

BOOKS IN BRIEF

COMPUTER LAW (3rd Edition — paperback)

**By Colin Tapper
(Longman)**

Highly readable, this first paperback edition is of apparent benefit to anybody with an involvement in computers, quite apart from the lawyers.

Not least among its benefits is the concerted attempt Tapper makes to analyse the real issues regarding security of information held in large computerised stores, so that the "most breathtaking superficiality" of the popular media's coverage does not continue to obscure the dangers and abuses "... for which," Tapper says, "there are no adequate remedies, but (which) are more diffuse and subtle than the conventional wisdom allows".

Also of keen interest to all computer users is the sound practical advice Tapper gives, under the heading of "Preventive Measures", to protect the security of personal information held within computer systems.*

Lawyers particularly will note that this latest edition further advances Tapper's case that a scheme of protection of intellectual property needs to be devised to cope with the peculiar nature of the computer industry. In particular, in reviewing the most recent UK and US cases, the limitations of copyright protection for computer programs are further exposed.

The problems of admissibility of computer output in evidence and the (various) common law and statutory solutions — bearing in mind that there is no agreed definition of a computer — comprise a separate chapter in which the South Australian solution (Section 14 of the South Australian Evidence Amendment Act 1972) is singled out for praise.

*For an easy-to-read Australian guide on the problems of protecting information, **THE PROTECTION OF TRADE SECRETS**, by McComas, Davison & Gonski, Butterworths, is the answer. It includes a suitable preliminary letter to back-up the hopes of individuals who are about to "unveil" their inventions/ideas to corporate interests in anticipation of a handsome reward for their creative efforts.

GUIDEBOOK TO COMMONWEALTH FREEDOM OF INFORMATION (CCH)

This straightforward guide is based on (and reproduces in full) the Freedom of Information Act 1982 as amended to 1st January, 1984, including the amendments enacted by the Freedom of Information Amendment Act 1983 (which increased the right of access to documents, narrowed the width of exemptions, tightened the requirements on Government agencies which receive requests for access to documents, and strengthened rights of appeal) which came into operation on 1st January 1984.

The text incorporates the substantive parts of the 6 sets of Regulations made under the FOI Act 1982.

The guidebook is well indexed and a case table includes some unreported recent decisions.

Hot off the presses, to fill a practical gap in Australian legal texts, come not one but two 1984 books on Discovery:

THE LAW OF DISCOVERY

**By Bernard C. Cairns
(Law Book Company)**

DISCOVERY AND INTERROGATORIES

**By S.D. Simpson, D.L. Bailey & E.K. Evans
(Butterworths)**

For CLB readers, the main interests aroused by this topic are probably in the fields of defamation, copyright, trade marks and (to a lesser extent) trade practices.

Both volumes devote considerable space to Anton Pillar orders.