

REVIEWS

Units. I commend them all.

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MAKING AND BREAKING THE LAW

The Legal System and the Attainment of Justice

by Jules Aldous and Dianne Levy;
VCTA Publishing, Melbourne, 1991;
\$34.00.

Victoria has a reputation for producing some of the most useful and interesting legal studies textbooks for high schools in the country. *Making and Breaking the Law* is no exception to this broad trend.

The book takes the view that 'our

legal system is a dynamic network that both responds to the needs and demands of the community as well as shaping relationships between individuals and groups in society'. It focuses on exploring the role of the law for individuals, the community and legal institutions. It does this by examining first, the role of law, law-making institutions and law-making processes; and second, dispute settlement, institutions, and process and procedures evaluation.

The book provides a useful description of the main institutions and issues relating to the law in society and the uses and processes of the law in Victoria. Each chapter has a particular theme (e.g. role of Parliament, civil procedure, the jury). Work requirements – such as analytical exercises, case studies, investigation and research projects – accompany each area. A liberal use of subheadings, margin notes, figures, cartoons and recent newspaper reports also break up the text. The book covers a comprehensive range of ideas and informa-

tion, and while it is well written, would certainly challenge intellectually more than a few of its student readers.

Making and Breaking the Law takes a relatively uncritical perspective on the social function and position of law in society, although it covers particular legal problems such as access to justice. Its main strength is that it provides a very useful reference point for high school students to develop their understanding of the law and legal processes, and to gain a substantial knowledge of its many different facets. Books such as this are valuable in another way: they can serve as models for the legal studies resources in other States, such as Western Australia, where the process of producing similar material is still in its initial stages.

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Rob White coordinates the Legal Studies Program at Edith Cowan University, Perth.

References continued from p. 241

References

1. This article is based on a workshop conducted by the authors at the 14th Annual Conference of Community Legal Centres in May 1992.
2. See, for example, Combined Community Legal Centres Group (NSW) *Submission to the Costs of Justice Inquiry by the Senate Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs* (1989), Office of Legal Aid and Family Services *Community*

Legal Centres: A Study of Four Centres in New South Wales and Victoria (1991).

3. There are, of course, obvious overlaps between each, and even disagreements as to whether a particular activity is, for example, undertaken because of its educative or reform aspect.
4. Details of the campaign can be found in Real Rape Law Coalition *No Real Justice. Interim Report of a Confidential Phone In on Sexual Assault* (1991).
5. See Australian Financial Counselling and Credit Reform Association *Need or Greed: A Study of Consumer Credit Insurance* (1987) and *37c in the Dollar* (1991) and Trade Practices Commission *The Market for Consumer Credit Insurance* (1991).
6. We have used the word campaign loosely. While CLC law reform work includes (and is sometimes dominated by) reactive responses to an unsavoury government proposal, the strategies are essentially similar to a premeditated and thoroughly planned 'campaign'.
7. A recent example was an early 1992 7.30 *Report* which surrounded a story on WA juvenile legislation with sensational car chases and police sirens.

FURTHER NOTICES CONFERENCES

LAW AND SOCIETY CONFERENCE 1992

Sponsored by Legal Studies Department and National Centre for Socio-Legal Studies, La Trobe University.

Dates: 4, 5, 6, December, 1992

Venue: Bundoora Campus, La Trobe University

Contact: The Convenor, NCSLS, fax (03) 479 1607

AUSTRALIAN FAMILY RESEARCH CONFERENCE

The Australian Institute of Family Studies is holding its fourth research and policy-related conference. The

conference will provide an opportunity for public discussion of both Institute and wider research.

Date: 17-19 February 1993

Venue: Manly Pacific Parkroyal, Sydney

Contact: tel (03) 608 6888 or fax (03) 600 0886