

# REFERENCE

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## ***New Reference Products***

Butterworths Australian Legal Dictionary  
1997

PUBLISHER: Butterworths

PRICE: \$175 (CD-ROM or Hardback)

This product is a new issue and the CD-ROM includes both the Australian Legal Dictionary and The Macquarie Dictionary post second edition. It is a snapshot of information and will not be updated. Therefore I choose to review the CD-ROM and the hard copy together with a few particularising remarks to end up.

The general editors are Dr Peter Nygh and Peter Butt, and these two very familiar names are backed by an impressive list of consultant editors.

Coverage includes (and I quote from the introductory note to the legal dictionary):

- "legislative and judicial authority
- jurisprudential and criminological terms
- explanations of well known rules and principles of law
- definitions of international law terms, treaties and conventions
- old English legal terms to assist in understanding older cases and commentaries
- translations of many Latin legal words and phrases
- brief descriptions of landmark decisions of the

High Court of Australia

- biographical entries for significant legal historians, scholars and jurisprudential figures"

I have had some days to use this legal dictionary and am already convinced of its worth. It is concise but informative. It is one of the few sources I have found for a definition of 'conflict of interest' or for 'specialty debt'. As far as newer terms go it is useful for such examples as 'infrastructure', 'telecommunications network'. Not all entries of course are backed by legislative or judicial interpretation, but even so the usefulness in these newer areas is invaluable.

Nice to see a personal favourite of mine has made it here too - 'pannage', an old common law right. 'Mabo' is listed and with some handy see references including Latin terms. This last example is a good example of the value of the dictionary, as it links terms which are useful leads to further research.

I also find this dictionary extremely useful for those situations where I know very little or nothing about a query. The concise and simple definitions are very helpful.

Additional benefits are the very full table of abbreviations of legal reports, which on the CD-ROM is separately searchable from the main text. There is also a table of the Justices of the High Court by year, a listing of the regnal years of English sovereigns and a list of Australian Prime Ministers. Of perhaps more general interest is the consolidation of the Commonwealth Constitution, and the listing of popular case names. All in all this is a well thought out reference source.

The CD-ROM version has additional benefits. It is run on Folio Views software and is available in Windows and in Mac versions. The obvious plus is that all fields are searchable in the disc version,

and having compared the CD-ROM and the hard copy over several searches, I have found this useful. There is also an added function called 'group' which is very useful. This is an electronic version of the see reference, but enables the whole 'family' of terms to be viewed and printed in one run.

I have only one criticism of the *Butterworths Australian Legal Dictionary*, and that is the version of the *Macquarie Dictionary* that is included on the disc is not as full as I would have liked.

### **Australian Encyclopaedic Legal Dictionary**

PUBLISHER: Butterworths

PRICE: \$495 annual subscription

This product was released on the February CD-ROM of the *Australian Legal Research Library*. In makeup it is very similar to the snapshot version reviewed above which contains about 20,000 references. This dictionary contains over 30,000 references and includes more environmental and accounting information. It is also updated monthly when the disc is.

This disc also includes *The Macquarie Dictionary*, and will be updated when new versions become available. There is a new version due out at the end of this year. This edition will include the language of the Internet, including words such as 'browser', 'newsgroup' and 'flaming' (*The Australian*, 28 February 1997, page 15).

*The Australian Legal Research Library* also includes *Australian Legal Words and Phrases*, which is the CD-ROM version of the hardcopy of the same name. These two databases together make a powerful research tool of the legal usage of words in Australia, particularly as the latter lists all words defined in the statutes of Australia.

### **Electronic Development Plans**

AVAILABILITY: Department of Housing and Urban Development (SA), GPO Box 1815, Adelaide, SA

PRICE: \$400 for the initial CD-ROM updated until April 1997 (including the whole state), then \$160 per month for updates.

In South Australia, the Planning Division of the Department of Housing and Urban Development has just released the *Development Plans* on CD-ROM. These plans are made under the *Development Act 1993 (SA)*. The current and first release of the plans includes planning policy for just the council areas of the Adelaide metropolitan area. An update will be issued in April 1997, which it is hoped will cover the rest of the council areas of the state.

It is also hoped that by April there will be an Internet link available to update information from the latest available disc and to provide historical information thus negating the need to keep hard copy just for this.

The CD-ROM uses PDF (portable document format) software, which gives very professional printouts or downloads. The downside is that it is fairly slow to move around in, as those of you who are familiar with PDF can vouch for. The disc however has a table of contents window which helps with navigation. Moving about within a map can be very slow work, especially if you have the enlarge function running. It is easier to move if you take the map back to the smallest possible and then enlarge the bit you want.

At the end of April 1997, the release will be complete, and available either on CD-ROM or through the Internet for the same price. According to local sources the CD-ROM will be better for networking, and for printing. Printing

from the Internet will be slow as it sends down one page at a time, making printing of the plan for a whole council area up to half an hour. But it is hoped that with the increase in modem speeds and updates to the software that these problems will be overcome. In between times the department is willing to loan the hard copy to CD-ROM subscribers in order that they can copy the base file more quickly than download the changes from the Internet Bulletin Board which will advertise changes.

At the moment it is not possible to search across different council areas, but it is hoped that the new software release will enable this function.

Obviously this CD-ROM is still in its early development stages, but even so I have found it useful. Lawyers seem to be relatively happy with, but we have not so far networked it

I suspect that its true value will only be seen when plans and specifications can be directly exported to word processing for advice

### South Australia on the Internet

In January this year AUSTLII released the SA Supreme Court decisions from 1984 onwards and the SA consolidated Acts and Regulations. These databases are as they were on SCALE. They have not as yet been updated, and the currency is as from August 1996. While this is useful for finding South Australian equivalents of other states' acts and sections, it should be remembered that there have been considerable changes in SA legislation since that time, especially in the areas of consumer credit, and electricity. It is to be hoped that these changes will be soon updated in these databases.

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