

been expanded. Additional articulation of a vision and guidance for the future would have delivered a stronger conclusion to the book.

While *Reconstructing Retirement* has a good index, making it easy to find various topics and key issues, given the detailed, country-specific programmes and policies that feature heavily in many chapters, a glossary would have been useful for readers. A table providing an overview of UK and US policy and legislation would also assist readers while complementing the Table 1.1 summary of changes in direction that Lain developed. The book is well organised while presenting historical policy development as well as new research from the ELSA and the HRS. Lain effectively conducts a comparative analysis between the USA and the UK while also weaving in research and examples from other places such as Canada, New Zealand, Australia and Europe.

Overall, *Reconstructing Retirement* provides a much-needed international, evidence-based perspective and offers suggestions for policy. Retirement is a social construction; it is shaped and reshaped through social policy. This book provides the thoughtful, forward-thinking guidance required by scholars, students, practitioners and policy makers during this pivotal time. The book is very suitable for graduate students in policy studies, economics, gerontology, sociology, social work and labour studies. As retirement is reconstructed in Western nations, the vision for the future is one where older adults are valued and recognised as a social capital resource in an intergenerational society.

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Hal Kendig, Peter McDonald and John Piggott (eds), *Population Ageing and Australia's Future*, ANU Press, Canberra, 2016, 317 pp., pbk Aus \$50.00, ISBN 13: 978 176046 066 2.

In *Population Ageing and Australia's Future*, Hal Kendig, Peter McDonald and John Piggott bring together a collection of essays that deal with various aspects of population ageing in Australia from as diverse disciplinary perspectives as gerontology, sociology, economics and health. This collection was first presented at a symposium of the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia in 2014. Across 14 chapters, these essays are organised under four distinct but related parts, each carrying a strong common theme that reflects on the causes, processes and outcomes of population ageing.

The first part – ‘Perspectives on Ageing’ – provides the background as to why Australia is experiencing an ageing population, a combination of improved health and medical care leading to increased longevity. The outcomes of this growing longevity – increase in post-work years, delay but an increase in the number of years requiring assistance and the impacts on quality of life – are discussed in detail in this section. Such outcomes are further reflected in Part 2 – ‘Population Ageing: Global, Regional and

Australian Perspectives'. As McDonald (Chapter 4) contends especially, with a continued favouring of younger, skilled migrants and comparatively high fertility, Australia presents as a unique case where the pace of ageing is relatively slow, at least compared to other Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development countries. As such, Australia is primed to learn from other, more rapidly ageing, societies on how potentially to deal with the outcomes while at the same time offering important lessons on policy settings for rapidly ageing societies to counter the effects. Part 3 – 'Improving Health and Wellbeing' – documents the outcomes of our aged citizens in an ageing society in terms of their ability to 'age well', changes to cognitive abilities and the plight of social isolation. The chapters in this part provide compelling evidence in advocating for better outcomes for our older citizens, against the face of recent policy proposals in Australia in incentivising older people to downsize, leave their local support networks and free up 'under-utilised' housing stock (Henschke 2017). The final part – 'Responses by Government and Families/individuals' – traces especially the policy responses from the Australian governments to our ageing population, particularly in providing assistance (financial and otherwise) or facilitating products (such as reverse mortgages) that may help individuals finance post-retirement life. As Ong points out (Chapter 13), however, such policies often impact more than just the lives of older Australians but also their families, and brings us back to the question of intergenerational equity first raised in Chapter 2 and that many older Australians also ask of themselves when deciding whether to pay for care and services.

This book closes with a concluding chapter that not only deftly summarises the arguments presented throughout the preceding chapters, but also points to the long road ahead for governments, and society more generally, in recognising our changing socio-demographic make-up and the contributions older people can make to the social and economic betterment of society. This is especially important with more of us projected to live longer and (supposedly) putting more pressure on the working-age population. In view of this, I cannot help but wonder the contradiction of a sustained trend in early retirement – where since the mid-1990s the majority (approximately 80%) of Australians had retired before turning 65 – and policies that encourage later retirement by tightening the pension age eligibility criteria. While mentioned in the conclusion, given the focus of the book on Australia's future, a broader discussion of the impacts of early retirement in other chapters may be beneficial. Likewise, while Australia's growing cultural diversity is acknowledged (Chapters 4, 7 and 14), the potentially different responses to the ageing process, access to care and financial decision-making may require further research in the future. Chapter 5 attempts to do this, but how the lessons from East Asia, especially given the vastly different fertility rates to Australia as highlighted by McDonald (Chapter 4), can be applied to Australia is less clearly articulated.

An equally important community requiring future research attention is ageing LGBTIQ, a field already emerging overseas (Simpson 2015),

particularly in reflecting the lesser legal rights and protections (*e.g.* in marriage equality and the tax and welfare benefits afforded to legally married couples) that LGBTIQ Australians experience. This is on top of the discrimination from families that many continue to suffer, though less entrenched than in many other societies, meaning that care in later life provided by family members is likely less an option than for many of their non-LGBTIQ counterparts.

Overall, this collection provides a valuable resource for researchers interested in the development of ageing research in Australia that should be equally interesting to policy makers and advocates alike. Its availability as a free resource online will also no doubt extend its reach to a broader audience.

References

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