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Historic NSW Law Report Series now available for free access on AustLII

AustLII is making available for free access online to the community scanned digital copies of important late nineteenth and early twentieth century New South Wales case law. These reports contain all the most significant judgments of the New South Wales Supreme Court and until now have only been available as hard copy books from major public and private law libraries.

Printed copies of the Law Reports of New South Wales Volume 1 to Volume 21 (1880-1900) and the New South Wales State Reports Volume 1 to Volume 51 (1901-1950) have been scanned using Optical Character Recognition (OCR) software and the relevant metadata (case name, citation, etc) captured to enable the linking of these judgments with all the other primary and secondary legal material on AustLII. While the text is displayed as a PDF image of the paper report the OCR text is searchable through AustLII's search engine and will also be captured through AustLII's award winning LawCite citator to track the citations of these historical cases to the present day. AustLII acknowledges with gratitude the assistance of the NSW Department of Attorney General and Justice for making available the physical copy of these reports for scanning.

The scanning and processing of the 6,280 cases covering more than 20,000 pages of these historical series of NSW law reports has been made possible by the Australasian Legal History Library project, an Australian Research Council LIEF research infrastructure grant involving ten universities.

The Library builds on prior work undertaken by AustLII to develop new research facilities for Australasian Legal History. The materials which are being included in the Library will be of great value to Australian legal historians, practicing lawyers and other legal researchers, but until now have been inadequately accessible because very few are available online at all. This Project will over the next year build the most comprehensive collection of Australasian legal history resources and represents the single most significant expansion of free access to Australasian legal information since AustLII's creation in 1995.

AustLII is Australia's largest and most popular online legal research facility. AustLII's 540 legal databases include current and historical case law, legislation, law reform reports, law journals and the largest national treaties collection on the Internet. AustLII receives about 600,000 accesses per day, and is regularly rated by HitWise as Australia's most used legal website. Since its inception AustLII has provided free access for the Australian public to the essential legal information needed for the rule of law and democracy to function effectively. AustLII's broad public policy agenda is to improve access to justice through better access to information.

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