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## Book review

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### **AUSTRALIAN FEMINIST JUDGMENTS: RIGHTING AND REWRITING LAW**

*Australian Feminist Judgments: Righting and Rewriting Law* edited by Heather Douglas, Francesca Bartlett, Trish Luker and Rosemary Hunter (Hart Publishing, 2014) ISBN: 9781849465212, pages 382.

I completed my law degree at the University of Melbourne in 1976. That is not that long ago. Sadly, at that time, an undergraduate law degree took no account of the way in which the law and the administration of justice impacts on individuals and groups of individuals in society.

By the time that I returned to the University from practise as a solicitor, in early 1991, great changes had occurred. Almost all subjects sought to impart some understanding of the way in which the law interacts with society and groups in society. Feminist legal studies had been introduced. There was concern for the way in which the law related to groups such as the Indigenous community and matters affecting ethnic groups.

I became Executive Director of the Australasian Institute of Judicial Administration in February 1997. I confess that the work of the AIJA in relation to cultural awareness, including Indigenous cultural awareness, and women and the law, was something that was quite new to me. I have been very fortunate since arriving at the AIJA to work with a number of enthusiastic and devoted judicial officers and others concerned with the administration of justice in relation to the interaction between the administration of justice and those it serves. That is so both in relation to educational programmes and research.

It is very pleasing that things have advanced so far that we now have, as the result of the Australian Feminist Judgments project, a collection of cases and commentaries on those cases which seeks, as the editors point out, to “put into practice and test feminist ideas in real Australian cases”. The judgments chosen cover areas as diverse as refugees, torts, evidence and family law. The editors note that authors of the various chapters imagine what decision and what reasoning might have been applied if a feminist judge had heard the case.

It is perhaps timely that this book should be published when family violence is so prominent as a concern for both Government, the courts and society. No doubt feminist judging has a real relevance to family violence and the future approach of courts and society to that subject. This is perhaps something that the book might have approached more fully.

The book is a fascinating and refreshing approach to judging. It will no doubt find a ready place in Law Schools, but more widely among the judiciary and the practising profession.

*Greg Reinhardt*  
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