Book Review

Immigration Refugees and Forced Migration:
Law, policy and practice in Australia
Mary Crock and Laurie Berg
The Federation Press
698 pp  $145.00
Reviewed by Craig Mackie

Tasmania was recently drawn into the national debate surrounding Australia’s immigration laws and policies following an announcement by the Federal Government on 5 April 2011 that a temporary detention facility will be opened in Pontville in the south of the state.

The centre will provide accommodation for up to 400 single adult males, expected to be predominantly asylum seekers from war-torn Afghanistan.

The site is said to be a short-term response while building works continue on other detention accommodation at Wickham Point in Darwin and Northam in Western Australia.

The decision to detain asylum seekers in Pontville has caused considerable debate in the local community, which should come as no surprise.

Australian immigration law is hotly contentious and seemingly in a state of perpetual and rapid change. In the past it has clearly been no easy task to reduce the law into an accessible text book, for there aren’t many of them.

Mary Crock and Laurie Berg have explored in basic language a wide range of the fundamental aspects of Australian immigration law in their book “Immigration, Refugees and Forced Migration: Law, Policy and Practice in Australia”, released this year by the Federation Press.

Topics covered include family reunion schemes, permanent and temporary labour migration, tourists and students, refugee and humanitarian programs, unlawful status, deportations and appeals. Cases are described in thorough but succinct commentary.

Like all text books in this electronic age, parts of this book will quickly suffer from obsolescence. First recourse for practitioners working in the area really must be the ever changing Migration Act and Regulations.

Nevertheless, this book does provide a good grounding in the basics of contemporary immigration law, and a valuable history of Australian immigration law, particularly since 1989 when the first attempts to codify regulations began.

The author’s self-professed objective for the book was to “capture the spirit of immigration law and policy in Australia”. It certainly succeeds in doing that.

Legal Practitioners are reminded that anyone who uses, or purports to use, knowledge of, or experience in migration procedures to provide advice or assistance to a person wishing to obtain a visa needs to become registered as a migration agent (see ss.276 and 282 of the Migration Act 1958).