Principles of Australian Succession Law is now onto its third edition, with the first edition published in 2007 and the second published in 2013. This book is primarily written for the undergraduate student, however can be used as a basic guide for practitioners for their initial consideration of succession law matters. It examines the foundational principles of succession law such as the mental elements of the making of a will and the formal requirements, revocation, alteration, republication, revival and constructions of wills, gifts under a will, intestacy, family provision, survivorship, personal representatives and the administrative process of personal representatives.

Although authored by Ken Mackie, a former Lecturer and Sub-Dean of the University of Tasmania Law School, it deals with all jurisdictions in Australia. Therefore, it can be used as a quick reference guide for consideration of matters from each different jurisdiction. An example of this is in relation to “revocation by termination of marriage”. In New South Wales upon termination of marriage, any disposition in favour of the testator’s former spouse together with any power of appointment exercisable by, or in favour of, the former spouse (such as an appointment as executor) is revoked, unless the appointment relates to the children of the spouse, or spouses, then that power of appointment is not revoked. Whereas in Western Australia, a will is revoked by the ending of the testator’s marriage without any exceptions to that rule. The variations between the different jurisdictions can be easily located and read within three to four pages under each topic.

The book is quite small compared to other books on the same subject matter, however if you require additional information it provides references in the footnotes and text of relevant case law and legislation (including a 52 page Table of Cases and Table of Statutes at the beginning of the book) which allows the reader to use the book as a starting point in their research. Overall, this book is easy to read and use and would be a good starting point for any research in Australian succession law.