

## LISA TAMANISAU

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# A soothing journey of wit, serious social issues

*Niu Waves*, edited by Robert Nicole. Pacific Writing Forum and the Oceania Centre for Arts and Culture, University of the South Pacific, 2001. 168 pp. ISBN 982 366 009 3

*NIU WAVES* is a collection of short fiction and poetry by a group of writers who are dominantly products of Fiji but who are also a part of the Niu Waves Writers' Collective. This was

formed in 1995 “to encourage and nurture young writers from the Pacific region” and is informally headquartered at the University of the South Pacific.

It comprises works by the “niuest” members, Mosmi Bhim and Josua Tuwere, and a few other more experienced writers that grasped my attention.

I mused over Mosmi Bhim's “Can't wait”. I fell in love just reading her “Rural reveries”. Then her vividly graphic piece, “Love bites”, which left a sharp after sting.

Josua Tuwere's “My uniform and extremities” was a real chuckle while his “Figure man” left me quite sombre. All had characteristics of deeper meaning beyond the surface of light words.

Susan Sela's pieces are bright and commendable – you'd either cry or

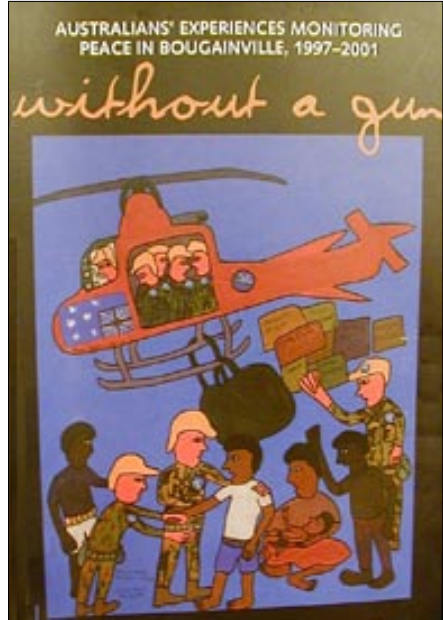
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laugh. And Seona Smiles' "Name games is hilarious.

*Niu Waves* does have a way with one's emotions. I reasoned that's because it's written by a variety of individuals pushing forth their different themes and perceptions of life — you really need to digest it slowly.

I quietly questioned, however, the appropriateness of certain words and images included in this collection which others like myself would find ill-suited for a younger audience that may be anticipated in secondary schools around the region.

Nicole answers: "We have come to the conclusion that if Oceania's young writers want to write sensual poetry, then Oceania's young readers will want to read about it. We're not helping our young people if we keep suppressing discussions about sex and sexuality."



### MICHAEL J FIELD

Auckland-based South Pacific correspondent for Agence France-Presse

## Anzac rivalries undermine Bougainville peacekeeping

*Without a Gun: Australians' Experience Monitoring Peace in Bougainville, 1997-2001*, edited by Monica Wehner and Donald Denoon, Pandanus Books, Australian National University, 2002. 204 pp. ISBN 1 74076 013 1