

A Cartoon Guide to Corporations and Partnerships Law by T Short & J Cane (Butterworths, Sydney, 1998) 74pp. Price \$19.50 (soft cover). ISBN 0 409 31555 9.

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A Cartoon Guide to Corporations and Partnerships Law contains a series of small black and white cartoons illustrating many of the legal principles of corporations and partnership law, supplemented by a small amount of text. The materials were originally produced by the authors for lecture presentations and internet access by students studying corporations and partnership law at the University of South Australia.

The book aims to stimulate students to do some reading in these areas of the law and is designed to be used in conjunction with standard textbooks. It also aims to instil in students some of the basic legal principles in corporate law.

It is a novel approach to teaching and learning law. The author and illustrator have taken on the formidable task of presenting legal principles in a visual form that will appeal to students. In some respects, they succeed, although my sample group of students had very mixed responses.

Some of the cartoons are amusing and diverting. They show, for example, many (perhaps too many) bewigged judges pronouncing the *ratio decidendi* of numerous key cases. Directors puzzle over the nature of their duty to act bona fide and in the interests of the company and struggle with the temptations of insider trading. Minority shareholders are cast out to sea on a raft being circled by (majority shareholder) sharks, and the s 1324 injunction appears as horse and rider to rescue the shareholder in distress.

The accompanying text is very good, although it is not intended to be comprehensive. Instead some useful background information is provided to some topics (the historic development of companies is covered well), and in others the authors list the key legal principles and cases and occasionally highlight some of the difficulties with the law. There are also some helpful diagrams, such as one showing the interrelationship between directors' statutory duties and their fiduciary duties and duty of care.

One difficulty with the book is its rather cramped presentation. Commonly, as many as eight cartoons appear on a double page. A better balance between text and cartoons, by allowing space for a little more text would have made the book more user-friendly and given many of the cartoons more impact. As well, the book does not deal with all aspects of corporations and partnership law. The section on corporations (nine of a total of ten chapters) stops at members' statutory remedies – there is nothing on external administration and winding up. The law of partnership appears in the final chapter. Another difficulty is that the book does not reflect the changes to the Corporations Law that came into effect on 1 July 1998, although the authors anticipate some of the changes introduced by the *Company Law Review Act 1998*.

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It is encouraging to see a fresh approach to teaching and learning in these areas of the law. Teachers will find *A Cartoon Guide* useful, if used selectively. Those students who are looking for a supplementary learning tool and want a book with a fresh approach will also find it beneficial. They will, however, have to overlook those areas that are now out of date following the passage of the *Company Law Review Act 1998*.



