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## Cover cartoon by Simon Fieldhouse

*The cover cartoon has been sold. Cartoons of equal calibre are available on enquiry from Chancery Estates.*

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*Newly elected President of the Bar Council, R.V. Gyles QC, plans a presidential style that takes elements from a variety of his predecessors.*

The Editor has asked me to make a policy statement. I aim for a continuation of the Gleeson 'No News is Good News' policy. To adopt a Fraserism, I hope to keep sport on the front page of *Bar News*. Whether zealous journalists, disgruntled clients, recalcitrant judges, sensitive solicitors, and restless politicians, disaffected members of the Association will permit it is another matter.

I can, however, reveal that I have been under intense pressure from certain former Presidents to jettison Gleeson's policy of being first to leave all Bar functions and return to the quite different policy of Meagher and McHugh.

I do not need to catalogue all of the problems we face as barristers and collectively as a Bar.

Escalating costs (particularly for accommodation), consistently inadequate revision of the scales of fees (particularly legal aid scales), and the current threat to several significant areas of work, combine to make survival difficult for those without established practices in commercial work or some other lucrative speciality.

The proliferation of chambers, the growth of regional Bars, the increase in numbers of practising barristers, and the widely differing work background of new entrants to the Bar make the establishment and maintenance of uniform professional standards of competence and ethics more difficult than hitherto.

To say the New South Wales Bar Association is a trade union is about as unseemly and indecorous as (to take one of Gleeson's illustrations) submitting to a Federal Court judge that he has no jurisdiction.

Nonetheless it is the essential truth. It is also a truth recognised by those with whom we must deal. It is not something for which we need to apologise.

There is little point in successfully resisting frontal attacks upon the structure of our profession, and in instituting reforms such as the new education and reading programme and the new disciplinary procedures if by a slow process of attrition the rewards of practice at the Bar will not be commensurate with the risks of the occupation.

Recruitment of able people is essential for the Bar to be able to properly perform its functions. We are competing in this with the lucrative and heady world of large firms of solicitors and large corporations and with the security which can be offered by the Government and the Universities.

This may be the year of 'bread and butter' issues.