A D LANG



# HORSLEY'S MEETINGS

PROCEDURE, LAW AND PRACTICE

**6TH EDITION** 

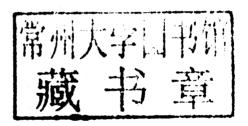


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## Foreword

This is an excellent book. My association with it (as a consumer of its content) goes back many years, almost to my first day as a barrister. The book has served me well and its enduring character (as evidenced by yet another edition) suggests that there are many more grateful consumers. It is with much pleasure that I congratulate its author on the publication of the 6th edition.

To those who may think that a book titled 'Meetings: Procedure, Law and Practice' deals with inconsequential issues of peripheral importance to our society, let me dispel those first impressions.

In 1948, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This was the first occasion that the world community of nations agreed upon a comprehensive statement defining universal human rights. One of the relatively few rights identified was the Article 20 right to freedom of assembly and association. In 1966, the United Nations adopted the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which Australia later ratified. Article 22 of the ICCPR provides that everyone shall have the right to freedom of association with others.

Freedom of association is a fundamental human right. A common expression of that right is the formation of associations of people and their assembly at a meeting. Each of us has the inalienable right to combine with others. That right is an individual right to join and participate in the affairs of the collectives we form.

Whilst you may not have perceived this book to be a human rights text, my first point about its importance is that its subject matter engages a fundamental human right of great importance to us all.

As herd animals, we like to exercise our right to associate and we do so often. Whilst our family is our most common and usually our most important collective, people form and participate in associations and organisations for business, political and social purposes. Not only do we collectivise as individuals but we also collectivise our associations to form associations of associations — federations, confederations, leagues and alliances of everything from sporting teams to nation states.

My second point about the importance of this book is that it deals with a form of human interaction which pervades every form of human endeavour. Associations and organisations are ubiquitous — partnerships,

corporations, trade unions, political parties, community groups, charities, religions and sporting clubs, to mention but a few.

Thirdly, because of the importance of our right to associate and because of the ubiquitous nature of the associations we have formed, it is crucial to our society that there be normative rules of behaviour which control and regulate the interactions of people that occur within the associations they have formed. Normative rules have been established by both the common law and by statute and are identified and clearly explained in this book.

Now that you understand both the importance of this book and its subject matter, I shall leave you to explore its content. I do so with the commendation that its author (a distinguished expert in the field) has here made a valuable contribution to our understanding of this branch of the law.

The Honourable Justice Mordy Bromberg
Federal Court of Australia
Melbourne
9 July 2010

### Preface

Healthy sales of the 5th edition have meant that a decision had to be made whether to reprint that edition or produce a new one. At the publisher's urging, I have taken the latter course.

In the four years since the last edition, there have not been any major legislative changes affecting the law of meetings. The only significant development in the companies context has been the decision of the Commonwealth Government not to proceed with the Corporations Amendment Bill (No 2) 2006, following the release by Treasury of an exposure draft. The Bill would have made a number of reforms to the procedures for company general meetings, including abolition of the so-called '100 member rule' in s 249D of the Corporations Act, under which a comparatively small number of shareholders can require a company to hold a general meeting. Despite widespread support from the business sector and interested professional bodies, the Bill did not receive the necessary agreement from the states and territories, and was therefore not introduced into parliament.

There have, however, been various case law developments since the last edition, and the relevant chapters have in each instance been updated and revised to reflect these. I have also taken the opportunity to rewrite some parts of the text to make them easier to follow.

My thanks are due to a number of people who have assisted with the new edition. First, to the Honourable Justice Mordy Bromberg of the Federal Court of Australia for the stimulating remarks he has made in the foreword. Second, to my colleague David Klempfner of the Victorian Bar, who has again contributed the chapter on defamation. And finally to the publisher's staff, in particular Carolyn Chamberlain for her patience and understanding.

As with the 4th and 5th editions, I wish to acknowledge the forbearance of my family in the preparation of this new edition. Thank you Melinda, Robbie and Emma.

A D Lang Aickin Chambers Melbourne 30 June 2010

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