This month's reviews cover conveyancing, justice within Australian society, conflict management and entertaining stories from Australia's legal history.

Annotated Conveyancing and Real Property Legislation NSW 2012-2013
Peter Young, Anthony Cahill and Gary Newton, Annotated Conveyancing and Real Property Legislation NSW 2012-2013, 2012, LexisNexis, pb $115.

A rather unflattering book review in the January 1973 edition of the Australian Law Journal (47 ALJ 56) commenced with the pronouncement "It is difficult to see the occasion, or a use, for this book." Happily, that is far from the case here.

Anyone who too readily dismisses the utility of a work written ostensibly for practitioners in another state overlooks that the common law of Australia is uniform and that while legislation often differs to varying degrees the similarities tend to outweigh the differences. And so it is that this title can comfortably be pressed into service by Victorian property law practitioners.

The work is what publishers call a "drop-out" book, and is extracted from volume 2 of the loose-leaf service, Butterworths Conveyancing Service New South Wales. Two pieces of legislation take centre stage: the Conveyancing Act 1919, which together with the Conveyancing (Sale of Land) Regulation 2010 also included in the work) covers much of the territory held by the Property Law Act 1958 (Vic) and the Sale of Land Act 1962 (Vic), and the Real Property Act 1900, being the New South Wales "Torrens" legislation. Other Acts are included, such as the Retail Leases Act 1994 and the Strata Schemes Management Act 1996, which bear many similarities to the Retail Leases Act 2006 (Vic) and the Owners Corporations Act 2006 (Vic) respectively.

All of the Acts are annotated, as the title of the book promises, and some 1000 cases are cited.

In short, this work would make a useful addition to the library of property law practitioners in this state.

The publisher is to be commended for making part of Butterworths Conveyancing Service New South Wales available at modest cost compared to the service itself. Having said that, one notable drawback of the work is that the reader is frequently referred for further discussion to volume 1 of the service which contains commentary on the law relating to the sale of land and the standard contract of sale. A drop-out book extracted from volume 1 would make a superb companion work if the publisher were to undertake such an exercise.

DAVID FLOYD BARRISTER

Justice in Society


The joint work of Carpenter and Ball, from the School of Justice at the Queensland University of Technology, deals with the complex and often seemingly obscure mountain that is justice. Their work highlights the different groups of society that face injustice because of class, wealth, gender, age, sexuality, being an Indigenous Australian or being an asylum seeker. In an interesting take on the topic, Carpenter and Ball do not seek to clarify justice, or what is required for it to be achieved. Rather they seek to provide a way in which to examine these issues away from the typical assumptions that are part of traditional ways of thinking about this area.

The position of the authors follows the thoughts of philosophers such as Derrida and Foucault; that while justice is an important and worthy idea to strive for, it will never be fully achieved. The overall tone of the book is not pessimistic however; as the authors show how a shift in focus is necessary to escape the assumptions that limit thinking about issues of justice. The book examines a wide range of social issues and provides a good background into each issue with well-supported facts. Each topic is presented according to a sociological and a political philosophy perspective. The authors then provide a third position that looks at sociological imagination, cultural ethnography and a history of the present. Furthermore, they advocate for recognising, embracing and working with the complex issues needed to achieve any form of justice.

Overall, the book is well researched and provides an excellent starting point for examining issues of justice and injustice within contemporary Australian society. The authors provide good explanations of the philosophical and sociological viewpoints and propose