

Child Access and Modern Family Law

By

Jill F. Burrett

The Law Book Company Limited, Sydney, 1988

and

Conduct, Fault and Family Law

By

Norman A. Katter

The Law Book Company Limited, Sydney, 1987

In a legal climate of increasing specialization it is heartening to see the publication of specialist texts to aid practitioners. *Child Access and Modern Family Law* by Jill Burrett and *Conduct, Fault and Family Law* by Norman Katter are two such specialist publications both of which bring, to their particular areas, a depth of knowledge that will aid family law practitioners.

Child Access and Family Law

Access to children by a non-custodial parent is one of the major areas of potential personal conflict between separated or divorced parents in family law.

Child Access and Modern Family Law seeks to redress many of the problems an adversarial system brings to such an inherently personal matter. The author aims first to educate family law practitioners about counselling procedures under the Family Law Act, secondly, to equip practitioners with knowledge of the interdynamics of family relationships and thirdly to help them gain knowledge of the use of mediation and conciliation as alternative skills to a trial of issues.

There is very little published material concerning the effects of separation on children at large and even less on the education of the legal professional in coping with clients who find themselves, at such an emotional time in their lives, having to make decisions concerning the future welfare of their children. For this reason the author also addresses the allied issue of custody of children.

This is a small but important book for all lawyers who practice in family law. It is written in an easily readable style and attempts to explain the dynamics of the family relationships without too much emphasis on theory. It also seeks to look to future development within the family groups, for example, step-parents, step-siblings and half-siblings and to assess the impact of these on the parent-aa-child relationship. Each chapter lists the author's references and a list of suggested further reading for the practitioner.

In writing this book, the author draws on her own experience working within the Family Court at Sydney and one of the strengths of the publication is the practical guides and insights the author has gained from working within the jurisdiction.

In the concluding chapters the author reflects on the need for further research into access and the effects of non-access or continued access on children. She also addresses the growing use of alternative forms of dispute resolution.

The work is a publication directed at the legal profession which gives valuable practical information and understandings concerning a very difficult area of interpersonal relations for the client. It further seeks to equip the practitioner with skills to deal with a potentially difficult issue. It is recommended reading for all professionals working in the area of family law.