders and attendees at international conferences. They are not even given proportionate weight in academia's economic and environmental forums (Frederiksen 1996:216).

What is being referred to here is the emphasis usually placed at official meetings and workshops on solutions that lean toward water markets, demand management, contracts, property rights and efficiencies, when there are other important factors impinging on a country's ability to deliver and maintain essential services of all kinds. How is it possible to safeguard water catchments, for example, in the face of uncontrolled urban growth and very often an unwillingness to accept any significant controls over land use? To promote the value and importance of urban and regional planning under such circumstances is to beg the question as to why land holders in the Pacific, particularly the customary ones, see any government intervention as unacceptable. The recent negative experience in Port Moresby with a Build Operate and Transfer project should be an obvious warning of the dangers in adopting novel strategies designed for very different conditions. One would hope that Volumes Two and Three of the Manila workshop proceedings might get down to some of this but somehow I doubt that they do.

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Reference

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Fisheries Development in Fiji: the quest for sustainability

Joeli Veitayaki, Institute of Pacific Studies and the Ocean Resources Management Programme of the University of the South Pacific, Suva, 1995, ISBN 982-02-0104-7, 233 pp.

The author of this book cares passionately about the fishing industry of his country and about the Fijians who depend upon the sea for their livelihoods. It is clear that when Veitayaki sets out to discuss 'the quest for sustainability' he sees sustainability in a wider sense than just 'sustainable yield': the quest is also for economic and social sustainability.

His technical and social knowledge of fishing in Fiji is very impressive. There is a clear and comprehensive description of the kinds of fishing that take place, traditional, artisanal and oceanic. In the last chapter, on fishing in Qoma, off Viti Levu, where the people are dependent on fish for their existence, Veitayaki is in his element. We are taken through the interaction of belief systems with fishing practices, how conservation was achieved by traditional taboos, and we are treated to some wonderful descriptions of ceremonial fishing and turtle catching. The pressures of the cash economy and technology on traditional practices are familiar themes but first-hand accounts such as this are very valuable for the insights they give.

Veitayaki wants to see fisheries develop to provide more employment and income. However, most fisheries development projects in Fiji fail. He is undertaking research to find out why and is a doctoral candidate at the National Centre for Development Studies at the Australian National University.

Fish catches continue to grow and make up an ever-increasing proportion of Fiji's Gross Domestic Product. (The

excellent *Annual Reports* of the Fiji Fisheries Division provide a comprehensive view of the trends.) The inshore stocks of fisheries are, however, declining due to population increase, together with the steady defections from traditional fishing to motorised fishing and cash. Moreover, the sedentary stocks, such as bêche-de-mer and trochus are becoming sorely depleted, as elsewhere in the Pacific.

When Veitayaki gets into marketing and economics he is on unsure ground. He regrets the fact that insufficient profits are made by artisanal fishers to repay their loans and reinvest in equipment and gear. (A large quantity of fishing equipment is repossessed every year by the Fiji Development Bank.) Yet he says that higher prices and export of fish to overseas markets threatens local fish consumption, and he deplors the substitution of imported foods, such as tinned fish and chicken, for fresh fish, which 'discourages fisheries development'. But that is what development is, taking advantage of comparative advantage to trade. There is an incentive for fishers to sell high-priced fresh fish and purchase low-priced tins. And for those who have earned the cash, the availability of tinned foods makes a nice change from fish. Moreover tins can be stored indefinitely, unlike fresh fish that requires refrigeration.

In Fiji there are some 1500 fishing licences issued to fish on only limited fish stocks, either deep bottom or reef. Policing is insufficient because of a lack of resources in the Fisheries Division. Therefore the presence of a large number of uncontrolled vessels in mainly inshore waters means that there is a situation bordering on 'open access.' Unlicensed fishing is rife, management practices are only observed in the presence of Fisheries Division personnel, and there is increasing conflict between licence holders and coastal villagers even though

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licences are only issued through the heads of customary fishing rights areas.

Veitayaki takes the fishermen to task for not seeing enforcement as part of their obligations. But why should they? Fishermen the world over maximise their catches and thumb their noses at authority — unless they are policed adequately or given a stake in the fishery. Neither of these conditions are present in Fiji. Veitayaki makes no mention of the presence or the effectiveness, or otherwise, of the Hoary Fish Wardens appointed by the Minister to detect and prevent fishing offences.

Scientific management of fisheries often doesn't work in the Pacific. Fisheries officers go to developed countries to learn how to manage sustainable and efficient Pacific islands fisheries. But the fact is that the situation in industrial countries' fisheries is very different. The state has jurisdiction over inshore waters, the fisheries are relatively simple, they do not involve subsistence fishing, and there is catch and effort data. In Pacific inshore waters, except in the case of some very valuable deep water assessments, there is usually no catch or effort or stock data on which to base a fishing management plan. The Division is working in the dark when it issues licences; the local customary right-holders therefore have the crucial decision-making role.

Something that does not seem apparent to Veitayaki is that the confusion that exists over rights to inshore marine resources must weaken the potential for introducing management. He takes the traditional owners to task for their failure to acknowledge that it is the state that owns all the sea seaward of high tide and has control over licences. But the Fishery Division's own 1994 *Annual Report* (p1) says that it (the Division) 'relies on traditional administrations to take responsibility for the regulation of inshore fisheries.'

A disappointing feature of the book is that it often points to problems but holds back from tackling them by offering statements such as 'fisheries must do their best to ensure the sustainable use of marine resources' (p110).

There are some big questions of sustainability hanging over the tuna canning and tuna longlining industries but these are given a rather superficial treatment. The PAFCO cannery faces a very big task in achieving financial viability. Its product quality is second to none and it has commanded a premium on the demanding British market, but other factors have worked against it. Fiji waters are not bountiful in canning tuna like tropical waters, and to make supply matters worse it has been saddled with the inefficient government-owned IKA pole-and-line fleet. (Fishing shouldn't ever be done by public servants.) Moreover, the location of the cannery on Levuka means that it is forced to double handle its output through Suva. The possible demise in year 2000 of the preferential market access under the Lomé agreement will put even more strain on the financial sustainability of PAFCO.

The greatest success story in Pacific fishing development is kept rather low key by Veitayaki. The export of chilled fish for sashimi to Japan and other markets, mainly by the Fiji Fish Company but also by other locally-based companies, was worth some F\$40 million in 1995. In 1989, only about 500 tonnes of the high-priced tuna and other species destined for the sashimi markets was caught by longline in Fiji waters, but by 1995 the catch had increased to over 4,000 tonnes. Fiji Fish Company has been employing hundreds of Fijians, including Fijian captains and crew on its vessels and at its shore-based establishments.

Several factors have played their part in the phenomenal success of this industry. The 1987 Fiji dollar devaluation, after the

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military coups, was a trigger that made it profitable to piggyback container loads of chilled fish on the wide-bodied, regular tourist flights to Tokyo and other markets. Other contributing factors have been the low level of tuna licence fees and taxes. As important, however, has been the skill of the entrepreneurs.

Veitayaki puts the success down to the fact that the government has excluded distant water fishing companies from Fiji waters. In my view, it is more likely that it was the combination of these other factors, facilitated by a government sympathetic to the private sector. Other countries in the region, particularly the Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea are trying to emulate Fiji, and while their circumstances are perhaps not as favourable, the adoption of this entrepreneurial model is surely a great advance on the previous models of government-dominated fisheries developments.

By-catch is mentioned briefly as being a problem in the sashimi industry. Marlin, shark and turtle are commonly taken along with the targeted tuna species. This may in time become one of the greatest issues in Pacific tuna management. Non-government organisations such as Traffic Oceania and certain academics are expressing alarm about this aspect of long-line fisheries.

Probably the greatest disappointment in the book is its failure to address the issues of economic and biological sustainability of the tuna stocks—the region's greatest renewable resource. While Fiji does well out of exploiting tuna for its cannery and chilled exports, the stocks are, in fact, regional—straddling the exclusive economic zones of dozens of countries in the Pacific and migrating through them.

While the status of yellowfin stocks is probably sound, the status of albacore and big eye, the other two commonly-caught species are somewhat in doubt, as has been emphasised by the South Pacific Commission. But these species are heavily

fished elsewhere in the Pacific and a regional approach to management will hopefully be taken in the not too distant future. In the past, Fiji has been at the forefront of international agreements governing fishing activities and was the first nation to ratify the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. And Fiji is a party to the multilateral tuna fishing treaty with the United States that has proved durable and profitable for the Pacific island countries. However, the fact of the matter is that most agreements that govern the harvest of South Pacific tuna are bilateral, between the mainly Asian fishing nations and individual island states. The fragmented nature of these negotiations allows the distant water fleets to undercut the level of access fees. The bilateral model is a stumbling block to multilateral agreements that would not only deliver more in terms of access fees but would facilitate regional management plans for tuna.

While Fiji has been a proponent of multilateral access arrangements it is only a minor player in the debate because it does not host large stocks like other Pacific islands countries, such as the Federated States of Micronesia and Kiribati, nor does its economy rely heavily on fishing. Nevertheless, it is hoped that Fiji will continue to play a prominent role in the important planning which is getting underway. The fortunes of many Pacific island nations will be intimately woven with the outcomes.

The book fails in its quest to deal with the issue of sustainability, a quest not only for Fiji but of just about every country with a coastline. Nevertheless, it remains a wide-ranging book that explains a good deal and brings many facets of Fiji's disparate and fascinating fishing industry under one cover.

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