

Book reviews

This month, discover books on national security and constitutional law, Australia's history of referendums and a twisty crime thriller.

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[Reviews](#)

[Continuing Legal Education](#)

[Books](#)

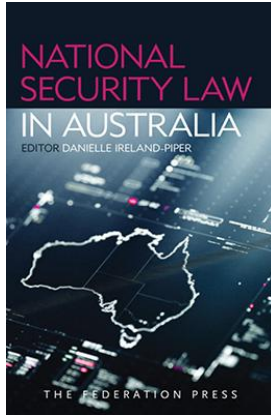


National Security Law in Australia

Danielle Ireland-Piper (ed), The Federation Press, 2024, paperback, \$170

LIV member price \$153

www.liv.asn.au/itemdetail?iProductCode=9781760025205 <<https://www.liv.asn.au/itemdetail?iProductCode=9781760025205>>



A book about national security law might risk a narrow compass, but this edited collection happily confounds such expectations.

The introductory chapter argues that the concept of national security should be broadly conceived to include threats to social cohesion, disinformation, food security, climate and natural disasters, pandemics, and the challenges of cyberspace and outer space. At the same time, it acknowledges that the process of “securitisation” – conceiving of a problem through the lens of national security – can have detriments, including allowing politicians to justify a more severe (and often rights-restrictive) response to a perceived problem. An example given is the way that asylum seekers arriving by boat have been politically framed as a threat to national security. The label of “national security” is further historicised and problematised in the book’s second chapter.

The remaining chapters fulfil the promise of a broad view of national security. While there are helpful contributions on what is considered the core of the subject – the powers of Australia’s national intelligence agencies – there are also whole chapters on gender and artificial intelligence. The breadth of the book also satisfyingly spans both black letter constitutional doctrine and broader policy debates, while scholarly rigor ensures that it makes an important and timely contribution to the study and practice of national security law in Australia.

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