

but which have the consequence of harming the individual. It is the issue which dominates this volume, and so it is appropriate it is to the fore.

Resolving such issues will never be easy. However, this collection provides an important grounding in the debates which will continue for a while to come. It will also be a necessary reminder when the specific events have been forgotten.

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The Tall Man

Chloe Hooper, *The Tall Man*, 2008, Hamish Hamilton, pb \$32.95.

The Tall Man falls comfortably within the genre of writing made most famous by Truman Capote in his classic work *In Cold Blood*. What is distinctive about this type of writing is that the author becomes involved in the story that they are narrating. Detachment or objectivity are probably not possible – or sought – in such writing. Instead, by becoming immersed in the unfolding human story, the writer – as well as the reader – attempts to make sense of what has occurred through a subjective response to the narrative. Hooper does so and the result is compelling.

In *The Tall Man* the key event is the tragic and suspicious death of Indigenous man Cameron Doomadgee in the Palm Island police station on 19 November 2004. The subsequent riot at Palm Island by the Indigenous community and the trial and acquittal of police officer Christopher Hurley for the manslaughter of Doomadgee is thoroughly examined. By doing so, Hooper's narrative focuses on attempting to understand all the participants in the unfolding drama.

Hooper achieves this in a number of ways. First, she becomes involved early in the story and visits Palm Island, meeting not only lawyers acting on behalf of the Palm Island community but also members of the Doomadgee family. What she then does – in what appears to be an unarticulated desire to remain "objective" – is visit the remote communities where Sergeant Hurley had worked in an attempt to understand him and his experience. For completeness, she also places the death in custody of Doomadgee in an historical, wider frame of reference that emphasises the enduring consequences of colonial and neo-colonial practices in Indigenous communities.

What is achieved in terms of "understanding" and the "lessons" is not made clear by Hooper. Perhaps it was not her intention to be prescriptive in this regard or, indeed, to suggest what could be learned from the death of a relatively young man while in state custody. Hooper is a fine writer. Her perception of others is nuanced and artful.

Rendering a complex, human portrait of all the participants in this human tragedy is perhaps her greatest lesson.

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Understanding Australian Construction Contracts

Ian Bailey and Matthew Bell, *Understanding Australian Construction Contracts*, 2008, Lawbook, pb \$74.95.

Having been deputy president of VCAT's Domestic Building List and now a senior member of that List and others, I can testify to the importance of standard form contracts in the building area. Most building contracts I have encountered – domestic and non-domestic alike – take a standard form. A work dealing with these forms is invaluable. This is just such a work.


The authors are both experts in their field and each is involved in the Construction Law program at Melbourne University. Their expertise in the field precedes them.

This book has its origins in Ian Bailey's *Construction Law in Australia* (LBC Information Services, 1998), chapter 10. But the book expands on the analysis found in that text. Justice Byrne in his foreword says that the value of the work to those in the construction industry will be that it makes, in summary, a comparison of the treatment of the principal features of a construction contract found in the standard forms now in use. Such forms include AS 2124 – 1992; AS 4000 – 1997; ABIC MW-1 2003; and PC-1 1998. Each of these is in common use. It is very handy to have a book that succinctly analyses their important features.

The book is a mine of information for anyone having occasion to wonder about the meaning or application of provisions in any of the forms. In 33 chapters (including "Bills of Quantities", "Site Conditions", "Subcontracts and Assignment", "Variations", "Practical Completion", "Liquidated Damages and Bonuses" and "Settlement of Disputes"), the authors set out in a very understandable and well-written way the provisions of the main standard forms and supplement this with valuable commentary. Each chapter is easy to follow. The work is assisted by a detailed index. Reference is made throughout to other standard texts.

This book makes a valuable contribution to a complex area of law. Anyone needing to consider any of the standard forms it deals with will be doing themselves a disservice if they do not consult it.

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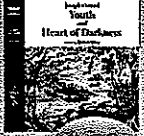
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