

Abstract

[Extract] The history of European impact on the Great Barrier Reef presented in this volume reveals continuing depredation and escalating degradation - a progression that has been fought against by courageous individuals and groups, with tardy sporadic support from the government. The unfolding tragedy is the more moving because this is not a polemical work, but a record of wide-ranging interrelated facts that speak eloquently for themselves. In meeting the need for a historical synthesis, the authors have equipped a range of scientific researchers with a comprehensive portable compendium for contextualising their investigations. They have also endowed politicians and administrators, historians, nature lovers, tourists and general readers with a seductive encyclopaedic work of reference. The inescapable conclusion is that if looming destruction is to be prevented, notions of 'sustainable development' and other deceptions must give place to radical concerted action by people and government. I, for one, fervently hope that this book's message will be heeded in time.
One of the world's natural wonders, the Great Barrier Reef stretches more than 2000 kilometers in a maze of coral reefs along Australia's northeastern coastline. Until now, no biographer has brought the fascinating story behind its mystique into public view. This book provides a comprehensive cultural and ecological history of European impact on the reef, from