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**Family Law in Australia, 9<sup>th</sup> ed  
Young, Sifris, Carroll & Monahan  
LexisNexis Butterworths 2016  
Reviewed by Catherine O'Sullivan**

This comprehensive text provides a thorough exploration of the main principles of family law. The key issues are presented in a detailed yet accessible manner, resulting in a text that is useful both as a detailed history of the development of modern family law, and a text that can be relied upon and applied in practice.

The book is divided into fifteen chapters, and commences with a short history of English marriage and divorce law, before outlining the development of Australian family law. A significant section of the book is devoted to sociological and psychological issues impacting on family law and the modern Australian family, with an entire chapter devoted to family violence. The text also provides a chapter on the various dispute resolution processes available.

A significant section of the book is focused upon an analysis of the historical, social and legal background to current family law, with an overview of past reforms. Though overall the book is an excellent resource for students, educators and family lawyers alike, the focus on the development of family law does render a significant section of the book one that is more suited to students, rather than those in practice.

The first half of the text is devoted to parenting matters. Chapter seven provides a helpful commentary in relation to parentage, including commentary on the presumption of parentage, issues regarding surrogacy, and some interesting reading regarding issues that can arise from assisted reproduction. Chapters eight and nine provide a useful outline of the legislative framework regarding the allocation of parental responsibility and the determination of the best interests principle and s60CC factors. There is a helpful section on those tricky relocation cases and matters involving allegations of child sexual abuse.

The second half of the text relates to financial and property matters. Chapters ten and eleven provide a detailed commentary on spousal maintenance and child support. The text devotes three chapters to the legislative framework and exercise of discretion involved in the distribution of property, and concludes with a chapter on specific issues relating to property matters. This includes some useful commentary on superannuation splitting and flagging orders, injunctions relating to property, orders relating to third parties, and the issue of bankruptcy and the *Family Law Act*. There is also a good summary of the law relating to the setting aside of property orders and the grounds for same.

The authors supply an in-depth analysis of several topics of interest, including a summary of the law pre- and post-Stanford and Bevan & Bevan. There is useful commentary on the changes in the area of 'big money' cases and the future of add-backs. The section devoted to the contentious issue of recent litigation on financial agreements makes for some compelling reading.

Overall, the book is well referenced and contains a lengthy table of cases, which provides a useful and up-to date resource. The detailed use of footnotes provides easy access to further reading if you feel so inclined to explore your topic further. Family Law in Australia would prove a useful addition to any family lawyer's library.