

BUTTERWORTHS' ANNOTATED STATUTES OF SINGAPORE: INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY LAW ANNOTATED BY NG SIEW KUAN [Singapore: Butterworths. 1996. xv +1399 pp (including index). Hardcover.]

THIS book is the seventh volume in a series of ten put out by Butterworths Asia. According to the publisher, the series is intended to be an authoritative and comprehensive examination of the statutes of Singapore, similar in approach and presentation to Halsbury's Statutes of England and Wales. As such, the series should serve as an important resource for research into Singapore laws.

In the area of intellectual property, Ms Ng's contribution in the form of this volume is a welcome sign, and no mean accomplishment. Intellectual property law is one of the fastest-growing areas of law, as witnessed by the increasing number of journals, books and conferences in the field, particularly in the international arena. Locally, a body of case law has been built up, and specialised books focussing on particular areas have been published, but there has so far been little attempt to publish a single title which surveys and brings together the various intellectual property laws. Against this backdrop, the significance of Ms Ng's work on this

volume is therefore clear. In bringing out, in a single volume, a detailed examination of the various Singapore statutes on intellectual property law, this book is a major contribution to the primary materials on the local laws in this important field.

At the outset, it should be noted that since the volume is intended as part of a series covering only those statutes in a particular field, the reader should not expect the type of discussion, layout or coverage which would be more appropriate for a textbook or casebook. In these types of books, the need to explain basic principles and explore problematic issues often results in substantial coverage of those statutory provisions which deal with these areas, and a consequently lesser survey of other provisions. The advantage of a book such as the volume under review is its very focus on the statutes; the author is able to provide a detailed analysis of the whole statute, and in the process give a clear overall picture of the breadth and scope of the law. This Ms Ng does admirably well, in both the detailed notes to each section which she provides as well as the extensive research into and citation of both Singapore and Malaysian case law.

The book covers all the main intellectual property statutes of Singapore, namely, the Copyright Act, the Patents Act, the Trade Marks Act, the United Kingdom Designs (Protection) Act and the Computer Misuse Act. Each statute is covered in its own "chapter" or section, and the volume concludes with a table of cases, statutory references and an index. Since the entire volume covers almost 1400 pages, these last inclusions will be of great assistance to legal researchers. Within each "chapter" or section, the reader is first provided with a preliminary note describing the legislative history and the various regulations and related legislation to that particular Act. This preliminary note serves as a convenient summary of these facts (including the reference numbers of the various pieces of legislation). Following the preliminary note, the main statute is reproduced, with a detailed note following each provision.

The insertion of these notes chronologically after each statutory provision makes for easy reference. These notes also reveal several noteworthy points about the work. First, Ms Ng has taken pains to indicate, where relevant, different sections of the same statute which deal with similar, or related, points; as well as other statutes which may throw light on interpretation of terms. This is an extremely helpful tool for legal researchers. Secondly, Singapore and Malaysian cases illustrating the substantive law under that section are highlighted in the notes. Many of these decisions are also summarised. The researcher is therefore given both a convenient reference point to other statutory provisions as well as an idea of the local cases which have dealt with that particular section. As already mentioned, the references and citations contained in these detailed notes attest to the extensive and meticulous research that was carried out in writing this volume.

Each "chapter" concludes with an Appendix listing various subsidiary and other legislation and relevant international agreements. In the Copyright section, the Appendix consists of the Copyright (International Organisations) Regulations, the Copyright (International Protection) Regulations, the Copyright (Records Royalty System) Regulations, the Copyright Regulations, the Copyright (Import Restrictions) Regulations and the Copyright Tribunal (Procedure) Regulations. In the Patents section, the Appendix is in two parts; the first consists of subsidiary legislation in the form of the Patents Rules, the Patents (Convention Countries) Order and Order 87A of the Rules of Court. The second part of the Appendix contains treaties and conventions such as the TRIPS Agreement, the Budapest Treaty and its regulations, the Paris Convention, the Patent Co-operation Treaty as well as its regulations. Finally, in the Trade Marks chapter, the Appendix consists of the Trade Marks Rules, the Trade Marks (Application of Section 75 to Foreign States) Notification and Order 87 of the Rules of Court.

Given the various materials contained in these Appendices, it would have been more helpful if these were listed in the Appendix section of the Contents page. Currently, a researcher has to turn to each individual Appendix to find out the materials contained within. Moreover, while the choice to include all the relevant international treaties and conventions in a single Appendix is logical, it can be a little puzzling to find the TRIPS Agreement and the Paris Convention in the Appendix to the Patents Act, since both of these agreements deal with the various different intellectual property rights as compared with an instrument focussing on certain aspects of a single right such as the Patent Co-operation Treaty. However, this might be justified by the fact that Singapore acceded to the Paris Convention at the same time as she did to the Patent Co-operation Treaty and the Budapest Treaty; also by the history of the Patents Act itself. As the most recent local intellectual property statute, the Act and its amendments in November 1995 represent Singapore's efforts in bringing its intellectual property laws into line with her international obligations, particularly those under TRIPS. As such, the inclusion of all the various relevant international documents in a single Appendix is not as surprising as first impressions might indicate.

From the stated aims of the publisher and contents of the volume, this book is clearly not intended to supplant textbooks or specialist volumes on intellectual property. This can be seen, for example, in the fact that landmark decisions of the English courts, from which country much of Singapore's intellectual property statutes and case law is derived, are not generally cited in the notes. However, given that the volume is intended as a sourcebook for exclusively Singapore statutes and cases from Singapore and Malaysia, this exclusion was perhaps a wise choice. As such, this volume is likely to be most useful to lawyers with some background in intellectual property looking for a specifically Singaporean and Malaysian reference. However, even those researchers without such a background will also find this volume useful as a supplementary tool to the standard intellectual property texts.

In summary, this book is a valuable addition to local scholarship on Singapore intellectual property law. Researchers can now find in a single volume all the major local statutes in this field, accompanied by well-researched and useful annotations. As such, this volume clearly fulfils the publisher's aim of producing a comprehensive reference to Singapore law for intellectual property. In this reviewer's opinion, this volume is a necessary addition to every Singapore intellectual property practitioner's bookshelf.

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