

gated legislation, other parliamentary materials, codes, treaties, administrative and quasi-judicial materials, media and press releases, government reports, books, digests and encyclopaedias, journal articles, loose-leaf services, conference and seminar papers, electronic material (including discussion lists, email and Intranets), and overseas material (the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Europe and Papua New Guinea). The final chapter of Part 1 looks briefly (all too briefly) at citation reform and recent developments.

Part 2 provides a citation guide to Australian law reports, journals, and other materials. Fong includes overseas journals with regular Australian content or with an Australian on the editorial board. He provides alternative citations, notes the title and any change in title, the duration of the title, and the preferred citation followed by alternatives. This is a valuable list of 54 pages. I found one typographical error on page 137 where '19 University of Tasmania Review 36' intrudes on the citation for the *Tasmanian Law Reports* (LBC). But that is a minor glitch in what is a remarkably useful and sensible book; particularly for students, who need to have the importance of correct legal citation ingrained in them from the start of their legal studies.

*Stefan Petrow**

Business Law of Australia

By R B Vermeesch and Justice K E Lindgren

9th Edition, Butterworths, 1998, pp mcdxxvii, \$70 (pbk)

The three main criteria for assessing a book of this type are (1) that it covers the area of law; (2) that it is interesting to read; and (3) that it is understandable.

Business Law of Australia (9th Edition) is likely to be the most highly used and respected text in the areas of business and commercial law in Australia because, on the whole, it covers these broad areas of law in such extensive detail. It is a valuable resource to both practitioners and academics alike, and also to the targeted audience: students. Although the authors are at times forced to briefly summarise some topics which are broad in nature leading to those particular areas being difficult to understand, and the restriction of the book and its references to pure 'black-letter' law makes reading a bit 'dry' at times for students, this text remains a resource of great quality for the areas of

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law it covers. The reformed structure and the addition of new relevant material are marked improvements upon the previous edition.

The text includes the basic principles of business, commercial and contract law in one volume. Using the example of commercial law, the book generally covers the area of law very well. Obviously, much of the book is not taught in this subject, but it includes every required topic: sale of goods, trade practices, law and bailment, insurance and security.

However, because of the wide area of business law what it covers is sometimes brief and, consequently, difficult for students to understand. Perhaps the weakest section in the book is the section on trade practices. The text offers only a relatively brief summary of the consumer protection side of this area, and does not go into nearly as much detail as students of commercial law require.

Conversely, the areas that, by their narrower nature, can be covered more thoroughly, are dealt with very well in the text. The arguments contained within the text are quite strong and convincing, and are always supported by the relevant legislation or cases. There are no noticeable omissions of references, and the table of contents, table of statutes and index are of the high quality one would expect of a text in its ninth edition.

The quotations used in *Business Law of Australia* (9th Edition) are all from case law. This text is essentially black-letter law. Some other texts covering this topic have included quotations from a variety of different sources which has the effect of making the reading more interesting and less 'dry.'³ This book makes little attempt to liven up the reading by such means, resulting in some students struggling to cope with the material.

The most recent edition of this well established text has undergone significant changes in design to enable it to be more easily used by students. Detail has been removed from the text into the footnotes to allow the commentary to flow; the chapters on contract law concentrate largely on the principles of the subject; and the overall structure of the book has been streamlined so that the sections work better and are more straight-forward. The result of this is that *Business Law of Australia* (9th Edition) is useful, not only to practitioners and academics, but also to students. The reformed structure of the book

3 See for example, Terry A and Giugni D, *Business, Society and the Law*, Harcourt Brace, Sydney, 1994.

would even enable someone who is unfamiliar with business law to find any particular area quite easily.

The language used is clear and concise, and good use is made of headings and sub-headings to generate a logical understanding of any particular section. Furthermore, the sections of the book are ordered so that those sections, an understanding of which is vital to the understanding of other sections, are placed earlier in the book than those more advanced sections. To illustrate this point, 'contract law' is included early on in the book, and 'supply and services', which deals with the *Sale of Goods Act* and the *Trade Practices Act*, is included later: it is beneficial for the student of law to have a knowledge of 'contract' before looking at those other areas of law.

As noted above, where the text falls down is that it is sometimes brief on areas so wide in content that it is not practical to cover them thoroughly. This results in those particular sections being difficult to understand. If it was possible to cover those areas in more detail, then this problem would have been unlikely to have arisen.

In relation to other books in this area, *Business Law of Australia*, at least in its recent editions, has been widely used and earned much credit and respect. Those areas that are difficult to understand, such as Trade Practices, are generally not those that are used as foundations for building an understanding necessary for the comprehension of later chapters. Some have argued that the final chapter 'Law, Society and Other Values' should appear at the front of the book so that the philosophy behind the book can be understood before much of it is read. However, often those referring to a black letter law book are not interested in the jurisprudence upon which it is grounded.

The text has not been 'edited down' at all from the previous edition, and much new material has been included, resulting in a considerably larger book. *Business Law of Australia* (9th Edition) does not add anything new to this area of law but is generally thorough and up to date, with the embarrassing exception of the failure to include the amendment of s 18 and the deletion of s 19 of the *Trade Practices Act* 1974. Apart from the afore-mentioned weak points, and some trifling spelling errors, this book is a highly recommended source for the areas of business, contract, and commercial law. Practitioners, academics and students alike will find a book of this calibre most useful.

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