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*Narcotic Offences* by F Rinaldi and P Gillies, Law Book Company, Sydney, 1991, i-xxx, 1-243/244 (Appendix of Legislation and Index, 245-444)

*Drug Law in New South Wales* by P Zahra and R Arden, Federation Press, Sydney, 1991, i-xx, 1-330/336 (Appendices and Index, 331-336)

The combination of a federal system of law, and successive measures to modify existing drug laws, has posed problems for practitioners and commentators alike. These two books aim to alleviate the first of these problems. Both seek to provide guidance for the busy practitioner.

*Narcotic Offences* provides an overview of drug law as applied *substantive* criminal law, and adopts a federal focus. Almost half the space is devoted to an Appendix which conveniently draws together the key provisions of the legislation in all Australian jurisdictions. The text itself falls into two parts: six chapters deal with the history and structure of drug laws, and the special concepts which constitute the main offences (importation, cultivation, possession, trafficking, etc). The remaining six chapters then turn to general principles of the criminal law which are of special interest in this field: conspiracy, complicity, and attempts, and some adjectival matters (search and seizure, criminal procedure and evidence).

*Drug Law in New South Wales* differs in three ways. It confines itself to the NSW legislation; it ranges much further over the broad 'criminal justice' canvass (covering more pre- and post-adjudication issues; such as bail, entrapment, and sentencing and confiscation of assets); and material is presented more as an 'annotation' of the local legislation (though there are liberal references to judicial authority from other jurisdictions where this illuminates the meaning of NSW provisions).

Despite its modest brief as a NSW practitioners' book, Zahra and Arden has its strengths: thus it manages to cover the recent *Crimes (Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Drugs) Act 1990* (Cth). Some of the textual commentary is also superior: for example in relation to "entrapment", the treatment of the discretions to exclude improperly obtained evidence and to stay proceedings (pp159-60) concentrates on the criteria which are to be balanced, whereas the same material in Rinaldi is presented in more conclusionary form, leaving the reader to follow up secondary references to ascertain the criteria — it will "in rare cases confer an evidential advantage" (p225).

Neither book strays far into the history or the policy of drug use (Rinaldi is the best on this score). But then neither purports to enter criminological or sociological territory. Both books are worthy inclusions in the library of practitioner and criminologist alike, however. Theory building and criticism depend heavily on such contributions to the form and operation of the drug laws. Overall, Rinaldi is the more comprehensive, the more scholarly and the more analytical of the two books. Drug law, however, is more than applied substantive criminal law. With its wider focus and highly readable style, Zahra is an essential purchase for NSW practitioners, and a valuable acquisition for readers outside the State (despite its skeletal and error-ridden index).

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