

## **HEARSAY FUNCTION SPEECH**

**BY RICHARD DOUGLAS KC**

Thank you Cate.

Thank you all for attending this evening on this important occasion for Hearsay, and the Bar Association.

While common nowadays, in 2006 a solely electronic magazine of any organisation was rare. For example, the Law Society's Proctor only went fully online in 2020.

The Hearsay electronic platform – while it has expanded in content – has changed little since Issue 16 which was published in December 2006. So much is a testament to Justice Martin Burns – the first Hearsay editor, and his then personal assistant Emma MacFarlane – and to the consultants they retained.

Justice Burns and Emma are here this evening.

The Hearsay editorial team – of course – has altered over time. The current team consists of John Meredith and me as editors, Philip O'Higgins KC as deputy editor, Stephen Keim SC as Reviews sub-editor, with the team of counsel rounded off by Carolyn Conway and Seraphina Noble.

Our Bar Association staff team member is Dianne Lyndon. Without her technical skill we could never go to press.

Hearsay's editorial team of 7 compares with a team of 25 barristers and staff at the New South Wales Bar, producing the same number of magazines (viz four) issues annually. I mention this comparison only because it is State of Origin time!

To rub it in, however, 18 barristers and staff in Victoria publish two magazine issues a year.

I thank our editorial team – and their predecessors – for their sterling work in eliciting, editing and often writing, contributions to Hearsay.

The person who has been with Hearsay throughout its life is Stephen Keim SC. Stephen has been reviews sub-editor – de jure or de facto – for almost 20 years. I cannot thank him enough. He is the master of incisive book reviews, and enlists so many other capable reviewers, many of whom are present this evening.

I also thank each of you. You were invited for your contribution and support over the years of Hearsay, in particular since I became editor in early 2022.

Since then we have published 13 issues – quarterly – with about 70 to 80 items per issue.

A strong supporter has been you, Chief Justice Bowskill. You have been one of our principal “spotters” for Hearsay contributions. Thank you, Chief Justice, for fulfilling that role. May it please continue. It relieves us from hitting up barristers in lifts to provide contributions.

In the last three years we have significantly augmented Hearsay’s content.

A Regional Bar section was added. We thought so much was critical given the decentralised character of Queensland commerce, including the Bar.

The “10 Minutes with ...” interview section was added. The first interviewee was Andrew Philp KC and the most recent Hugh Fraser KC. Other interviewees included Fleur Kingham, Ian Callinan KC, Danny Gore KC, Justice David Boddice, Justice Martin Burns, Philip McMurdo KC and Kathryn McMillan KC, all of whom are attending this evening.

The interviewees’ have afforded valuable insight into legal history, good practice at the Bar and modern mores in legal institutions.

The “Professional Conduct and Practice” section underscores that the Bar Association does not turn its face against the need for strict regulation of the Bar to maximise proper ethical standards.

We report disciplinary decisions involving barristers in Queensland and across Australia, few as they are. Recent Presidents have emphasised to me that hearsay has become a beacon of proper ethical standards at the Bar.

The “Words from the Past” section reminds us that many articles written several years – sometimes decades – ago are worthy of re-publication.

The “Reviews and the Arts” section was broadened to comprehend reviews of film, music, art, poetry, travel and the like.

In the 100<sup>th</sup> Issue even “Bluey’s World” exhibition at Hamilton was reviewed for the benefit of barristers and judges who wish to entertain children and grandchildren. London’s May Chelsea flower show also was reviewed.

In each issue we attempt to include subject matter that we believe will entertain and engage the bar, the judiciary and solicitors and otherwise expose barristers to the wider public in a favourable – but sensible – light.

Since 1 January this year, there have been just over 52,000 users accessing the Hearsay website including archive issues. Even allowing for the occasional robot as user, that is a hallmark of its success as a journal.

Long may Hearsay thrive.

Thank you for your attendance and support. Have a pleasant evening.