

competitiveness are identified in this context as quality, technical excellence, delivery on time, market commitment and credibility. According to the author rectifying these determinants still represents a race against time.

The immediate future appears bright but British manufacturers are cautioned against over-complacency. The two significant problems which underly the future of the industry in Britain are an exceptionally unfavorable business environment and an unduly superficial approach to business strategy. The conclusion reiterates the economic choices to be made which were outlined in the second chapter such as more widespread recognition of the trade-offs between interventionism and independent policies of the corporate executives. The emphasis needs to be changed from reliance on demand policies to sector specific policies which recognise the increasing globalisation of the customer base. The lesson to be learnt by the country's policy-makers is to acknowledge past failures and set the country on a course of secure success for the future.

While this work is a comprehensive survey of the vehicle components industry and is extremely informative in its content, it becomes on many occasions repetitive. Perhaps the structure of the book in examining each sector separately leads to repetition but some of it could have been avoided. Its coverage of the industry is very substantially documented with data and provides solutions to the competitiveness problems of Britain's industry on the whole. Considering that the Single Market for Europe is impending it becomes all the more necessary for serious consideration by industrialists on the lines suggested in this work. I believe it is essential reading for policy-makers who are seriously troubled by Britain's lack of competitiveness in an interdependent global market. With the current negotiations in GATT for greater transparency of trade barriers and the need for reciprocity, some of the external problems that reduce competitiveness for the UK automotive industry may get resolved.

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**Electronic Highways: An Introduction to Telecommunications in the 1990's by**

*Peter Westerway*

(Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1990), pp. xxiii + 112, \$AUD17.95, ISBN 0-04-442207-5.

Peter Westerway has written an excellent primer on current debates in telecommunications policy. He describes the technological and international political context of debate about telecommunications reforms in a way which would make the book accessible to undergraduates in the humanities and social sciences. The book contains a useful glossary of technical terms, a directory of international organisations with an interest in telecommunications, a concise overview of telecommunications reform in the United States, and a modest annotated reading guide.

The book had its genesis in a Senior Executive Fellowship which Peter Westerway received while he was a senior policy-maker in the Department of Transport and Communications. As a consequence, historians of the current Australian telecommunications reforms, and the accompanying debate, will be able to trace the origins of those reformist ideas as they emerged in the late 1980s.

While unambiguously supporting the notion of competition in the provision of telecommunications services, Westerway clearly acknowledges that competition is merely a means of meeting social objectives. Unfortunately, many other participants in the current debate see competition as an end in itself.

If there is any shortcoming with the book, it is that it does not adequately deal with the telecommunications policy challenge posed by changes in the broadcasting and cable television industries in North America and Europe. His focus on the needs and interests of large users of telecommunications such as the airline industry and financial institutions, and their impact on policy formation, underestimates the significance of the emerging debate about who should bring broadband services into the home. Clearly the cable television operators and telecommunications providers would like to have the ability to carry each other's services into the home. Here is an archetypical case of convergence at work.

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**Toxic Fish and Sewer Surfing** by Sharon Beder  
(Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1989), pp. xvii + 176, \$12.95, ISBN 0-04-442112-5 (pbk).

That the beautiful beaches and waterways surrounding Sydney are sometimes polluted will certainly come as no surprise to regular visitors to these areas; however the extent to which this pollution poses a threat to public health would appear to have been greatly underestimated. This book gives an account of the chronic problems which have been associated with Sydney's sewage system, from the time that the first white settlement occurred there, up to the current period of controversy over the wisdom of constructing the extensions to the sewage outfalls at a cost of several hundred million dollars.

Although Beder concentrates on the ramifications for public health of the accumulation of toxins in the food chain and on the deleterious health effects of pollution, the author certainly does not confine herself to the technical details of sewage disposal. Beder has also concerned herself very much with what she considers to be mismanagement by the authorities responsible for the treatment and disposal of Sydney's sewage and industrial waste waters.

What will be of considerable concern to those with a specific interest in the hazards posed by marine pollution, e.g., swimmers and surfers, is the unreliability of faecal coliform bacteria concentration as an indicator of pollution levels. "The Water Board found that 90 per cent of faecal coliforms die off in one to seven hours during the daytime. So sewage that has been at sea for more than an hour will not necessarily contain them. But it may contain something nastier, like viruses" (p. 84). This is extremely important when it is considered that most authorities responsible for water standards around the world, and the Sydney Water board is no exception, rely very heavily on faecal coliform counts to determine whether water is polluted or not. This point is recognised in the scientific literature, e.g., "The isolation of viruses in the absence of faecal