Letters of the law

THE AUSTRALIAN LEGAL DICTIONARY / S.E.
Marantelli. Melbourne: Hargreen Publishing
Co. 1980. 248pp. $5.95. ISBN 0 9596696 7 1.
THE legal dictionary has a long history as a
lawyer's research tool in England and in those
countries in which the common law was
adopted. Latin and French were at times the
official language of English law and they
played an important part in the shaping of its
technical language.

However, that technicality is not restricted
to foreign words for English words may also
acquire precise, legal meanings. Multivolume
and substantial single volume dictionaries
which aim to define and illustrate these
meanings are available and in Australia until
now reliance has been placed on English
publications. This was quite reasonable when
the common law (judge made law) was in
force in purer form throughout the English
speaking world.

Today, when the predominance of statute
law has produced a great diversity in the laws
of the common law countries, the usefulness
of an English legal dictionary, particularly a
popular one, is increasingly limited. For this
reason Mr Marantelli's work is, as the first
attempt at an Australian legal dictionary, an
important one.

This dictionary contains over 1500 entries
on 243 pages, many entries running to half a
page or more, some consisting of only one line.
An entry consists of a simple, short definition
of a term or phrase followed, when necessary,
by a fuller explanation and examples.

References to case and, more frequently, to
statute law are included when relevant,
Victorian statutes usually being cited. For
example, the entry for 'arrest' gives a short
definition followed by almost a page on the

procedures that need to be followed in Vic-
toria. Reference is made to four statutes.

The mention of 'habeas corpus' suggests
checking that entry, in which a further
reference is found to 'false imprisonment'.

Historical terms ('hung, drawn and quar-
tered') mingle with strict legal terms ('laches';
'estoppel'), Latin tags *('nolle prosequi'*; *'omne
majus continet in se minus')* and new ter-
minology ('.05%' – drink-driving legislation
in Victoria; '.08%' – parallel legislation in
New South Wales, Queensland, South Aus-
tralia and Western Australia'; 'knock for
knock'). Terms relating to contemporary
social issues eg 'abortion', 'breath tests',
receive longer, more discursive treatment so
that the dictionary provides interesting
reading as well as serving a reference
purpose.

For those beginning professional legal
studies and having recourse to the primary
legal materials, especially case law, a basic list
of abbreviations of law reports would have
been a useful appendix to this work.

However, as a compact, cheap and as yet
unique work this dictionary will be useful not
only to those students but also to those
engaged in legal studies programs in high
schools and colleges of advanced education. It
is also a welcome addition to the new litera-
ture which seeks to demystify the law and
bring it to the people.
John Rodwell, Macquarie University

Local history

LOCAL HISTORY AND THE PUBLIC LIBRARY
(Occasional Paper no3). Sydney: NSW
Branch, Library Association of Australia.
1979. $3.50 ($3 to LAA members). ISBN 0 7240
5107 4. ISSN 0155 5472.
THIS publication consists of the proceedings
of a workshop held at Willoughby Municipal
Library, Chatswood, on 12 October 1979. The
theme was the organisation and indexing of
local history resources in public libraries and
access to sources of materials and informa-
tion. The workshop was arranged by the NSW
Branch of the LAA and the Public Libraries
Division of the State Library of NSW as the
third in a series under the LAA Continuing
Education Activities program. The previous
two were *Local History Resources* and *Oral
History Techniques*.

The proceedings consist of seven papers
with a summary at the end of points from the
plenary session.

The first two papers are practical accounts
of what has been done in the local history field
in the Stanton, Willoughby and Sutherland
Public Libraries. The paper relating to the
Stanton and Willoughby collections gives
good guidelines about starting such a collec-
tion, what type of material they have acquired
and how they have dealt with it. Clear ex-
amples of indexing, reference and query cards
are given.

The Sutherland Library paper concen-
trates on the problems of indexing local
history printed material. It relates the expe-
riences encountered in indexing the manu-
script for a book and proceeds with an ex-
tension of this into the indexing of
newspapers.

It is interesting to note that the approaches
to indexing in these two papers differ; one is by
place and other by subject. It is a good
example of the need to design an index to fit
the circumstances.

The paper on local government records
deals with the problems of access including
the difficulties of reconciling availability with
privacy and also the need for finding aids and

guidance from the archivist. The writer ends
on a note of caution to librarians to recognise
the essential differences between archival and
library materials, a warning with which I
heartily concur.

The remainder of the papers deal with
organisations which hold or use records.
There is reference to bodies such as historical
societies, the NSW Heritage Council, etc and
also a discussion of the promotion of local
history in school curricula. A brief introduc-
tion is given to the Mitchell Library and the
Archives Office of NSW. An outline is in-
cluded of a survey being carried out by the
NSW Friends of the Library to determine the
level of public library and institutional in-
volvement in local history resource
collections.

The volume, though dealing specifically
with the NSW scene, is a useful publication as
both a guide to public librarians and possibly
historical societies in setting up and indexing
local history collections and also to the ama-
teur historian in giving a very general outline
of the type of source materials likely to be
found in different places.
Margaret Medcalf
Battye Library, WA

Aust technology

**AUSTRALIAN TECHNOLOGY DIRECTORY: a
comprehensive guide to technology or-
ganisations, services and facilities in Aus-
tralia.** Braddon, ACT: Intertrade. 1980.
166pp. $17.50. ISSN 0158 2070.
Intertrade has published *Australian Tech-
nology Directory* which is 'designed as a
reference publication for companies and
individuals to locate the many organisations
both institutional and private, which can help
in the search or explanation of how tech-
nology can help their businesses'.

In view of this objective it is unfortunate
that the classified arrangement is not ac-
companied by an alphabetical index. For
example the only way of finding the Astron-
omy Advisory Council is to know that it was
appointed to advise the Minister of Science
and the Environment.

Despite this, the publication is useful
because it brings together an interesting
collection of information which has only been
available from many, and sometimes obscure
sources.

There are eight sections: Patents designs
and trademarks, Technology Councils, Com-
mittees, Statutory Authorities, Federal
Government Departments, Technology and
Technical Associations, Technology Consul-
tants, Technology Publications and Trade
Fairs, Commercial Technology and Technical
Facilities, Tertiary and State Technology/
Technical Facilities.

Some library-based information services
are included, such as ANSTEL and others
under the research role of colleges of ad-
vanced education. Some of this information
should be treated with caution as it is out of
date.

The publishers intend to issue a second
edition in 1981 and one would hope that some
of the weaknesses in the present edition will be
corrected. For example there is no publication
date or cataloguing in publication record.

In summary, *Australian Technology Direc-
tory* is a valuable guide to librarians who are
interested in the wider world of technology
transfer and those who are engaged in
providing library-type information services to
the business community.
Dorothy G. Peake
NSW Institute of Technology