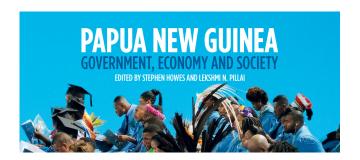# DEVPOLICYBLOG

Papua New Guinea: government, economy and society

By Stephen Howes and Lekshmi N. Pillai
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Yesterday ANU Press published our edited volume *Papua New Guinea: government, economy and society.*

Earlier social science surveys of PNG were published more than a decade ago, so this book fills a big gap. Its seven main chapters – divided into three parts: politics and governance, the economy, and society – are a mix of literature surveys and data analyses that provide accessible and engaging overviews of some of the most important issues facing the country.

The authors are mainly from the Australian National University (ANU) and University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG), and the book as a whole has grown out of the longstanding partnership between the Crawford School of Public Policy at the ANU and the School of Business and Public Policy at UPNG.

Here is a quick overview of the chapters to whet your appetite:

- The introduction, by the two of us, provides a summary of each chapter and briefly draws out some common themes and links.
- Chapter 2 titled "Elections and politics", by Michael Kabuni, Maholopa Laveil, Geejay Milli and Terence Wood, canvasses a range of electoral and political issues, from women in politics to clientelism, electoral quality and the dynamics of parliamentary politics.
- Chapter 3 – "Decentralisation: a political analysis" by Stephen Howes, Lawrence Sause and Lhawang Ugyel – is a survey of PNG's unique decentralisation trajectory with an emphasis on the political aspects.
- "Crime and corruption", by Grant Walton and Sinclair Dinnen, examines understandings of, and drivers and responses to, crime and corruption in PNG's recent history.
- "PNG's economic trajectory: the long view", by Stephen Howes, Rohan Fox, Maholopa Laveil, Luke McKenzie, Albert Prabhakar Gudapati and Dek Sum, provides new time series for various important economic indicators since

independence based on the recently created PNG Economic Database.

- "[Have living standards improved in PNG over the last two decades? Evidence from Demographic and Health Surveys](#)", by Manoj Pandey and Stephen Howes, examines trends in living standards over a range of dimensions in PNG drawing on three surveys carried out in 1996, 2006 and 2016-18.
- "[Uneven development and its effects: livelihoods and urban and rural spaces in PNG](#)", by John Cox, Grant Walton, Joshua Goa and Dunstan Lawihin, focuses on the uneven nature of development within and between rural and urban spaces in PNG, and the ways these have shaped social and environmental outcomes.
- Finally, chapter 8, titled "[Communication, information and the media](#)" by Amanda Watson, explores a variety of topics from media freedom to the spread and uses of mobile phones.

We'd like to thank all of the book's 21 authors, and the Australian and PNG governments for supporting the ANU-UPNG partnership. Thanks also to ANU Press, and special thanks to Lydia Papandrea for her fine editing.

We hope that *Papua New Guinea: government, economy and society* will be an asset especially to students in and of PNG, but also to policymakers and researchers looking for overviews of particular topics or a starting point for further research.

That this volume is open access (available to download for free) should greatly add to its utility and use. Go and [download your copy now](#).

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