

Review of *Statutory Will Applications: A Practical Guide*

It is an interesting feature of book scholarship on Australian succession law that its focus, with the exception of my own work (co-authored with Ken Mackie),¹ in the last 25 years or so has been on specific aspects of succession law. The Australian legal landscape has witnessed relatively recent books dedicated to family provision applications² and to the construction of wills,³ both areas replete with case law extending over a significant time frame. Perhaps, therefore, it should have been little surprise that the trend should continue, here with the recent publication of *Statutory Will Applications: A Practical Guide*. Sight unseen, I confess to have pondered how much could be written on this topic, especially against a statutory backdrop extending over only 17 years or so in Australia.

The opportunity to peruse the work, however, highlights more to the topic that may have first been imagined. While the relevant statutory schemes are not overly lengthy (and are extracted in Ch 9), and the Australian case law amounts to little more than 50 cases (most being unreported, and catalogued in Ch 8, which contains case briefs, extending to some 100 pages, some two-fifths of the substance of the book), the authors have left few stones unturned in their exposition of the relevant law. But the value of the book, beyond the foregoing, centres on its practical focus. The 50 or so pages on acting for applicants and other interested persons (Chs 4 and 5) are likely to be invaluable to the practitioner in this field, as are the brief precedents found in Ch 10.

The strong practical focus of the work is indicative of its intended audience. This has not, however, been at the expense of some analysis and contextualisation of the relevant law, although the book is not (and cannot be expected to be) an academic treatment of the law. There are some minor infelicities in the heading levels – on occasion the same heading level is utilised for material that ostensibly cascades under another heading, and the formatting of headings is not always consistent. There are also occasions where the number of headings unduly break up the narrative, but in a practitioner work these no doubt assist ready referencing.

Succession law practitioners will be benefited by consulting *Statutory Will Applications: A Practical Guide*, as the only work devoted solely to that topic. Its overall logical structure, easily accessible nature, and practical focus augurs well for its widespread use.

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¹ G E Dal Pont and K F Mackie, *Law of Succession*, LexisNexis Butterworths, 2013.

² See, for example, J K de Groot and B W Nickel, *Family Provision in Australia*, 4th ed, LexisNexis Butterworths, 2012.

³ D M Haines, *Construction of Wills in Australia*, LexisNexis Butterworths, 2007.