

## **Information Memorandum from the President**

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Dear Member

Over the past several months, Bar Council has discussed whether present and emerging needs of the Association can be met if it remains in its current location on the Ground Floor of the Inns of Court.

The Bar is growing, the practice of barristers is becoming more complex, and the demand for CPD lectures has increased. These changes have given rise to the expansion of the services required by and in relation to members. There has also been an expansion of calls on the Association for assistance and resourcing in matters collateral to its operations but central to the ethos of a profession of its kind. Much of this work is performed by barristers volunteering significant time and expertise, but it must all be administered through the Association and by the Association's staff.

In short, accommodations for staff are already less than ideal and certainly do not enable expansion to meet the growing needs of the Bar.

The CPDs offered by the Association (some of them with in-person compulsory attendance for readers) are oversubscribed more than a quarter of the time. The number of attendees who can be accommodated is limited due to the floor area giving rise to capped headcounts, and the size of the Gibbs Room itself.

The other critical responsibility of the Association is the delivery of the Bar Practice Course. The Association is grateful for the support of the Federal Court of Australia, which has provided the main venue for the last few courses, but the cohorts are very close to exceeding its capacity and the number of candidates sitting the Bar Exam in the last few sessions gives the Council confidence in predicting that the upward trend will continue. The Council is conscious also to ensure that it can continue to offer places in the Course to colleagues from Papua New Guinea, and potentially other countries within the South Pacific Region in the future.

The Bar Council has prepared an information memorandum ([attached](#)) to take members through the matters we have considered in relation to this important decision. The information memorandum discusses the drivers behind these considerations, the

options that have been considered and the one which presents most favourably, strategic plans for future expansion, financial forecasts and the financial implications for individual members. As to the last of these, the Council has been conscious of the desire of members to limit their outgoings. You will note that the Council does not expect that the proposed move will result in any increase in practising certificate or membership fees beyond CPI. The Association has been the beneficiary of strong financial management over a long period and is well-resourced.

Barristers Chambers Limited, the Association's landlord, was the first to be told of our potential move as soon as it became reasonably likely that it would occur. The current lease expires in February 2026. We are corresponding about options that might exist within the Inns, while being realistic about the limitations in this regard, including structural issues within the current premises. It seems likely that the Association's future requirements will not be able to be accommodated within the Inns of Court.

I invite you to review the information memorandum. The Bar Council meets next on 21 July 2025, and I expect that it will make its final decision then.

**Cate Heyworth-Smith KC**  
**President**



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