

# Two decades of service for the welfare of the Bar

*By The Hon. Justice B A Beaumont*

Speaking for the New South Wales Bar at the sitting of the Federal Court of Australia to welcome Justice Lockhart, the Bar Association President, T R Morling QC, observed that as well as meeting the demands of a busy practice, Justice Lockhart had found time to make a real and substantial contribution to the welfare of the Bar. Trevor Morling noted that Justice Lockhart had been, at various times, a member of the Bar Council and had held the offices of Secretary and Treasurer of the Bar Association. Morling went on to say:

But perhaps the most onerous work, and perhaps least known work, which you have performed for the Bar has been in your role as a director and later as chairman of Counsel's Chambers Limited. The provision of suitable chambers for the Bar is a fundamental need of those who practise at it. That need would not have been met as adequately as it has been had it not been for the contributing efforts and foresight of the directors of the company. In your Honour's time as chairman the company has not merely preserved the work of the past in the provision of chambers in Phillip and Macquarie Streets, but it has expanded its activities by promoting and providing new sets of chambers in Martin Place. The Bar is much in your Honour's debt for this valuable, but largely unknown work.

In the whole of his time in practice (1960 – 1978), John Lockhart was active in the corporate life of the Bar in virtually all of its dimensions. Within a few years of admission, he was elected to the Bar Council and appointed Honorary Secretary (1964). Already fully committed to a large practice, he served in that year upon a number of committees – General Administration (with Vice-President D S Hicks QC); Public Relations (with President J R Kerr QC, Hicks QC and E A Lusher); liaison with the Australian Law Council and the Australian Bar Association (with Kerr QC, C L D Meares QC, P B Toose QC and Lusher); and the History of the NSW Bar (with Mr Justice Windeyer, H A R Snelling QC, N H Bowen QC (who had launched the project as Bar President in 1960), Meares QC and Kerr QC).

In 1965, John Lockhart was again Secretary. He served on the Law Society Liaison Committee (with President J D Holmes QC and Lusher QC), and continued to serve on the History of the Bar Committee for many years until the successful completion of the project by Dr John Bennett. On re-election in 1966 (with R M Hope QC, M M Helsham, E P Knoblanche and T Simos), he joined the Council's Law Reform Committee.

Lockhart was once more elected to Council in 1972, joining the Legal Education Committee (with President G J Samuels QC, a Vice-President G D Needham QC, B J K

Cohen and M G Gaudron) and the Reading Committee (with Vice-President H H Glass QC, M D Finlay, A G H Cook and B M J Toomey). On re-election in 1973 (having been appointed Queen's Counsel in April of that year) he continued with the Legal Education Committee and joined the Law Reform Committee (with Needham QC, C S C Sheller, J Badgery-Parker and P G Hely).

In 1974, Lockhart was elected Honorary Treasurer and joined the Ethics Committee (with President T E F Hughes QC (with whom he had read), Cohen, H H Bell and P R Capelin). He served again as Treasurer in 1975. He then constituted the Legal Education and Qualifications Inquiry (chaired by Sir Nigel Bowen) and chaired the Listing (Equity) Committee (J B Kearney QC, Sheller and Hely were also members).

Significantly Lockhart's contribution to the Bar reading programme was not limited to his official responsibilities – he had several grateful readers: including JRT Wood, PR Graham, TFM Naughton and DPF Officer.

This is a formidable record of achievement of service to the Bar and to the maintenance of its standards, and in turn to the maintenance of the legal system itself. For practitioners, there is always a temptation to concentrate on the case at hand, to the exclusion of the welfare of the system as a whole. Yet we have always depended upon individual members of the Bar to volunteer to come forward to address the systemic issues that constantly arise in the management of inevitable change. In the absence of the participation of those at the coalface, the consequences could be terminal.

Moreover, as Trevor Morling noted, Lockhart was able as well to make a significant contribution to the important work of Counsel's Chambers Limited. He was a director for 11 years from 1967 until his appointment (when Chairman of the Board) to the Federal Court in 1978. Here, his wide commercial experience and good sense were employed to their full advantage. It is impossible to overstate the practical significance of obtaining centrally located, reasonably priced accommodation, especially for the junior Bar. In his time, John Lockhart was influential in effectively progressing this cause, particularly in his efforts promoting and establishing Garfield Barwick Chambers in the APA Building in Martin Place.