

## From the President



18 March 1988

The Bar has a problem with its public image. This is not new, and we can never hope to be popular with all our clients. However today the consumer revolution, legal aid, and the dominance of the media make the problem far worse.

Our poor public image makes us an easy target for politicians and the media. This is not good for the Bar but the danger is that we will lose our capacity to be heard on civil rights issues.

This lesson was brought home to me during the discussions that the Bar Council and the Law Society had with the State Government over Workcare and Transcover prior to June 1987.

I believe that a majority of the politicians concerned were not even trying to find a way to preserve reasonable rights for accident victims. Accident victims were seen as powerless and their natural spokesmen from the legal profession were seen as easy targets for attack on the basis of self-interest.

If the Bar cannot be heard, and will not be listened to when the issue concerns the rights of accident victims what chance is there that we will be listened to on other civil-rights issues which may only effect really small groups in the community?

This Bar Council and its predecessor have decided that it was essential for the Council to attempt to communicate more effectively with and through the media. The Bar must work not only to maintain civil rights in the Courts. It must also be active to maintain those rights by appropriate action outside the Courts.

Our effectiveness as a guardian of civil rights outside the Courts depends in the long run on the way the public views us. Every time one of us has dealings with a client or a witness the Bar is on trial. Each of us should set for ourselves the highest standards and seek to live up to them. If we did so not only would there be less complaints from the public but the Bar would become more effective in its efforts outside the Courts to maintain civil rights against legislative and other encroachment. □

## Are "YOU" in the Bar Sickness and Accident Fund?

If not WHY NOT? You must be either careless or crazy! You must be either uninsured (crazy) or insured with a commercial insurer (crazy and careless).

The Bar Sickness and Accident Fund insures barristers against loss of income from those risks for up to 12 months. The premiums charged are only 60% of those charged by commercial insurers. The reason is obvious. Barristers do not take "sickies" unless they are really sick. The Bar fund's claims experience is therefore well below the industry average.

Furthermore the Bar fund pays no commission to salesmen, no profit to shareholders, no fees to directors, and has very low overheads. Moreover if you do have a claim it will be assessed by colleagues, and not by some unknown claims manager behind closed doors. This insurance with our own fund is a really good deal.

Why then do only 314 out of 1139 members belong to the fund? It beats me.

Premiums for this insurance are *fully* tax deductible under Section 51 of the Income Tax Assessment Act *without* loss of the \$1,500 concessional deduction for superannuation or life insurance payments.

The Bar's fund has now been operating successfully and profitably for over 25 years. It has built up substantial reserves and is protected by appropriate reinsurance. It is a worthwhile co-operative activity that deserves the support of *every* member of the Bar. If more members joined the fund would become even more successful and be able to further reduce premiums.

Do yourself and the rest of the Bar a favour. Insure with the Bar's Sickness and Accident Fund. If you don't you must really be either crazy, careless or both. The contract runs from 4 p.m. on 30th April for the following year so act now. Cover is available on an indemnity basis up to \$2,500 per week. □

K.R. Handley .

### LAWASIA ENERGY LAW SECTION

#### 1988 - Hong Kong Conference

**Theme:** "Investment Opportunities in Energy in the Asia-Pacific Region in the 1990's"  
**Dates:** 15-17 September 1988  
**Contact:** Mr Gage McAfee  
Coudert Brothers  
Alexandra House, 31st Floor  
20 Chater Road  
**HONG KONG**

Tel: 852 5265 951 Telex: HX 74073 AMLAW  
Telefax: 123 4129