

dents wishing to do exam-style questions in preparation for their exams.

*Revell Norquay\**

### **Understanding the Australian Legal System**

**John Carvan**

**Fourth Edition, Lawbook Co, 2002, pp 176, \$32.76**

*Understanding the Australian Legal System* (4<sup>th</sup> ed) is the most recent publication of this introductory text to the study of law. It does not differ greatly from the previous editions, but includes further discussion of legal reasoning and judicial decision-making and additional case law examples. A new chapter on torts, in particular the law of negligence, has also been included in this edition. The author, John Carvan, has been a lecturer of both introductory and administrative law for many years at various institutions, including the Australian School of Commerce and Management, the University of Wollongong, the University of Western Sydney and TAFE. His wide experience in lecturing in introductory law is reflected in the comprehensibility of this latest reference.

This text is clearly intended to act as introductory reading and to provide a general overview of Australian law for first-time students or others requiring a basic knowledge of the law. Each of the nine chapters deals with a different aspect of the law, following a logical progression in difficulty from 'Studying Law', in the first chapter, to explanations of the basic concepts of the laws of contract and torts in the final chapters. The definitions and concepts dealt with are explained clearly and concisely using simple language to facilitate understanding. More difficult issues, inherent in areas such as the study of contract and torts, are also explained in a straightforward manner. Each chapter is divided into clear sections under headings, and contain diagrams and numerous practical examples to assist in the comprehension of the explanations provided. Case examples and extracts are also provided, particularly in later chapters, to illustrate relevant principles.

Sample questions and self-testing questions are provided at the end of each chapter. These are designed to ensure that the student understood the key issues raised within the chapter and that any problematic or difficult areas are addressed. Answers are provided to the

\* BSocSci (Swinburne); Fourth year LLB (University of Tasmania).

sample questions, as well as a suggested method for approaching and responding to these questions. Correct responses are not expressly provided for the self-testing questions; however, all necessary information is contained in the text of the relevant chapter.

The text is primarily concerned with the law of New South Wales, although most of the concepts dealt with are common throughout Australia. Any differences arising between any of the State and Territory jurisdictions are generally noted by the author. The concise overview of each aspect discussed provides a good introduction to the Australian legal system. This brevity, at times, may result in a lack of depth and detail. However, in the main, the author is not overly simplistic and a good overview of each topic discussed is provided. He also states in the preface to this text that its purpose is to 'provide a pathway into the more detailed and generally excellent writings in introductory law subjects'<sup>1</sup> and that it was not therefore intended to be a comprehensive text. Rather, it is anticipated that it will be useful to students as preliminary reading prior to referring to set texts.

This text has been recently short-listed for the '2002 Awards for Excellence in Educational Publishing' in the category of TAFE and Vocational Education, testifying to the quality of this latest edition and its recognition as a valuable text. It is straightforward and easy to follow, and generally provides a good starting point for the study of law. It is not possible to offer many criticisms of *Understanding the Australian Legal System*. John Carvan has been successful in creating a comprehensive introductory text to Australian law.

*Stephanie Iernio\**

### **Ethics in Law: Lawyers' Responsibility and Accountability in Australia**

**Ysaiah Ross**

**Third Edition, Butterworths, 2001, pp 566, \$88.00**

The increased public scrutiny of the legal profession in recent years has led to a greater focus on professional ethics and accountability. Legal ethics courses are now recognised as being an essential part of legal education. *Ethics in Law* provides students with a detailed account of the responsibilities of lawyers in practice and the ethical issues that they may confront.

<sup>1</sup> Carvan D, *Understanding the Australian Legal System* (2002) vii.

\* Third year BA/LLB (University of Tasmania).