

Book review:

The Little Red Book of Advocacy Second Edition

Chief Justice Trevor Riley (author)

■ Julian R. Murphy¹ (reviewer)

What distinguishes Chief Justice Trevor Riley's *The Little Red Book of Advocacy* from other Australian advocacy texts is its brevity; at 152 generously spaced pages, this is a book that can be read in a sultry, wet season afternoon. But its modest length and compact presentation also make it a book that is easy to come back to. Not an intimidating tome to gather dust on chamber shelves, this is a portable and accessible book that will no doubt find its way onto the desks and into the briefcases of many practitioners, especially those working in the Northern Territory.

The NT legal fraternity was introduced to Riley's writing on advocacy in the monthly 'Advocacy Column' published by the Law Society Northern Territory in the late 90s and early 2000s. Indeed, the first edition of Riley's book (published in 2003) was simply a chronological compilation of those columns and for that reason it lacked some of the cohesion and comprehensiveness that one hopes for in a one-stop-shop manual.

This deficiency has, however, been remedied in the second edition. It is arranged in a more logical sequence and the original material has been supplemented with a considerable number of new chapters. The most helpful of this new material covers appellate advocacy, written submissions and interlocutory applications.

The second edition is now divided into succinct chapters on all the essential dimensions of advocacy. Topics range from the general (preparation, communication and skill development) to the particular (child witnesses, unfavourable witnesses and cross-examining experts). It opens with instructions on how to prepare for a trial, then addresses each significant aspect of the trial, appeal and sentence before addressing very particular issues and closing with some general discussion of nerves, communication techniques, customs and the role of counsel.

In its new iteration the book accomplishes a concise yet complete introduction to advocacy. If there is common refrain that one hears from advocacy experts from Irving Younger, through to George Hampel QC and to Riley, it is that preparation, practice and refinement are crucial to the development of good advocacy and this book reflects that same sentiment: that a good advocate is made and not born. Whilst the text holds lessons and reminders for more experienced, mid-career lawyers it will be of most use to junior practitioners. In the NT, perhaps more than anywhere else in Australia, newly minted lawyers regularly find themselves on their feet in court, both for the prosecution and defence in criminal matters, and for all parties in civil disputes. In this environment the new edition of *The Little Red Book of Advocacy*, like its predecessor, constitutes a **significant contribution to the development and preservation of quality advocacy in the jurisdiction.**

¹ In 2014 and 2015 Julian R. Murphy was a criminal defence advocate with the North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency in Katherine. He is now a Judge's Associate at the High Court of Australia. The views expressed here are his own.

