

parts, the first being a theatrical re-enactment of the original trial, the second being a retrial. For the retrial, two senior members of counsel will be briefed to appear to prosecute and defend Kelly. The briefs will include copies of the original depositions and statements from 1880. The audience will be the jury.

#### BARRISTERS' CHAMBERS

Many of you will have already seen the new Joan Rosanove Chambers. They will be opened by His Excellency Sir James Gobbo on 14 April 2000. In this edition of the Bar News there is an article about the chambers.

#### INTERNET CONNECTION

One of the features of Joan Rosanove Chambers, a feature which BCL is progressively offering throughout its chambers, is a direct connection to the internet. This enables 24-hour continuous access. The effect is that e-mail comes to you, rather than you dialling in to your Internet Service Provider to collect it. Once connected, it costs \$25 per month. Everyone connected agrees that it is a superb system. E-mail addresses are also now available. E-mail addresses are "name@vicbar.com.au". In general, the direct internet connection and e-mail addresses are available to members of the Bar, their secretaries, readers and clerks (as well as to BCL and the Bar Council staff). It will be available incrementally. It is presently available in Joan Rosanove Chambers and Owen Dixon Chambers West in accordance with notices which have been circulated. A large group in Latham Chambers have also been connected as a result of the initiative and energy of Michael Wheelahan. It will be available in Owen Dixon Chambers East. Until the renovation of that building, however, the service will depend on surface cabling. More information about the service is provided in an article in this edition of *Bar News*.

#### BAR HOME PAGE

Those of you who use the internet will find the home page of the Victorian Bar at [www.vicbar.com.au](http://www.vicbar.com.au). It has been completely redone since it was first established through the skill and dedication of David Levin QC. Linked with it is the home page of BCL. That page is still under construction.

#### BAR TELEPHONE SYSTEM

In 1998 BCL upgraded the PABX telephone system provided to its tenants

and to associated chambers. In the result, the PABX has now available virtual ISDN (Integrated Services Digital Network) lines and all extensions to the PABX are now accessible through the prefix 9225.

#### RENOVATION OF ODCE GROUND FLOOR

The ground floor of Owen Dixon Chambers East is to be renovated. The renovations are expected to commence in late May or early June this year. The works are anticipated to take three months only. During the period of the renovations the clerks on the ground floor of Owen Dixon Chambers East will be relocated. There is more information about the renovations later in this edition.

#### PRO BONO SCHEMES

On behalf of the Bar Council, I thank all those members of the Bar who have given their time to represent litigants in need of assistance. In particular, I thank those members of the Bar who have participated in the Bar's Pro Bono scheme, the Bushfire scheme and those who have assisted with the East Timor evidence project.

#### NEW BAR READERS

Finally, I wish to extend a warm welcome to the new Bar readers, including three from Papua New Guinea and one from Vanuatu, who commenced the Bar Readers' Course on 1 March 2000.

Mark Derham  
Chairman

# Autumn Se Reforms

THE recently commenced autumn session of State Parliament sees the introduction of a number of significant legislative reforms for the Bracks Government — including the introduction of the Juries Bill, the Administration and Probate (Dust Diseases) Bill, the Whistleblowers Protection Bill and amendments to the Equal Opportunity Act

Firstly, the introduction of the Juries Bill reaffirms juries as the cornerstone of our legal system. The Bill deals specifically with the issue of jury vetting — and was drafted partly in response to the decision of the High Court last year in *Katsumo v. the Queen*. The Court held that the provision, by police to the prosecution, of material relating to the criminal histories of potential jurors is unlawful. The Bill also expands the range of potential jurors and clarifies who is disqualified from sitting on juries.

It is my view that people should only be excluded from jury service on the basis of clear legislative criteria. For this reason, jury vetting by the prosecution should not be permitted and will be abolished in favour of a disqualification regime significantly more rigorous than that in the current Juries Act.

The Bill provides a lifetime disqualification for anyone who is sentenced to three years or more in prison. It provides a ten-year disqualification for persons who have been sentenced to a period of imprisonment of between three months and three years. In addition, the Bill provides for a period of five or two years disqualification for persons charged with serious offences, depending on the sentence received. Those on remand and undischarged bankrupts will also be disqualified.

This scale of disqualification strikes an appropriate balance between concern about convicted criminals sitting on juries, and the right of people who have served sentences being again able to participate in an important civic right and obligation.

Further to my commitment to provide access to justice and the enshrinement

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