

Contract Law in New Zealand: Lawyers' Handbook

*Reviewed by Grant Illingworth QC**

IT is deceptively easy to assume that contract law is one of the easier subjects in the legal curriculum and that once you know the basic rules you can work out most of the answers.

In fact, nothing could be further from the truth and the more you explore the nooks and crannies of the subject, the more you appreciate just how many traps there are for young and old players alike. The moral of the story is that you usually need to look up the law, if only to check that your intuitive assessment is correct.

The problem is that most contract text books are very discursive and it can often be difficult to zero in on the specific issue that happens to be mouldering in a file in

the far corner of your office. What you need is a compact text that bridges the gap between the superficial style of book aimed at the business executive and the full-monty approach of the established texts, which are usually quite abstruse and often don't address the New Zealand legislative context anyway.

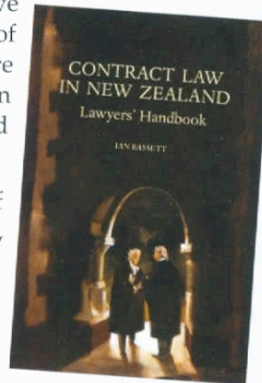
If you hear the sound of the cavalry approaching, you're right: help is on its way. It's coming in the form of an attractive tome that features on the cover a classic legal scene painted by Garth Tapper. The attractiveness of the cover is neither misleading nor deceptive because

the book itself really is a little gem. Ian Bassett's scholarly skills, honed in the hallowed halls of Cambridge University,

have been applied for the benefit of all practitioners who need to find ready answers to practical problems in this area of the law.

By a process of assiduous analysis, Ian Bassett has simplified the law of contract down to a series of key propositions, each of which is supported by at least one authoritative case citation. The result is an extremely

user-friendly New Zealand contract law handbook that provides a veritable wealth of information in a compact, readily accessible format. I propose to keep a copy handy, and so should you.



Contract Law in New Zealand: Lawyers' Handbook, by Ian Bassett, Southern Cross Publishing, 2007. ISBN 9780473122652. Paperback 224pp. \$ 77 including GST. Available from www.contract-law.co.nz, UBS University Bookshops in Auckland and Dunedin, VicBooks in Wellington and Bennetts bookshops.

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