



GOVERNMENT HOUSE  
SYDNEY

Message from  
**Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC QC**  
**Governor of New South Wales**

On 1 October 2019, Eric Holdeman in Disaster Zone, declared that the '2019 Word of the Year' was 'unprecedented'. His prophecy was made in the context of US politics and climate change. He concluded: 'Hopefully 2020 will be a little less 'unprecedented' in what happens in the world' - a prophecy about as accurate as that which predicted President Trump would not win the 2016 US election.

This is a very difficult time for everybody and barristers are as affected by and as vulnerable to the vagaries of COVID-19 as anyone, whether that be risk to health or to its economic impact. Indeed for barristers, there are particular stresses: the downturn in work; receiving briefs online - although an increasingly common practice, I heard one story of an online brief of 5000 pages; the difficulty of preparation at home without ready access to familiar resources; the variable quality of online technology; the uncertainty of whether a hearing will proceed; the difficulties of working from home with children being home-schooled or one's spouse or partner also working from home.

The Bar is of course a unique profession - where more than 2000 sole practitioners nonetheless 'do collegiality' well, as is apparent from the daily briefings from the Bar Association in *InBrief* and the various initiatives it is taking to help you manage the impacts on your practices. It is important to maintain that collegiality.

At the moment I am reading Albert Camus' 'The Plague'. Putting aside its allegorical intent, the parallels to the reality of this pandemic are uncanny, right down to this reference: 'the long rising curve had flattened'. Thankfully, 'unprecedented' doesn't feature. So, to a profession which is so much part of my DNA and very dear to my heart and where I have wonderful friendships, can I say 'chin up' for a bit longer. It is really tough but at least things seem to be getting back on track. If it would help anyone to ring and have a chat or to 'zoom in' I am more than happy to engage.

**The Honourable Margaret Beazley AC QC**  
**Governor of New South Wales**

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