



Book Review: Environmental Law Handbook, 7th Edition

The Environmental Law Handbook: Legislation, Case Law and Policy in NSW. Seventh Edition.

Editor: Peter Williams, Sydney Law School, The University of Notre Dame, Australia.

Publisher: Thomson Reuters Australia, 2024.

THE seventh (and latest) edition of the long-running text *The Environmental Law Handbook* was published in late 2024 by Thomson Reuters. First appearing in 1988 when single-handedly written by David Farrier, Emeritus Professor of Law at the University of Wollongong, the book has enjoyed a remarkable longevity. This is largely thanks to the commitment of an expanding list of authors drawn from both practice and academia who have contributed to produce a comprehensive text that has sought to keep abreast with the continuous change and progression of New South Wales environmental and planning law.

As this body of law has become increasingly complex with a growing number of judicial decisions elaborating on the bare bones of legislation and policy, successive editions of the book have required more extensive collaboration in their compilation. The latest edition continues to draw on specialist skills, assigning the revision and writing of specific chapters to authors with particular expertise. This has been essential as the book has expanded to include much fuller coverage of particular areas and new chapters. Twenty-four specialists in environmental law shared in the writing of the 20 chapters of the latest edition, building on the work of previous editions.

Those familiar with earlier editions will find that the book has been heavily reorganised and rewritten, and redesigned for easier location and use of content. Substantial changes have occurred in environmental law since release of the 6th edition of the book in 2016. New content includes:

- All topic areas covered in the book's 20 chapters have been updated.
- Extensive revision of pollution law with inclusion of significant new and updated material following a range of statutory amendments and new case law.
- Extensively revised discussion on forestry and plantations, agriculture, water supply and Crown land and protected areas.

- Major rework of treatment of land use planning, development, NSW and Commonwealth environmental assessment and biodiversity.
- Thorough updating for judicial interpretation and legislative change.

Environmental law in NSW is far more complicated than it needs to be. This 7th edition of *The Environment Law Handbook* seeks to continue to be a valuable jumping-off point for practising lawyers and law students. The careful balance of clarification and detail also makes the text more widely useful. Planners, engineers and environmental scientists, as well as those involved in environmental or community causes and who seek a good grasp of the legal responsibilities of those overseeing a complex network of rights and regulations, will find *The Environmental Law Handbook* a valuable resource.

