

In a year not without activity, some issues stand out as of enduring significance.

Legislative Change to the Bar

The Attorney General's proposals for legislative change to the Bar are published in this issue of Bar News. They reflect the result of lengthy negotiations since publication of the Law Reform Commission Reports. The changes have not been sought by the Association, but are accepted in order to bring to an end the long period of uncertainty as to the future of the Bar. The Council will be working closely with the Attorney General and his Department in preparing legislation.

Judicial Officers' Bill

As this is written it appears likely that the modified Bill will become law shortly.

The Bar's opposition was made public promptly and unequivocally, and was constantly maintained. It is not necessary to repeat it here. One cannot help asking what might have been the position had the judges done the same. This is only one of a number of unanswered questions about the matter.

Law Council of Australia

In June the Association gave notice of its intention to withdraw from the Law Council of Australia at the expiration of the necessary 6 months' period of notice.

This was a consequence of certain unconstitutional resolutions of the Council. The Bars of Victoria, Queensland and the Australian Capital Territory have also given notice of intention to withdraw effectively from 30th June 1987. This will also be the effective date of the withdrawal of this Association.

The Council is very conscious of the disadvantages of dismembering the Law Council, and only acted as a last resort. There have been a number of discussions since involving Alex Chernov, Q.C., former Chairman of the Victorian Bar, and myself with representatives of other constituent bodies and the Executive. These discussions will continue. Previous "constitutional crises" in which notices of withdrawal have been given by constituent bodies have been solved before actual withdrawal.

I shall make a full report to members well before actual withdrawal takes place.



R.V. GYLES QC

Supreme Court Rules re Arbitration

The issue was debated widely late last year and early this year, and was well reported in Bar News. I believe that the principle for which the Bar contended was important. It is also important that it be clearly recognised by the judiciary and the executive that the profession is not to be bulldozed when important questions concerning the courts are at stake.

Accident Compensation

The practical importance of the topic is obvious to all. It is too early to predict the outcome. Much attention has been devoted to it, and a separate report is published.

I wish to thank the Registrar and his staff for their loyal efforts during the year. The workload of the Association has increased significantly over the last year. Our revised disciplinary procedures, our fees recovery procedures, and the number of urgent public issues which have arisen have caused particular strain.

I also thank the members of an active Bar Council for their work and support during the year.