

tion contains a valuable insight into what examiners look for when marking exam answers in evidence law. The final component of each chapter concerns common errors to avoid when answering exam questions. This section is a fitting final component which acts as a simple summary easily referable to and invaluable in preparing for exams.

Overall the text is a useful addition for a student embarking upon the law of evidence. Its content is geared almost entirely to preparation for exam situations and provided that it is used for this purpose students will find it a valuable addition to their evidence library. Nevertheless, this text should not be used as a substitute for a comprehensive evidence text and without a fundamental understanding of the law of evidence. Also, the text has a strong focus on the position in NSW, which is under the jurisdiction of the *Uniform Evidence Act 1995* (this Act is also operative in the Commonwealth and ACT jurisdictions). Although reference is made to the position in other states, such comparisons are thin and students in these states need to be cautious when relying on the key issues and guide answers in this respect.

*Tracey Brewer**

Butterworths' Student Companions: Administrative Law

Anne Ardagh

Fourth Edition, Butterworths, 2000, 123pp, \$19

Ploughing through mountains of cases is often a laborious and ultimately unrewarding task. When reading through a 50-page judgment, it is irritating to discover the eventual conclusions to be superfluous, or even worse, an excruciating restatement of the obvious. The *Butterworths' Student Companions* series aims to provide crisp summaries of important cases in a wide range of legal fields, allowing the student to grasp legal principles with ruthless economy.

This latest collection of cases, compiled and summarised by Anne Ardagh, a Senior Lecturer in law and head of the Financial Studies Department at Charles Sturt University, attempts to encapsulate those cases deemed 'essential reading' for any student of administrative law. This is an ambitious project: administrative law is a notoriously nebulous area, and, being a relatively new legal field, it is inevitable that cases for study will overlap with certain other areas (in

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my experience, frequently with contract and constitutional law). Ardagh's admirable scope provides us with 164 imperative inclusions.

The book has advantages and disadvantages. Its main advantage is its obvious function as a time-saving device. The book's utility is multiplied when one is confronted by an especially verbose judgment; Ardagh's handy summaries of the facts also allow one to grasp immediately what would otherwise be difficult statutory regulations. I found this factual synoptic overview particularly useful as a 'primer' to reading the judgments in their original form, especially in cases such as *R v Toobey*; *ex parte Northern Land Council* and *Australian Broadcasting Tribunal v Bond*, in which a mastery of the facts greatly aids comprehension of the judgments and enriches an appreciation of the case. There is of course no real substitute for reading the judgments themselves; but extensive summaries of the famous *Drake* cases certainly include the salient details, and provide one with an indication of what to look for when reading the original.

This volume is, however, less than comprehensive. Many important cases, including *Minister for Aboriginal Affairs v Peko-Wallsend* and *Nationwide News v Wills*, have not been included. Perhaps these omissions can be explained by considerable overlap with other areas; specificity may denote their inclusion in other collections in the series. I was more frustrated, however, with the exceedingly poor index. Subject areas seem to be chosen at random; many are omitted without explanation (Why is there no mention of discretion, judicial review, or merits review as subject areas?) and presentation of the index is clumsy and cluttered. Furthermore, the numbers given in the index are referenced to case numbers, rather than page numbers. This is not a major flaw, but an annoying one. The inclusion of a case-name index to the names of all parties to the action would have greatly enhanced the utility of this volume.

Ardagh's selection obviously will be useful as a supplementary account of main cases and principles. It will be particularly beneficial for administrative law courses that are exam-based; considering the ridiculous price levels of law texts, it is admirably inexpensive. Students wanting more robust theoretical treatment of administrative law principles will immediately look elsewhere. Nevertheless, this is a useful collection.

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