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This is the first book to offer an in-depth examination of the history, operation, and growth of film festivals as a cultural phenomenon within Australia. Tracing the birth of film festivals in Australia in the 1950s through to their present abundance, it asks why film festivals have prospered as audience-driven spectacles throughout Australia, while never developing the same industry and market foci of their international fellows. Drawing on over sixty-years of archival records, festival commentary, interviews with festival insiders and ephemera, this book opens up a largely uncharted history of film culture activity in Australia. .