

and interesting. In addition the *Pickle Street* theme song and the introductory jingles to the 11 episodes sound painfully similar to the beginning of daytime soap operas.

System requirements are fairly basic: a multimedia 486 IBM PC or compatible with MS Windows, 8 megabytes of RAM, 256 colour video, sound blaster or compatible sound card and a dual speed CD rom drive. If run on the

Macintosh, the minimum requirements are an operating system of 7.1 or higher, 8 megabytes of RAM, a 256 colour video and dual speed CD rom drive.

NAOMI MARSHALL
CAROLYN HABIB
BARRY RODGER
KAI TIER

The writers are Year 12 Legal Studies students at St Philips College, Alice Springs.

Judicial Review of Administrative Action

by Mark Aronson and Bruce Dyer; LBC Information Services, 1996; 1022 pp; \$115.00 softcover, \$145.00 hardcover.

Administrative law, write Aronson and Dyer in their first chapter, represents an important institutional component in the attempt to achieve a just society. Not only is it an important component, it is also a fascinating one, rich in issues and connections. Control of government power by the courts involves considerations of the balance of power between Parliament, the executive and the judiciary, as well as of ideals such as fairness, accountability, participation and openness. What standards are required by the concept of procedural fairness? Who should have standing to challenge administrative decisions? Should decision makers be required to give reasons for their decisions? On what grounds and to what degree should courts be able to review administrative action?

Control of government power by the courts also has links with changing conceptions of the state. There is a current trend for government to downsize, privatise and contract out. An important question arising from this trend is the extent to which the courts can control the exercise of public powers by private bodies.

One difficult issue facing any author setting out to write a book on administrative law is where to draw the line. Administrative law is not just about judicial review. It is also about freedom of information legislation, privacy legislation, ombudsman review and administrative tribunals. An even broader vision might include chapters on decision-making theory, rule making, public administration, regulation and a sociological consideration of the impact and effect of administrative law on society. Of course, no work could adequately discuss all these topics. The authors have recognised this and have limited their book to the core of administrative law — judicial review of administrative action. While narrower in

breadth than some competing administrative law texts, the result of their efforts is a well-structured work.

One strength of *Judicial Review of Administrative Action* lies in its detail. Each chapter contains a comprehensive explanation of principles and leading cases. Provision of detail is particularly useful in a field of law which continues to face change and in which many issues remain unsettled. Aronson and Dyer's work has space to accommodate and explain these competing views. In addition, the footnoting of cases is extensive, providing quick access to relevant authorities for those who need to pursue issues further.

A second strength of the book is that it is not just a statement of the law. It is also a work rich in ideas. The most exciting chapter from this perspective is chapter 3 which considers the scope and nature of judicial review. The chapter explores the limits of power which judicial review exists to enforce, the source of the courts' power to engage in judicial review, the relationship between judicial review and parliamentary sovereignty, whether judicial review extends to the exercise of powers by regulatory or non-statutory bodies, the extent to which administrative guidelines, codes of practice and explanatory circulars may be reviewed,

whether judicial review extends to cover government contracting, and emerging new principles of judicial review. One topical issue discussed in this last section is the impact of human rights on judicial review. Chapter 8, which provides an overview of the scope and duty of procedural fairness, follows close behind chapter 3 in its presentation of ideas.

A third strength of the work is its referencing to other materials. Just as the text is well footnoted with cases, so too it is well footnoted with journal articles and books by past and present commentators, as well as with reports by various bodies. One set of reports, for example, which the authors incorporate well into their discussions of statutory and judicial developments are those of the Administrative Review Council. Chapters 3 and 8 again lead the way, with many references to Australian, English and North American materials. However, the other chapters of the book, which deal with the substantial components of administrative law, also cite helpful specialist works where appropriate.

The back cover of Aronson and Dyer's text promotes the book as one in which the authors have drawn on a wealth of legislation, reports and other literature to provide both a highly detailed exposition of the subject and an exploration of its underlying principles and theories. Sometimes one is disappointed to find that what lies between the covers does not quite live up to the blurb. However, this is not the case here. *Judicial Review of Administrative Action* is a leading work in its field. It is highly recommended to practitioners who need to locate their clients' complaints within existing administrative actions, to advocates who need to both know specific cases and understand general themes, and to students who wish to research issues and explore ideas.

BEN ZIPSER

Ben Zipser is a Sydney lawyer.

Talk of the Devil: Repressed Memory & the Ritual Abuse Witch-Hunt

by Richard Guillatt; Text Publishing, Melbourne, 1996; 296 pp; \$16.95 softcover.

This book addresses two crucial questions. First, is there such a thing as a 'repressed memory'? Second, are children in Australia being ritually abused

by satanists? The questions are important because in a number of cases in Australia people have been tried, and sometimes convicted, on charges aris-