

DURING a period where the Alternative Dispute Resolution process of mediation is fast becoming a part of the Singapore legal system, this book is both useful and timely. As its title implies, Boule and Teh's work deal with the principles, process and practice of mediation. Professor Boule is a Professor of Law at Bond University, Australia and is the Chairman of the National Alternative Dispute Resolution Advisory Council. Ms Teh Hwee Hwee was the Executive Director of the Singapore Mediation Centre (SMC) and now serves as Consultant to the SMC.

The book is divided into three parts consisting of a total of thirteen chapters and two annexes. Part 1 is titled "Principles" and consists of three chapters. Chapter 1 explores matters such as the definition, features, models and uses of mediation. Further, it provides a primer to important issues such as neutrality of the mediator and the scope of the mediator's ability to intervene. Chapter 2 provides a useful comparison between mediation and litigation. The approaches to conflict and negotiation are also explored. This chapter also considers wider policy issues of how mediation interfaces with notions of justice. Chapter 3 provides a comparison between mediation and other dispute resolution processes like negotiation, arbitration and counseling. A particularly important practical issue that is considered is the question of when mediation is appropriate. A list of suitable and unsuitable indicators is provided and this will no doubt be useful to mediators and lawyers. Also useful is a guide to selecting an appropriate mediator.

Part 2 of the book is titled "Process" and also consists of three chapters. The chapters in this part focus more on the mediation session itself. Chapter 4 looks particularly at the mediation process from the point of initiating a session through the session itself to post-mediation matters. The different variants on the mediation session such as co-mediation and the use of the internet are also considered. Chapter 5 examines the process from the perspective of the roles and functions of the mediator, parties, legal and other representatives. These two chapters will certainly be useful for the lawyer or client who needs to have an idea of what to expect from the mediation process when deciding to engage in it or while preparing for it. Chapter 6 is more useful from a mediation practitioner's point of view as it addresses the various skills and techniques of mediators. As a mediator himself, this reviewer finds this chapter particularly helpful and is sure that other mediation practitioners will find the same.

Part 3 of the book is titled "Practice". Consisting of seven chapters, it deals with many of the practical and practice aspects of mediation. Chapter 7 takes a historical perspective by examining the evolution of dispute resolution practices in Singapore. This historical perspective then leads into Chapter 8's examination of the development of the mediation movement in Singapore. In this chapter, the contributions of the judiciary, government and various other bodies are considered. Chapter 9 can be termed as more of a legal practitioner's chapter in that various aspects of mediation in legal practice are explored. The discussion in this chapter is extensive, ranging from mediation conducted in connection with the courts, *eg*,

Family and Subordinate Courts, to commercial mediations done at the Singapore Mediation Centre, to mediation services provided by professional bodies, as well as government agencies. Chapter 10 addresses the issues of quality, standards and accountability in mediation. Specifically, the chapter looks at training for mediators, accreditation matters, standards and guidelines, as well as the potential legal liability of mediators. Since the mediation movement in Singapore is relatively young, these matters are indeed topical and in many cases have not yet been resolved. Chapter 11 provides a glimpse into the perspective of the users of the mediation process. This survey of satisfaction levels includes not only the parties but also their legal representatives. Chapter 12, the penultimate chapter, deals with the various legal issues that arise in mediation. This may surprise some legal practitioners who may have thought that mediation had “no legal substance” to it. One issue of personal interest to this reviewer is whether a contractual clause requiring parties to mediate their dispute is enforceable. Of particular utility are the sample mediation clauses used by the Singapore Mediation Centre. Another important issue is the role of confidentiality in mediation and whether privilege is accorded to the process. Other matters are also discussed and this chapter will be helpful to legal and mediation practitioners grappling with such issues. Chapter 13, the final chapter, deals with the themes and trends in mediation practice. This chapter returns to the “big picture” by exploring the various pressures on mediation as well as future trends.

At the end of the day, Boule and Teh’s effort is a laudable one. Although this reviewer would have liked to see a section devoted to the topic of mediation advocacy so that legal representatives can have a road map to assist parties in preparing for a mediation, it is acknowledged that a book cannot be all things to all people. This book, however, does come close. Its scope of coverage means that it has something for legal practitioners, lay people, mediation practitioners and students of mediation.

While not the first local book on mediation, *Mediation: Principles, Process Practice* certainly distinguishes itself. It is a book that this reviewer will return to from time to time and he highly recommends it as a valuable addition to the bookshelf of anyone that is interested in or involved with mediation.