



Australian Labour Law: Cases and Materials

by Ronald C. McCallum and Marilyn J. Pittard; 3rd edn, Butterworths 1995; 1024 pp; \$98.00 paperback.

The third edition of this now classic industrial law text takes account of the significant amendments made by the *Industrial Relations Act 1988* (Cth). These include the enterprise bargaining provisions, the new right to strike in certain circumstances and the controversial unfair dismissal protections.

As well as providing extracts from and commentary on the standard cases, legislation and articles, *Australian Labour Law* makes some attempt to put employment law in its social context. The book contains short sections on women and labour law, unfair dismissal and job security, and Kooris, women, equal pay and comparable worth.

The authors state in the Preface that the primary function of the book is as a source book for the teaching of labour law in universities. \$98.00, is however, out of reach of most students which is a shame given that it could be of great assistance to undergraduates. ● FW

Legal Studies for Units 3 & 4

by Peter Alderson and Jeanne Strong; McGraw Hill, 1995; 2nd edn; \$36.95.

As a former student of VCE legal studies (who thoroughly enjoyed the course) I think the second edition of *Legal Studies for Units 3 & 4* will be a very useful resource for Year 12. The text is the product of teacher and student responses to the first edition, and reflects changes to the law since the first edition was published. The revised edition has several new features, including revision questions, a glossary at the end of each chapter, extracts from newspaper articles with structured questions, and a greater amount of illustrative material including flow dia-

grams and summary tables. These changes ensure greater clarity and are helpful.

While the text deals with the mechanics of the law, it also provides lots of room for issues-based activities, which is a good way to keep Year 12 students interested. The second edition places strong emphasis on policy, our relationship to the law and how to go about using it. Students are encouraged to evaluate various aspects of the legal system and there is plenty of scope for critical discussion. The development of students' analytical skills is also encouraged through case studies of current and recent legal issues such as the High Court's *Mabo* decision. The authors use an interactive approach, asking students to collect additional resource materials to assist their analysis of the legal issues.

The aims of the text, in keeping with the VCE Legal Studies study design, have been successfully met. The text provides students with a basic overview of the legal system in Australia, concentrating on the role of parliament and the courts in law making, and how the law operates in practice. The authors have gone to great lengths to ensure student comprehension, providing point-form summaries in non-legal jargon and helpful exercises on every page. Students are invited to question the law and to view it as fluid and capable of change. The authors stress the concept of law as 'an expression of the will of the people' which needs constant re-assessment to reflect changing community attitudes.

A section devoted to how students should go about completing their VCE legal studies CATs and Work Requirements is included in the text. Detailed information is provided on how to plan, structure and submit papers. As well as advice, the text refers students to other sources useful for VCE legal studies work. Overall the second edition of *Legal Studies for Units 3 & 4* is a great student resource, with invaluable hints on how to achieve successful results in the VCE. ● LB

Legal Fictions. Short Stories about Lawyers and the Law

edited by Jay Wishingrad; Quartet Books 1995; 402 pp; \$19.95 softcover.

This is a book that can be judged by its cover. The front cleverly masquerades as your archetypal wood, brass and frosted glass door to your archetypal legal office. The back (turn the lights out as you leave) contains the unforgivable blurb — *Legal Fictions is essential briefing for all those on the case*. The sort of thing you'd present to your lawyer friend for their birthday if you wanted to give the impression that you'd spent three and a half seconds thinking about what to get.

You've got the obvious authors (Kafka, John Mortimer), the old timers (Melville), the major 20th century writers (Greene, Allende, Gordimer). For the cosmopolitan touch there are stories from Czechoslovakia, Sierra Leone, France and Italy. There are also the genre stories that you'd expect: the law case/crime with a twist, the tough life of the outsider (woman, Jew etc.) in a WASP establishment, the language of law taken to absurd lengths (*My client, Mr Wile E. Coyote... does hereby bring suit for damages against the ACME company*), and the desperate grey world of the emotionally scarred, ennuistricken, burnt out and repressed lawyer (who probably always wanted to be a writer). There are also editorial musings and the law and literature link — *does the short story bear any similarities to the legal documents that lawyers produce?* Surprisingly the answer is yes...

Maybe I'm being unfair. While *Legal Fictions* doesn't contain any particularly surprising selections, it is fairly comprehensive in a white American liberal sort of a way. And there is a surrealistic execution to savour. Reading this anthology is not a complete waste of time. ● ME

BITS was compiled by: Lauren Ban, Michael Easton and Frith Way.