

Lewis & Kyrou's *Handy Hints on Legal Practice*

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4th ed

by Gordon Lewis,
Emilios Kyrou and
Nuwan Dias
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There are known knowns; there are things we know we know. We also know there are known unknowns; that is to say we know there are some things we do not know. But there are also unknown unknowns—the ones we don't know we don't know.

—US Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, 12 February 2002

After 25-odd years as a barrister and, before that, a solicitor, there are some things I know I know about legal practice. However, I am often struck by how much I know I do not know. Known unknowns are, of course, not necessarily a problem, as gaps in knowledge can be filled with research. But unknown unknowns are outright perilous.

Fortunately, Gordon Lewis, Emilios Kyrou and Nuwan Dias come to the rescue in all three categories—known-

knowns, known-unknowns, and unknown-unknowns—in the fourth edition of *Lewis & Kyrou's Handy Hints on Legal Practice* (Lawbook Co, 2018).

Gordon Lewis is a former judge of the County Court and former Executive Director of the Law Institute of Victoria. Emilios Kyrou is a judge of the Victorian Court of Appeal and a former partner at Mallesons Stephen Jaques (now King & Wood Mallesons). Between them, Lewis and Kyrou have more than 90 years' experience in legal practice. They were the authors of the first three editions of *Handy Hints*. In the fourth edition, they are joined by Nuwan Dias, a solicitor at Herbert Smith Freehills.

Handy Hints walks readers through the gamut of matters that practitioners need to master, or at least be aware of, in everyday practice. For those starting out in the law, there are useful tips on topics ranging from how to approach your first interview with a client, to drafting correspondence in plain English, conducting settlement negotiations, and managing competing demands. For more experienced practitioners, there are answers to the questions one can sometimes feel too reticent to ask (can I take the staple out of an original affidavit before photocopying it?) and useful primers on topics as diverse as privilege, contempt, duties and undertakings. The book does not shy away from

proffering advice on dealing with difficult dilemmas such as the perils of intra-office sexual relationships and how to deal with dishonesty and physical threats by clients.

When the third edition of *Handy Hints* was published in 2004, Facebook had just been founded. Twitter had not yet been invented. Mobile phones were Blackberries, not iPhones. Electronic trials and the paperless office were at best conceptual. In the fourth edition, the authors have addressed the increasing complexity of legal practice as a result of these and other developments.

Handy Hints will be most useful to solicitors embarking on a career in the law, but it contains wisdom for counsel at all levels. Many topics are illustrated with practical and often humorous examples drawn from the catastrophes that can befall practitioners, such as the all-too-common experience of inadvertently hitting 'reply all' to an email, or the not-so-common experience of one practitioner who hatched a failed plot to influence a jury by climbing onto the roof of a courthouse in order to inject laughing gas into the air-conditioning system.

We all make mistakes and commit errors of judgment in our professional lives, although most of them do not involve nitrous oxide. Learning from the mistakes of others is clearly preferable to making them oneself. In that endeavour, *Handy Hints* has earned a place on the bookshelf of both the budding and the experienced practitioner. ■