

Critical Perspectives on the Uniform Evidence Law

Andrew Roberts & Jeremy Gans (eds.)

The Federation Press

288 pp

\$165

Reviewed by Vivienne Gale

Slim Volume Packs a Weighty Punch in Uniform Evidence Law

Uniform Evidence law books have a tendency to be substantial. Generally they are lengthy tomes dense with essential detail. Cast your mind back to the last time you worked out in your office picking up, down and through the faithful and indispensable stalwart Odgers' *Uniform Evidence Law*¹. That volume of almost two thousand pages, deals heavily with the vast details of this expansive legislation and the cases that begin to define its interpretation.

But that is not this evidence book. Andrew Roberts and Jeremy Gans, *Critical Perspectives on the Uniform Evidence Law* is a slim hard covered book that feels light in the hand but it still packs the weighty punch needed for investigating this area of the law. Within this elegant volume the heavy weights of academia and the courts enlighten us on specific, controversial and often, misunderstood areas of the Uniform Evidence Law. The wisdom and clarity that these pre-eminent authors bring to their topics makes the content come to life. These authoritative authors compel our interest and reward our reading with focused enlightenment not easily found in other investigations of Uniform Evidence Law.

These essays are penned by the finest minds and cover the essential, the difficult and the most controversial areas of Uniform Evidence Law. The authors are relevant and vital critics of their chosen topic. Allowing their *critical perspectives* to cross easily from the page and into our inquiring minds. From confessions and admissions, to tendency and coincidence we are invited to explore another perspective, a differing and more illuminating view is offered for our reflection.

Included is a fascinating discourse of not so uniform adoption of these laws throughout Australia. This is considered in a number of chapters. Early on in the book Tasmania is picked out by Jeremy Gans as ground breaking due to its divergence from the mainland model. Tasmania's substitution of the dictionary with an interpretation provision, dropping of the standard stylistic approach, inclusion of non-UEL provisions, and a differing approach to identification admissibility rules gives this State a point of difference. Whereas Queensland, Western Australia and South Australia justifications for non-adoption are comprehensively analysed by Andrew Hemming. His absorbing treatise discusses these States' reticence and what the Commonwealth can do to aid the adoption of these laws across the country.

The chapters unfold to reveal absorbing deliberations on reliability, probative value, delay in sexual assault complaint and more. This book provides solid, reliable and insightful knowledge of Uniform Evidence Law. It is well written and engaging and is recommended as a fine read.

¹ Stephen Odgers, *Uniform Evidence Law* (Thomson Reuters, 12th ed, 2016).