

**A**t the time when this edition was being compiled, *Bar News* learned that The Hon. Justice John Lehane of the Federal Court had been admitted to hospital and was seriously ill.

Justice Lehane made the transition from solicitor to Federal Court judge in October 1995, in a manner which barristers, solicitors and the Court alike have acknowledged displayed enormous learning, skill and courtesy. His Honour has delivered many clearly reasoned and compelling judgments and presided with dignity over lengthy and difficult trials. The Bar extends best wishes to His Honour, his family and close friends.

This issue of *Bar News* includes the excellent address, delivered by Sir Gerard Brennan AC as the inaugural Sir Maurice Byers Lecture. Also, there is the speech delivered by Sir Anthony Mason AC at the opening of Maurice Byers Chambers.

William Walsh gives us a critical, but highly powerful opinion piece on the problems faced by District Court users in regional New South Wales. Those problems arise mainly from the closure of courthouses and the procedure for listing trials. Readers are invited to contribute to subsequent issues of *Bar News* with any particular problems faced by members of the Bar or their clients, particularly in rural or regional areas.

It is hoped that the following issue of *Bar News* will examine the pros and cons of specialisation at the Bar. Readers are encouraged to submit contributions on this or other topics.

*Justin Gleeson S.C.*

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