

Book Reviews

Finding the Law: a guide to Australian secondary sources of legal information, by C Fong and G Ellis,

Legal Information Press, Sydney 1990, 698 pages.

by Elizabeth Naumczyk

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Legal researchers wanting to find secondary sources of legal information for Australia will welcome the recent publication of *Finding the law*.

This work is first and foremost a *guide and reference work*. It is easy to browse and a quick first step to uncovering the various secondary sources available. The main work comprising 503 pages spanning over some twenty years, is comprehensive, well presented and organised by subject. Secondary sources cover textbooks, looseleaf services, periodical articles, videos and computerised legal databases. To assist the user further, the authors have provided various lists namely a *List of publishers' abbreviations*, and a *List of subject headings* (10 pages). The appendices include *Australian Legal Abbreviations* (62 pages), and an *Annotated Legislation Index* (22 pages), followed by an *Author index* (107 pages).

The task undertaken by the authors is enormous considering the burgeoning amount of information generated in today's society. Not surprising, therefore, some selectivity has been necessary. The preface states what has and has not been included, for example, references to particular government publications such as law reform agencies are included while "generally articles in *Australian Current Law* prior to 1986 have been omitted: the 1975-1985 Index should be consulted for prior articles".

Of particular interest is the listing of looseleaf services, databases, and their print versions, under particular subject headings. In future, the versions available on CD-ROM discs could be included. Other useful features are the listing of individual conference papers, as well as the contributors and chapters found in an edited work; indicating changes to specific title headings between the 2nd and 3rd editions of the *Australian Digest*, and providing the *Annotated Legislation Index* in Appendix 2 to show where statutes have been annotated as monographs or in looseleaf services.

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A book of this kind can never be definitive and factual deficiencies will occur when, for example, computerised legal information retrieval systems change names from CLIRS to INFO-ONE, or databases become accessible via different systems. CINCH the Australian Institute of Criminology database is now no longer accessible via the AUSINET system. It can be accessed on the OZLINE and LINK systems, and the CD-ROM disc version called AUSTROM. The work is large and the area covered very significant, and I am sure any such changes can be rectified by the authors in future editions. Certainly, they do not diminish the book's importance and valuable contribution to Australian legal research.

For the latest word on specific topics it may be necessary to ask your librarian for further assistance to supplement the information available in the book, by searching the latest printed sources, computerised legal information databases or their CD-ROM versions. It is essential such a key reference work be updated on a regular basis, and clearly the authors have this in mind. I wish them every success in their continuing contribution to Australian legal research