

The publication of this issue of *Bar News* coincides with the 100th anniversary of the commencement of the First World War.

As Tony Cunneen points out in his article commemorating that anniversary, a large number of NSW barristers served with distinction in the First World War. It was a different time. Cunneen notes that the then chief justice of NSW, Sir William Cullen, said that giving up one's life for one's country was the 'best gift a man could give'.

Cunneen emphasises that the contribution was not just to the fighting. The wives and families of many servicemen also carried out immensely valuable work, including to organisations such as the Red Cross and the Comforts Fund.

Indeed Cunneen observes that the important role played by the wives of judges and barristers in this work was a determining factor in the passing of the *Women's Legal Status Act 1918*, which gave women the right to become lawyers.

The bar was able to contribute to the war effort in other ways. Cunneen describes how a well known barrister, Langer Owen KC, with the encouragement of his wife Mary, established the Red Cross Missing and Wounded Enquiry Bureau – an organisation which collected and disseminated information about missing servicemen to their families back home.



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Owen KC advertised his private telephone number so that anyone could call him in an emergency; his motto was 'trouble does not exist'.

Other articles in this edition include an interview with the newly appointed Attorney General, the Hon Brad Hazzard MP. Justice Melissa Perry writes on women at the bar. We reproduce the speech given by the Hon James Spigelman AC QC at the launch of Michael Pelly's book *Murray Gleeson The Smiler*.

Peter Lowe has contributed a fascinating piece of forensic history, entitled 'Tricky demurrers and frivolous pleas'. And Caroline Dobraszcyk has written on the well-known prosecution of Amanda Knox, in Italy.

Bar News thanks the outgoing president, Phil Boulten SC, for his outstanding

efforts during his time in office. Boulten SC has agreed to be interviewed for this issue and he gives an insight into day to day life of – and pressures upon – the person serving in this office. Boulten describes, for example, attempting during the morning tea recess in court to deal with the 30 – 40 emails he would receive each day as president.

In this issue we also see the first column from the newly appointed president, Jane Needham SC. *Bar News* welcomes Needham SC and wishes her well in her new role.

Jeremy Stoljar SC