SHORTER NOTICES

Economics and Health: 1986 Proceedings of the Eighth Australian Conference of Health Economists, *edited by J.R.G. Butler and D.P. Doessel.*
(School of Health Administration, Sydney, 1987) pp. v + 256, $12, ISBN 0 85832 0630.

The eleven papers (and discussants' comments) presented at the eighth Australian Conference of Health Economists held at the Australian National University in September 1986 are presented in this monograph. There are four papers on hospitals: George Palmer analyses hospital funding; Abernethy and Stoewinder consider the use of budgeting information by medical practitioners with managerial responsibilities; Hickson is concerned with various ways of measuring hospital expenditures and Abelson review regional allocation formulae for hospitals.

There are two papers on pharmaceutical issues. Bob Wallace presents a brief account of the Industries Assistance Commission's (IAC) 1986 Report on pharmaceuticals and Hagan and Henry (from the IAC) indicate how modelling of patients' use of pharmaceuticals was undertaken.

Health insurance issues are considered by Ferguson and Crawford who use Canadian data to test for supplier-induced demand and Jeff Richardson, using Australian data, argues a case for universal bulk billing.

There is a cost-effectiveness study of hospice care for the terminally ill (Dunt *et al.*) and Green considers patient characteristics for long term elderly hospital patients. There is also a general paper on the health sector in Thailand by Pairoj Vongvipanond.

DPD

Silicon Visions: The Future of Micro-computer Technology, *by Don Shafer.*
(Prentice Hall, New York, 1986) pp. xx + 313, ISBN 0-89303-845-8.

The focus of *Silicon Visions* is on the short-term technological trends and impacts of the microcomputer. The first part of the book deals with emerging applications of microcomputer technology in specific products and ideas. The likely impact of these new microomputer applications on our daily lives are then assessed in terms of first, the extension of our mental capabilities; second, the broadening of an international 'wired' society; and third, cultural development (in arts, music and education) and the enchancement of our quality of life.

The detailed features of the changes in microcomputer technology, in terms of hardware systems, interfaces and software, are coverd in the second part of the book. *Silicon Visions* is written at a level that should be understandable by most general readers.

CWC