

The Economy Really Does Matter

Brian Easton's book *Not in Narrow Seas: The Economic History of Aotearoa New Zealand* was published by Victoria University Press in 2020. Rightly described as a magnum opus, the book attracted considerable attention for its extraordinary historical breadth and vision. Part of that attention was a panel discussion of the book hosted by the Stout Research Centre for New Zealand Studies at Victoria University of Wellington, on 21 April 2021, as one of its continuing series of research seminars.

The advertisement for the discussion noted that "Brian Easton suggests that everyone agrees the 'economy really does matter' but too few seriously investigate the implications. His book addresses this omission, identifies major economic trends since the Second World War, and challenges a number of national myths. The narrative includes attention to the environment, technical change, and globalisation as well as to the tensions between market and government".

In the panel discussion, Brian Easton was joined by Professor Alan Bollard, CNZM, School of Government, Chair of the Infrastructure Commission, Governor of Reserve Bank 2002-12; Dr Margaret Galt, Senior Analyst and Principal Advisor, Treasury; and Dr Geoff Bertram, Senior Associate, Institute for Governance and Policy Studies.

Brian's introductory remarks and the discussants' papers are reproduced here. While they have been lightly edited for publication, they are otherwise presented as delivered.