

IRS

Industrial  
Relations  
Society of  
South Australia Inc

# NEWSLETTER

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## SECRETARIAT

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Members

I am proud to serve for another term as President and again look forward to working with the Committee of Management to facilitate first-rate seminars and Newsletters for members. We will soon be publishing detail of seminars concerning social media and a practically-focussed seminar on the *Return to Work Act 2014 (SA)*. I am also optimistic of significant structural improvement to the National peak body, the Australian Labour and Employee Relations Association that would benefit constituent State and Territory bodies by, amongst other things, facilitating the sharing of the vast amount of information at their disposal. I also look forward to seeing you personally at one of the Society's seminars.

Best wishes

Craig Stevens  
President IRSSA

**STEWART'S GUIDE TO EMPLOYMENT LAW  
5<sup>TH</sup> EDITION, THE FEDERATION PRESS, 2015**

**REVIEW BY GLEN SEIDEL, IRSSA COMMITTEE  
MEMBER**

Professor Andrew Stewart is a well-known and respected expert on employment law. His 5<sup>th</sup> edition adds 250 new case references and recent changes to the *Fair Work Act 2009* (Cth) to make this edition as current as any printed book can be. Changes covered include the *Fair Work Amendment Act 2013* (Cth), bullying, registered organisations and the building and construction industry.

This book is not intended for those who are expert practitioners in the field. It is written in a readable style and intended to give the non-expert reader an overview of Australian industrial law. It is ideally suited to the student, employer, employee and lay advocate. I would recommend it for reading by all union officials who deal with employment matters on any sort of formal or technical level.

No book of under 500 pages can cover the field with all case law and variations of situations. The book is structured to start with an overview of the Australian IR system and then focusses in on specific areas (see contents below), having established the framework within which the specifics operate.

I found that as I read the book I could recognise most of the recent cases being cited, but Stewart draws them together into a contextual framework. As much as I could sagely nod in sporadic recognition when reminded, my knowledge was akin to a pile of colourful fabric patches. Stewart has made them into an appealing patchwork quilt.

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**DID YOU KNOW?????**

The South Australian Law Society has confirmed that all IRSSA seminars are recognised as CPD activities for the purposes of Practising Certificate requirements in South Australia. Legal practitioners in South Australia can claim 1 CPD unit for an active hour at an IRSSA seminar.

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IRSSA is now calling for articles for its quarterly newsletter. Articles can be on any topical industrial relations matter and typically should be approximately 400 -500 words. If you are interested in submitting an article for the September newsletter please contact Justin Ward, IRSSA Newsletter Editor. Justin's email is [justin.ward@sa.gov.au](mailto:justin.ward@sa.gov.au)

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## A BRIEF HISTORY OF IR SOCIETIES IN AUSTRALIA BY KAYE SMITH, VICE PRESIDENT IRSSA

WITH ASSISTANCE FROM: PROFESSOR RUSSELL LANSBURY AND COMMISSIONER  
PETER HAMPTON, IRSSA COMMITTEE MEMBER

Did you know?

1. The Industrial Relations Society in Australia was established at its inaugural meeting in Sydney on May 14 1958. This was the culmination of several years of activity by **Kingsley Laffer from the University of Sydney** who established the first course of study in industrial relations in the Department of Economics in 1956.
  - Kingsley was interested in establishing a **national body (not confined to NSW)** which would bring together academics, employers, trade unions, government and legal practitioners with a **common interest in promoting the field of industrial relations**
  - The **inaugural President was John Kerr** who had become Chief Justice of NSW (and later Governor General). **Kingsley Laffer became the Honorary Secretary**
  - The first national convention was held in **Canberra in 1970**
  - The **membership fee** was two guineas (i.e. two pounds and two shillings) or just over \$2.00 in decimal currency!
2. The composition of the inaugural committee of the Industrial Relations Society:
  - The **patron** was the Chief Justice of NSW: Sir Kenneth Street
  - The **President** was the Hon. Justice Webb (formerly of the NSW Industrial Commission)
  - There were **three Vice Presidents** representing employers, the unions and the legal profession (John Kerr QC: Barrister)
  - The **Secretary** was Kingsley Laffer
  - The **Committee** comprised another 11 men - no women!
3. The Industrial Relations Society of South Australia was formed in early 1961 and was the second such group established in Australia, closely followed the establishment of the first industrial relations society in New South Wales in 1958.

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4. The first issue of the JIR noted that the Industrial Relations Society was:

*'Envisaged as more than merely another academic Society. It is a distinguishing characteristic of the Society that it brings together representatives of top management, the trade unions, the government services and the professions as well as specialists in the various academic disciplines concerned with industrial relations'*

- The first **Journal of Industrial Relations (JIR)** was published in April 1959. It now publishes five issues per year and is **ranked among the best IR journals of the world.**

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**Job Quality in Australia**  
***Perspectives, Problems and Proposals***  
*Edited by Angela Knox and Chris Warhurst*

Review by Daryl Anthony, IRSSA Committee Member

“Job Quality in Australia” presents a brilliant overview from Australia’s leading researchers in this field on the necessary framework required to determine the true value of job quality.

The discussion on job quality is not a new topic; in fact serious consideration of the subject dates back to the mid 1960’s where early challenges were faced initially in establishing a set of disciplines whereby job quality could accurately be measured. Some researchers maintained that single disciplines such as wages were sufficient indicators in the assessment of job quality, however over time this has expanded into a multi-dimensional range of disciplines including; sociology, economics, law, industrial relations, health science, psychology and geography. The employment landscape is rapidly changing in Australia moving from the single breadwinner in the family with a job for life to working couples and the casualisation of the workforce. These rapid changes are contributing to reduced job satisfaction and feelings of financial insecurity by many in the workforce.

Job quality impacts in three key areas:

- 1) the individual through better wages, health and wellbeing,
- 2) organisations through increased productivity; and
- 3) the nation by increasing employment participation.

Internationally there is a stronger focus on better understanding and improving job quality and Australia should not be left behind in the policy and research areas.

In 2012-2013, the Australian Workforce and Productivity Agency (AWPA) undertook research to gain a better understanding of job quality and the benefits this would have for employers and employees through developing a policy agenda for job quality in Australia. However the process appears to have now slowed due to the functions of AWPA being absorbed into the Department of Industry.

As a nation we need to continually invest in research on Job Quality in Australia to ensure we create better quality jobs which will benefit employees and employers and long term sustainable productivity growth.

This book provides a solid case to reignite the discussion on job quality in Australia and should be considered a must read for Australia’s policy makers and Industrial Relations practitioners.