In recent years, there has been an emerging plethora of substantive works on Australian intellectual property law – whether in the form of historical text, current commentary, legal analysis of case law and legislative developments, or a combination of all three. This reflects the continuing and burgeoning interest in and importance of IP law as it affects rights owners (existing and potential) and IP practitioners.

The most recent publication of Intellectual Property – Text and Essential Cases by professors Rocque Reynolds, Natalie Stoianoff and Alpana Roy is yet another welcome addition to this rich corpus of Australian IP literature.

This trio of scholars is particularly well-placed to undertake the task of authoring the fifth edition of this voluminous text. Each author has well-known expertise, at both the academic and practical levels, in various specific areas of intellectual property law.

The general layout of Intellectual Property – Text and Essential Cases is in fairly standard, traditional format. The main body of the text, preceded by a list of entries and tables of cases and statutes, is divided logically into five discrete major parts: an introduction; copyright and neighbouring rights; patents; passing off, trade marks and related actions; and designs, plant breeder’s rights, circuit layouts and confidential information. Of particular note, there is an extended coverage of resale royalty rights for visual artists.

At the outset, the authors explain that the approach and underlying ethos adopted in this book as focuses on “[a] number of themes which we believe are important to a full understanding of intellectual property law. First, in so far as intellectual property is a form of personal property, the law protects it in a way which some people will find acceptable. Secondly, intellectual property law is conducted in an international context and this is reflected in Australia’s domestic law. This means that international and bilateral treaties commonly impose minimum standards for intellectual property protection and may require Australia to extend protection for intellectual property to citizens and nationals of other party states. … Finally, the relationship between technology and intellectual property law is a constantly changing and fascinating one. Not only does changing technology pose challenges for law reformers and drafters but it also opens up new possibilities and challenges for intellectual property owners.”

As also rightly pointed out by the authors in their introduction to the work: “One of the features of this textbook is that it contains extracts of essential cases at the end of each chapter. In most cases, the extracts have been chosen because they are the leading or authoritative statement of the legal point in issue. However, in some cases, an extract might have been selected because it provides an excellent statement of the legal principle or because it provides a history or an overview of the authoritative case law.”

Intellectual Property – Text and Essential Cases especially functions as a most helpful and accessible introductory text on intellectual property law that should allow the student to select both the IP area and the type of law that assist tyro IP associates commencing practice, as well as the more seasoned IP practitioners that rely on a comprehensive reference book in their practice.

As Australian intellectual property law is constantly changing and developing, it is vital that updated texts of this kind which not only traverse the wide range of IP fields but also report on the latest significant cases, legislative amendments, and policy reports are available to IP students and practitioners. With respect to the latter, for example, there is excellent coverage of the Australian Law Reform Commission’s report on fair use in Copyright and the Digital Economy.

Intellectual Property – Text and Essential Cases more than fulfils that demand and fits the bill. The text is based on the law as at 1 January 2015. The index provides a comprehensive and useful adjunct to the text.