“This book is exactly what its title says it is. It is about being Lebanese in Australia. Some experiences are very clearly Australian specific such as the Lebanese racialised integration in the culture and club structure of rugby league football. Some experiences are transnationally Lebanese such as dancing dabke, celebrating ‘Ashura or enduring racism, but the book still manages to capture the Australia specificity of these experiences. What’s more, the book constantly moves between the theoretical and the specific whether dealing with the circulation of ‘ethnic capital’ or with related questions of Lebanese youth and the quest for respect. All of this is much harder to achieve than some might suspect. Today, there are many publications in Diaspora Studies where one drowns in endless theoretical generalizations about transnationalism, mobility and identity. Such works make the reader feel that they can be about any diaspora anywhere. This why this book is an important accomplishment: while being very savvy and subtle in the deployment of general theoretical arguments, one is always kept aware that one is learning something about the specificity of the experience of Lebanese people as such, and the particularities of their Australian experience. Paradoxically, this allows for a much richer knowledge that equips the reader to better understand all kind of diasporas. I strongly recommend this book.”

Prof. Ghassan Hage, Future Generation of Anthropology and Social Theory, School of Philosophy, Anthropology and Social Inquiry (PASI), University of Melbourne.

“The authors have made an outstanding contribution to our understanding of Lebanese in Australia and, more generally, of the migrant experience. They have achieved this by incorporating in this book a happy blend of social theory (based mainly on the work of Bourdieu and Hage) and empirical examination of practices and experiences of different groups of Lebanese in Australia. In the process they interrogate a number of taken-for-granted constructs such as ‘Lebanese community’, ‘multiculturalism’, the notion of ‘two cultures’, ‘assimilation’ and ‘integration’ all of which appear in earlier studies of Lebanese in Australia. Instead, they present an analytical approach and language which more accurately and sensitively depicts the complex and differentiated experiences of Lebanese in Australia. This they achieve through the use of structuring concepts such as ‘ethnic field’, ‘habitus’, ‘ethnic capital’ and ‘identity,’ among others. The authors’ analyses range across the diverse experiences and attitudes of Lebanese in different situations and activities. These include the Shiite ceremony of Ashura: the dabki (Lebanese dance); the use of language by Lebanese young people, in particular the diverse meanings attributed to the word habib. Other chapters cover gendered studies of Lebanese young people; Lebanese community leaders; Lebanese rugby league football followers; and the changing definitions of the notion of respect among young Lebanese males over time. The chapter on everyday racism and uncivil regulation of ethnic capital is notable for the links established between experiences of racism and international and local events. In each of these chapters we hear authentic Lebanese voices which illustrate in highly personal terms the major themes of the book. I found reading this book an experience that challenged and altered my perceptions of what it means to be Lebanese in Australia.”

Dr. Trevor Batrouney, Adjunct Professor, RMIT University, Melbourne.