

COMMONWEALTH CONSTRUCTION CASES – THE SINGAPORE PERSPECTIVE
BY PHILIP CF CHAN [Singapore: Sweet & Maxwell, 2002, xlvii + 253pp,
Hardback: S\$180]

This is a valuable contribution to construction law jurisprudence generally, and Singapore in particular. The author is a well known specialist in the field, having both practised and taught the subject, and his comments on the arbitration aspects of the topic are particularly interesting, coming from a former Executive Director and Registrar of the Singapore International Arbitration Centre.

The book is based on the author's doctoral thesis (supervised by the guru of building law, Duncan Wallace QC) and, as expected from such a work, is comprehensive in the scope of its coverage. What makes the book unexpectedly useful is the reader-friendly style of the author, and a host of valuable comments on the leading cases. This is not just a compilation of cases from Singapore and the Commonwealth, but is a well compressed discussion of the leading cases in context, followed by a separate section in each chapter containing the author's observations on the correctness (or otherwise) of the cases. The author shows a commendable independence of thought in his trenchant comments on the leading judgments. He is prepared to call a spade a spade, and has no hesitation in telling us when he believes a judge, however distinguished, to have been wrong. One may not always agree with the author's views, but the reader will always be stimulated, and often enriched, by his opinions.

The discussion of controversial cases like *RSP Architects Planners & Engineers v Ocean Front Pte Ltd* [1996] 1 SLR 113, *Lojan Properties Pte Ltd v Tropicon Contractors Pte Ltd* [1991] SLR 80 and *Aurum Building Services (Pte) Ltd v Greatearth Construction Pte Ltd* [1994] 3 SLR 330 are provocative, and the chapter on "Performance Bonds" is especially valuable as it contains all the major local cases on the topic, which is a well traversed area in the courts.

In addition, there are useful discussions of relevant Singapore legislation, which complete the picture so as to make this book a holistic account of all the major areas of legal activity in construction law in Singapore.

Given that this is the most up-to-date work in this field of practice, and the economical size of the book, it is a must for any generalist or specialist practitioner.

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