



# Standing Committee on Member Services

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THE  
**LAW SOCIETY**  
OF HONG KONG  
香港律師會

**2017**

The Standing Committee on Member Services formulates and oversees the implementation of strategies and programmes that enhance members' benefits and interests. It is the Standing Committee's mission to provide the best benefit for our members and to unite them with a common goal of developing the legal markets locally and internationally. The Standing Committee also makes recommendations to other Standing Committees on issues pertaining to members' legal practice. The Standing Committee met seven times in 2017.

### **Members' Forum and Dinner Gathering**

The Standing Committee organised one large scale Members' Forum and Dinner Gathering on 28 July. The topic this year was "*Use of Awards and Citations in Practice Promotion*" and members made useful submissions thereon.

At the "*Dialogue with the President: What Can We Do for You?*" session, members raised questions on the floor and the President, together with Vice-Presidents and other Council members, gave answers on the spot.

### **Members' Quarterly Lunch Gatherings**

The Standing Committee introduced the idea of quarterly gatherings for more interactions with members on topical issues with the view to assist general members to meet their demands in practice. Three gatherings were successfully held in 2017:

**(a) "Solicitors Hourly Rates" on 31 March**

Mr. Amirali Nasir, Vice-President & member of the Working Party on Party and Party Rates and Mr. Nicholas Hunsworth, member of the Working Party, gave an overview of the developments on the most concerned topic and the updated position. 97 members attended the gathering.

**(b) "Risk Management and Other Regulatory Issues Relating to Pro Bono Practice" on 13 September**

69 members attended the gathering with Mr. Amirali Nasir, Vice-President, Ms. Melissa Pang, Vice-President & Chairman of Pro Bono and Community Work Recognition Committee and Ms. Serina Chan, Council Member & Chairman of Pro Bono Committee speaking on risk management and regulatory issues relating to pro bono practice; while representatives from Aon Hong Kong Limited and QBE HongKong & Shanghai Insurance Limited introduced members to a newly-launched insurance product for pro bono work.

**(c) "Third Party Funding of Mediation" on 19 December**

Ms. Ada Chen, Commissioner of the Joint Dispute Resolution Strategy Office, Department of Justice and Mr. Iu Ting Kwok, member of the Secretary for Justice's Steering Committee and HKMAAL Accredited Mediator, spoke to members on the

Law Reform Commission’s recommendation that consideration should be given to whether third party funding should apply to mediation and consequential amendments to the relevant legislations. 86 members attended the gathering.

## **QR Code for Registration of Events**

The Standing Committee initiated the trial use of QR code in March to facilitate proper record keeping of the registration and attendance events coordinated by the Member Services Department. The use of QR Code was subsequently extended to other departments during the year.

## **Online Payment**

During the year, the Standing Committee recommended the adoption of online payment system to improve The Law Society’s services to members which is now in the process of implementation.

## **Law Library**

Towards the end of the year, the Law Library was transformed to a fully digital library. Major online research platforms are now available in the Library for members’ research purpose.

## **CLUBHOUSE COMMITTEE**

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On 9 June, the Clubhouse Committee organised a farewell party to bid farewell to the Law Society Clubhouse after its 20 years of service. Over 40 members including Past Presidents, former and current Council members and members of the Standing Committee on Member Services attended the party. Several Council members serving in 1997 when the Clubhouse was founded also attended and spent a joyful and memorable evening with old friends.

The Clubhouse was officially closed on 12 June. The premises will be transformed to a multi-function room to serve the wider interests of our general members.

## **IN-HOUSE LAWYERS COMMITTEE**

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The In-House Lawyers Committee (“IHLC”) works towards providing a platform for sharing of experiences and resources, exchanging of views and ideas in relation to the role of in-house lawyers (“IHLs”). It also creates a forum for facilitating the relationship between IHLs and private legal practitioners in Hong Kong.

IHLC held its signature event, the Annual Conference of In-House Lawyers, in September. The full-day event attracted over 400 members including 300 IHLs of different sectors and

industries. 18 speakers and panelists were invited to share their insights on various topics tailored for IHLs including top management's expectation of their legal teams, apology legislation, fintech, corporate governance and doing business in Japan.

In July, the Committee organised a visit to Midea Group's headquarter in Shunde. The day trip consisted of an office tour in Midea, a talk by Midea's in-house legal department on their structure and operation followed by a discussion and exchange of views and experience. Over 20 members joined this visit.

The Committee also promotes networking and experience sharing amongst IHLs through its "Sweat & Glory" sessions. Three panel discussions were organised during the year covering the following topics which were well received:

- "Fintech and In-House Lawyers"
- "Job Matching 2.0 - Branding Yourself for Success on Social Network"
- "Legal Mind for ESports – Press for Connect"

IHLC wrapped up the year with the Sweat & Glory Finale in November where members had the opportunity to meet in person distinguished speakers who participated in IHLC events this year in a relaxing atmosphere. Mr. James Thompson, Chairman of the Hong Kong Management Association, attended the event as the Guest of Honour.

## **MEMBER BENEFIT COMMITTEE**

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The Committee works towards identifying services and benefits for Law Society members. The Committee's work ranges from improving personal well-being of members to business promotion and development for the profession. The Committee also makes recommendations on promotion items received by The Law Society from time to time. The Committee also promotes the overall wellness of members via creating and implementing various types of wellness programmes and activities.

### **Seminars, workshops and visits**

The Committee organised the following workshops, seminars and visits on a variety of topics, a number of which were newly introduced this year:

- A Coffee Day was held on 23 March. A Latte Art workshop by Ms. Lamont Loo, a licensed Q-grader was held on the same evening.
- In celebration of mid-autumn festival, a mooncake workshop was held on 23 September.
- Two visits to the Court of Final Appeal were held on 12 April and 18 October respectively.
- A health seminar and guided visit to a local skincare product manufactory was held on 4 November.
- A cupcake class was held on 11 November for members and members' children.

- Two Chinese seal carving workshops were held on 21 October and 25 November respectively.

### **The Law Society's Annual Christmas Party 2017**

The Committee organised the Annual Christmas Party with the theme “Purple and Silver” on 14 December. Nearly 200 members and guests celebrated the festive season together, engaging themselves in different party games arranged by the Committee. The Party kicked-off with Christmas carol performance by the VIP band together with some Council Members and Committee Members. The Law Society's Live Band – TLF also performed at the Party.

### **Programme for Members' Children**

The Committee organised a guided visit for members' children to the Fire and Ambulance Services Education Centre cum Museum in August. Members and their children were introduced to the latest training facilities as well as basic fire safety and ambulance knowledge.

### **The Law Society's Credit Card**

The Committee continued its collaboration with American Express on the “The Law Society American Express Platinum Card”.

### **Other Benefits/Events offered by the Committee**

The Committee continued to source and/or offer an exclusive range of products and services for the benefit of members throughout the year. The year round benefits under the six categories, namely Culture & Lifestyle; Dine & Wine; Education & Learning; Health & Leisure; Household & Living and IT products & services were available on Law Society's website and Law Society's App for members' easy reference. Other benefits included complimentary tickets to Asian Licensing Conference and travel expo.

## **PRACTICE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

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The Practice Management Committee is dedicated to serving members in best-practice endeavours. The scope of its work includes providing guidance to members on the opportunities and risks arising from the business of law practice, and on formulating strategies to expand law practice, manage risks in practice, enhance services to clients, motivate staff and manage finance and information. It aims to help law firms to achieve practice management excellence. It formulates guidelines and practice manuals and organises training programmes, seminars and conferences on practice management. The Committee met two times this year.

## **RME Practice Management Course**

Section 6(6B) of the *LPO* has been amended to include a requirement that solicitors who intend to apply for an unconditional practicing certificate must satisfy the Council, in addition to compliance with the two-year employment requirement, that they have successfully completed a practice management course provided or approved by The Law Society (“the Course”). The Committee had finalised the Course materials in 2016.

Early this year, the Council resolved conducting the Course on a trial basis as an RME elective and reviewing the feedback before determining whether the Course should be made mandatory.

Some members of the Committee volunteered to join the selection panel of the trainers of the Course, and met with the Course provider in June. The Law Society was recruiting trainers for the Course which would be open for enrollment in the coming year.

## **Helping Members to Manage and Grow their Businesses**

The Committee engaged a consultant to develop checklists relating to the running of a law practice. The checklists will be introduced in 2018.

The Committee commissioned the writing of five articles, four of which were published during the year in the following issues of *Hong Kong Lawyer*:

- “The Changing Business Model of Law Firms” published in January
- “How to Manage Business as a Small to Medium-Sized Firm” published in March
- “Managing a Small/Medium-Sized Firm: The Role of the Leaders” published in June
- “Talent Retention and Succession Planning” published in November

The last article “*Five Techniques for Improving Profitability in Smaller Law Firms*” will be published in January 2018.

The Committee also organised a seminar on “Talent Retention and Succession Planning” on 18 October, and joined hands with InnoTech Committee (formerly Technology Committee) to organise a seminar entitled “Blockchain & Artificial Intelligence: Will they revolutionize the Law Practice?” on 5 December.

## **ISLAMIC FINANCE WORKING PARTY**

The Working Party provides recommendations on the legal development of Islamic financial products and services in Hong Kong. It aims to equip members with updated knowledge and insights in the rapidly growing Islamic Finance market in Hong Kong. It works closely with financial institutions, government, non-governmental organisations, international organisations and universities relating to Islamic finance. The Working Party also meets with lawyers from local firms and overseas lawyers to discuss developments in Islamic finance globally and the foundation that already exist in Hong Kong for Islamic finance, such as the issue of halal certificates and the launch of the third sukuk by Hong

Kong government.

On 9 November, the Working Party held its fifth annual networking reception themed “A Green Halal Blockchain: Hong Kong’s Belt and Road Advantage” with distinguished guests from various consulates, government bodies, financial institutions and corporate attending. Mr. Pindar Wong, Founder and Chief Architect of Belt & Road Blockchain Consortium, kicked off the reception with his enlightening speech on the theme.

## **WORKING PARTY FOR SME FIRMS**

The Working Party was established under the Practice Management Committee to make recommendations to the Committee on any support and guidance which the Working Party may consider desirable for small and medium-sized enterprise (“SME”) law firm practice management; to provide a forum for networking, sharing of experience, exchange of views and discussion of common problems of sole practitioners and small partnership firms on practice management; and to provide a channel of communications between such firms and The Law Society.

During the year, the Working Party conducted a SWOT analysis on local SME legal firms, and also considered topical issues including the development of an online platform for matching of legal services, use of modern technology to enhance efficiencies of SME firms, creation of a precedent library for Law Society applications, and locum. The Working Party also recommended the Hong Kong Academy of Law Limited to hold seminars on SME law firm operations.

The Working Party met two times in the year.

## **INTEREST GROUP ON MERGERS AND ACQUISITIONS**

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The Group was formed with the primary aims of setting up a platform for sharing information on mergers and acquisitions; to have in place an effective mechanism to collate relevant information on the needs of potential investors from the Mainland and understanding their investment objectives; formulating how Hong Kong solicitors can assist in the process of advising Mainland enterprises in relation to their diversification of investments abroad pursuant to the national "going out" policy; and inviting those with the relevant expertise to express their interest to be involved.

## **PRO BONO COMMITTEE**

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The Committee is formed to review the types of pro bono work undertaken by the profession, promote public awareness of pro bono services of The Law Society and encourage participation by the profession in pro bono work.

Throughout the year, the Committee reviewed various pro bono schemes which The Law

Society has organised and/or coordinated participation by its members, including the Free Legal Helpline; 45 minutes Free Legal Consultation, Free Legal Advice on Building Management and various programmes for social enterprises, non-governmental organisations (“NGOs”) and secondary school students.

## Free Legal Helpline

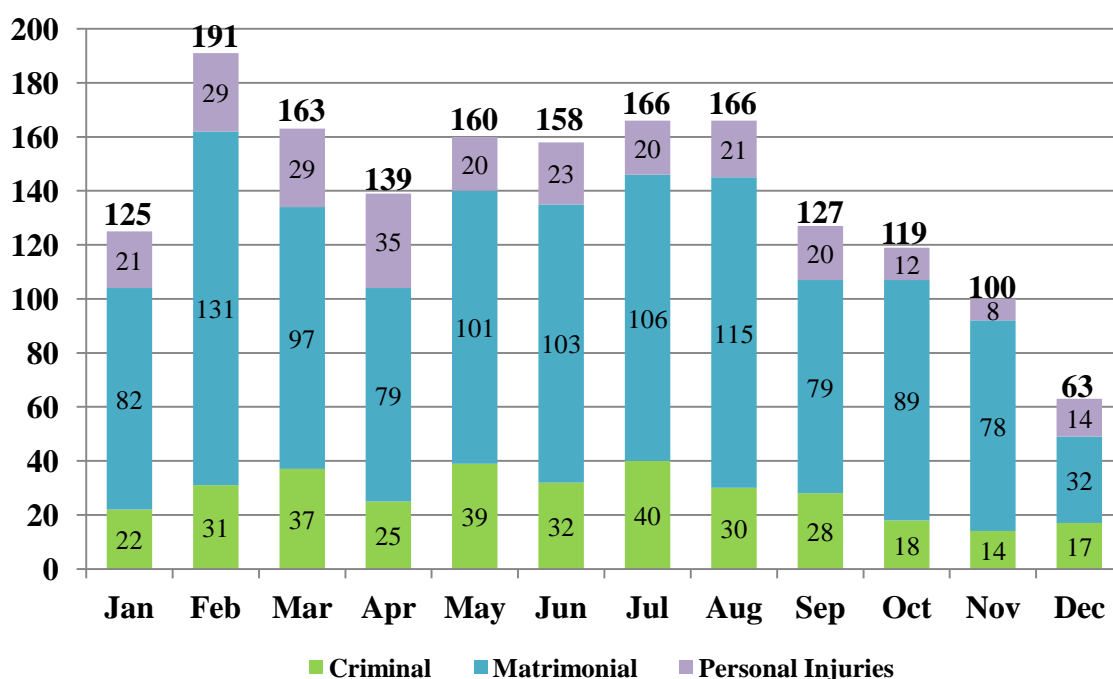
The Free Legal Helpline (“the Helpline”) was established in late August 2013 with an aim to offer pro bono legal advice to the public in need on three areas of law, namely personal injury, matrimonial law and criminal law.

The Pilot Scheme on Mediation, which was launched in December 2014 under the Helpline to provide free telephone sessions on mediation, has been extended until 31 December 2019.

To further enhance the Helpline’s service, the Committee conducted a 1-month trial of Interactive Voice Response System (“IVRS”), a technology that automates interactions with telephone callers, in December. To effectively assist the general public seeking legal consultation, especially the grass-root class, the Helpline still maintained its in-person call pick-up and case vetting services. The Committee will continue to monitor the operations of IVRS in conjunction with call pick-up services from 2018.

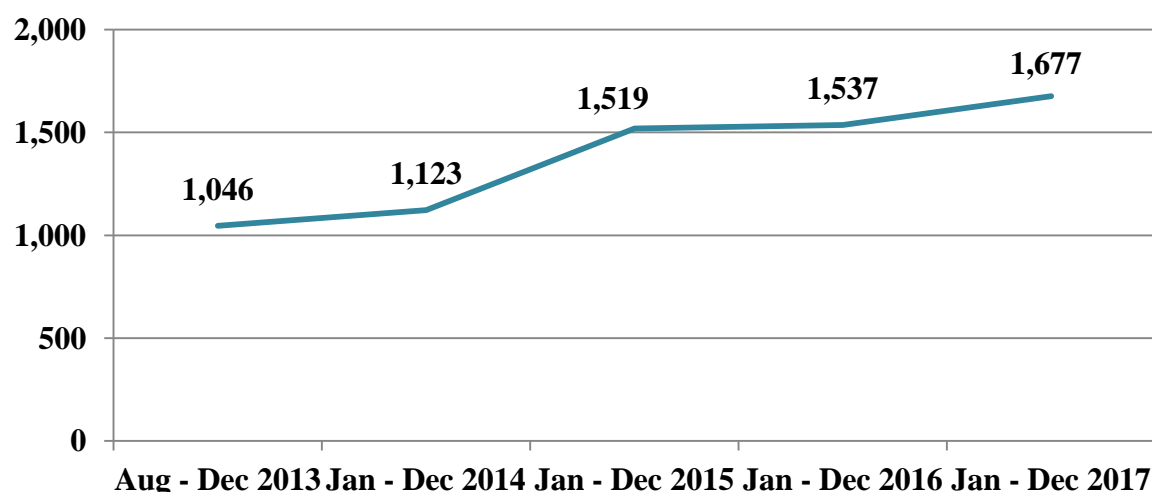
Up to 31 December 2017, over 6,800 calls had been handled through the Helpline.

**Figure 1: Number of cases received in 2017**





*Figure 2 : Number of cases received during 2013 – 2017*



## **Collaboration with Hong Kong Council of Social Service (“HKCSS”)**

### **NGO Corporate Governance Platform**

The Law Society continued to partner with HKCSS on their “NGOs Governance Platform Project” to promote best practice and experience sharing on NGO governance among board members of their NGO members. Our members were invited to speak at their sharing sessions and/or join the visits to the boards of various NGOs.

### **Community Housing Project**

Community Housing Project (“the Project”) was a new social movement implemented by the HKCSS to provide short term relief to individuals or families which are proven to be in need of transitional housing by way of accommodation and support services.

The Law Society is one of the professional partners of the Project. Vice-President Melissa Pang also sits in HKCSS’s Steering Committee for Community Housing Project as a member.

A briefing session on Transitional Social Housing Pilot Project was held on 4 September 2017. In the sharing session, representatives from HKCSS, Mr. Keith Wong, Chief Officer (Social Development) of Policy Research & Advocacy, and Mr. Charles Ho, Officer, Policy Research & Advocacy, introduced to 17 members about the Project and its objectives, such as identifying idle or under-utilised housing resources in the community and providing affordable and decent housing units to deprived tenants. VicePresident Melissa Pang and Ms. Serina Chan, Council Member and Chairlady of Pro Bono Committee attended to show support to the new initiative.

## **Collaboration with Education Bureau**

The Committee continued its collaboration with the Education Bureau in its “Business-School Partnership Programme” (“BSPP”) with the aim of promoting better co-operation and closer alliances between the legal sector and the schools, to lead students out of the classroom to gain a wider perspective of the world and to get them better prepared for life in the society.

Two guided visits and sharing sessions for Form 4 to Form 6 secondary school students to Independent Commission Against Corruption (“ICAC”) and High Court & Legal Aid Department (“LAD”) were held on 12 October and 28 November respectively.

During the visits, sharing sessions were held when the staff of ICAC and LAD introduced their daily work to the students. Mr. Eric Chan, Ms. Elen Lau and Chairlady of Pro Bono Committee also gave an introduction of the legal profession and an explanation of the differences between a solicitor and a barrister. Mr. Ben Wong, a member of Criminal Law & Procedure Committee, served as guest speaker to give an inspiring talk on Criminal Law to students at the occasion of the Visit to ICAC.

A total of 108 students participated in the two visits. Through participating in the two visits, students were able to understand more about the legal profession and their career options.

## **The Cross-Strait, Hong Kong & Macau Youth Volunteering Forum**

The Hong Kong Council of Volunteering (“HKCOV”) and Agency for Volunteer Service (“AVS”) are The Law Society’s long-term partners in pro bono work. The Law Society is one of the member organisations of HKCOV.

AVS organised “The Cross-Strait, Hong Kong & Macau Youth Volunteering Forum” in November. Around 300 speakers, youth and volunteer leaders, youth service professionals, representatives from volunteer organisations in Hong Kong, the Mainland, Macau and Taiwan shared experiences and exchanged views on the challenges, opportunities, strategies and service models in promoting youth volunteering.

Invited by the HKCOV, Council Member Serina Chan joined as a panel speaker in the session titled 「青年義工於社會的角色和路向」.

## **15th IAVE Asia Pacific Regional Volunteer Conference**

Invited by the AVS, Vice-President Melissa Pang represented The Law Society in the 15th IAVE Asia Pacific Regional Volunteer Conference held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia from 23 to 26 November.

Vice-President spoke at a workshop entitled “Strategic partnerships - pro bono work and access to justice in Hong Kong”. At the workshop, Ms. Pang introduced the pro bono and

volunteer work carried out by lawyers in Hong Kong in the context of strategic partnership. Further, she explained how The Law Society mobilised members to actively participate in pro bono and community work, and organised innovative and attractive pro bono and volunteer programmes. She also gave an overview on the legal aid system in Hong Kong and the status of litigants in person.

## WORKING GROUP ON INSURANCE FOR PRO BONO WORK

The Working Group is tasked to review the regulatory framework relating to professional indemnity and insurance arrangement and coverage to ensure that members are sufficiently covered when they perform pro bono services.

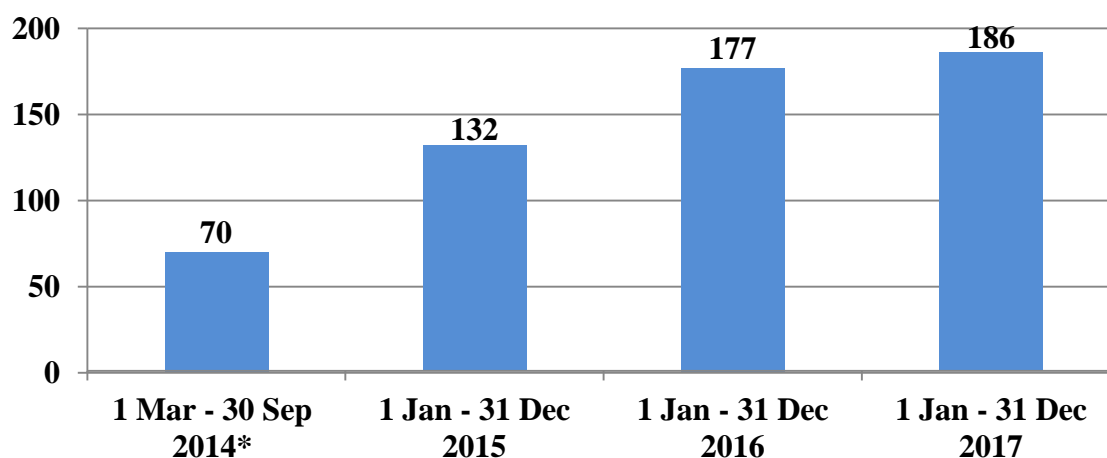
The Committee and Working Group will continue to facilitate the understanding of the relevant stakeholders on The Law Society’s stance on pro bono services and will keep track of feedbacks and development surrounding this matter.

## WORKING GROUP ON PRO BONO PROJECTS ON BUILDING MANAGEMENT WORK

The Working Group administers the pro bono projects in relation to building management. It updates panel members on new developments, cases and legislations in the building management spectrum from time to time.

Since early 2015, the Working Group has been working with the Home Affairs Department (“HAD”) on the Free Legal Advice Service on Building Management (“the Scheme”). In 2017, 186 cases had been processed.

**Figure 3 : Number of cases processed from 1 March 2014 to 31 December 2017**



*Note:*

\* Cases were handled by the Property Management Advisory Centres of Hong Kong Housing Society.

A Basic Course on Property Management was held from 12 October to 8 November (5 sessions, 2 hours per session) to provide potential panel members of the Scheme with a better understanding of the relevant topics on property management. 28 members completed the course.

A Refresher Course on Property Management was held on 26 October. 55 panel members completed the course.

The Working Group also organised a sharing session for panel members on building management on 7 December. The guest speaker, Ms. Vega Wong, Assistant Director of Home Affairs, introduced the proposed amendments in the *Building Management Ordinance* (“BMO”), such as the quorum for the Owners’ Corporation general meetings, the requirement of financial statements to be audited for maintenance projects and ceiling on the number of proxy instruments. 31 members who served as panel advisors of the Scheme attended the sharing session to obtain updated information and exchange ideas with the guest speaker.

## **WORKING GROUP ON PRO BONO WEBPAGE**

The Working Group shall continue to review the Pro Bono webpage in the members’ zone of The Law Society’s website, so as to encourage members’ active participation in pro bono work and to promote public awareness.

## **WORKING GROUP ON SEMINARS FOR SOCIAL ENTERPRISES**

The Law Society has been running the “Social Enterprise Legal Seminar Series” in collaboration with HKCSS for six consecutive years. The aim is to help social enterprises better understand the legal aspects of their operations.

The Working Group and HKCSS jointly organised a seminar titled “Legal Aspects of Fund Raising for Social Enterprises” on 29 June. Dr. Teresa Chu, a member of the Working Group, introduced to the audience common types of fundraising exercises, funding schemes and crowdfunding. She also gave some important pointers on fundraising and scaling up a company. Over 70 representatives from various social enterprises attended.

## **PRO BONO AND COMMUNITY WORK RECOGNITION COMMITTEE**

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The Committee is tasked to promote and encourage active participation of individual members and law firms in pro bono and community work by showing appreciation for and recognition of their outstanding commitment to volunteering at the Award Ceremony.

Since its inception in 2011, the Pro Bono and Community Work Recognition Programme

("the Programme") has been highly regarded by The Law Society and has established itself as one of flagship events. In 2017, the Programme continued to gain recognition among the legal profession with over 150 applications from lawyers and law firms.

The Award Presentation Ceremony took place on 13 December at the Function Hall of Justice Place. We were very honoured to have the presence of Chief Justice Geoffrey Ma and then Secretary for Justice Rimsky Yuen, as well as other distinguished guests at the event. 107 Individual Awards, 23 Law Firm Awards and 8 Distinguished Awards were presented. Amongst the Distinguished Awards, a new "Young Lawyer Special Award" was introduced this year to encourage and recognise active participation of our young members (with 5 years P.Q.E or below) in pro bono and community work.

The awardees of the Distinguished Awards (with the exception of the "Young Lawyer Special Award") were selected by the Judging Panel comprising Mr. Chua Hoi Wai, Chief Executive of The Hong Kong Council of Social Service; Mr. Thomas Kwong, Director of Legal Aid; Mr. Patrick Li, Deputy Secretary for Home Affairs; Mr. Stephen Wong, Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data; The Hon Wong Yan-lung, Former Secretary for Justice; Mr. Michael Lintern-Smith, Past President of The Law Society; Ms. Melissa Pang, Vice-President and Chairlady of the Pro Bono and Community Work Recognition Committee of The Law Society and Ms. Serina Chan, Chairlady of Pro Bono Committee of The Law Society.

## **RECREATION AND SPORTS COMMITTEE**

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The Recreation and Sports Committee ("RSC") is dedicated to serve members by providing a whole range of recreational activities and sports to enable members to strike a balance between health and work, and foster friendships among them.

RSC had organised six regular meetings throughout the year. Captains and convenors of various teams also met every two months to report on their activities.

The Recreation and Sports Programme 2017 has attracted a record breaking of 780 members who took part in a variety of events, competitions and regular practice sessions organised by the recreational and sporting teams and interest groups which were set up to cater different interest and needs of members. The 14 sporting teams under the Programme included badminton, basketball, cycling, distance running, dragon boat, football, golf, hiking, snooker, swimming, table tennis, tennis, tenpin bowling, and volleyball. The Programme also offered nine recreational interest groups including bridge, Chinese calligraphy and painting, cookery, food and wine appreciation, dancing, live band, martial arts, photography, singing and yoga.

Same as the years before, the RSC teams and groups continued to make marvellous achievements this year in external competitions including various invitational matches with other professionals, public bodies, industry associations and charitable organisations.

The Committee was also keen in building closer connections with legal professionals from

other jurisdictions. The 7th Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Lawyers Sports Meet, a bi-annual mega sporting event gathering legal practitioners from the three regions, was held in Guangzhou this year with Taipei Bar Association taking part as the special guest team. The Hong Kong team represented by almost 100 lawyer athletes was crowned champion in three of the 11 events. The Shenzhen-Hong Kong Badminton Cup and the Volleyball Tripartite involving the law associations of Hong Kong, Malaysia and Singapore were also added to the event list.

The Law Society is a member of the Recreation and Sports Club for Hong Kong Professional Bodies (“RSCP”) and takes part in inter-professional sports and recreational tournaments regularly held by RSCP. RSCP forms a networking platform enabling members to bond with members of other major professional bodies in Hong Kong.

Over 700 activities including those recreational and sporting classes and training sessions were organised and participated by RSC this year. All activities attracted attendance by around 8,000 participants.

## **INNOTECH COMMITTEE** **(formerly TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE)**

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The Innotech Committee provides technology knowhow and services to members as well as innovative ways of applying ICT to Law Firms and legal services. It met six times.

The Committee had a busy and rewarding year paying visits to technology-related bodies to establish collaboration with The Law Society:

- (a) Under Secretary for Innovation and Technology on the use of block-chain technology and technology in general in the legal context.
- (b) Head of Risk and Strategy for the Hong Kong Securities and Futures Commission relating to anti money laundering through ICT and the use of IT by law firms in general and particular.
- (c) Chief Executive Officer of the Hong Kong Cyberport Management Company Limited regarding collaboration with Lawyers and startups in Cyberport.
- (d) Hong Kong Monetary Authority on development of Bitcoin and Distributed Ledger Technology respectively.
- (e) Meeting with Department of Justice on the use of block-chain technology and technology in general in the legal context, e-legislation, Technology Court, and online dispute resolution.
- (f) Meeting with the Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation regarding collaboration with Lawyers and startups.

The Committee organised one seminar on “Latest Cyberattacks (WannaCrypt/Petya) and Key Learnings from the Incidents” on 31 July which was well received.

## **Apps and their Applications**

The Law Society's App has cumulated 7,195 downloads on iOS and Android devices since its release in 2013. In 2017, there were 843 new activations and the "hit rate" of instances of members clicking within the App reached 1 million.

To enable members to check their event registration and attendance status/history from time to time, the Committee approved the recommendation of the Working Group on Law Society's App on the development of virtual membership card ("Virtual Card") with individualised QR code embedded. The Virtual Card feature will be rolled out in the second quarter of 2018.

The functions of the Virtual Card will continue to expand to include course enrolment and attendance of CPD/RME in due course.

## **Updating The Law Society Software Directory and Selection Guide ("Guide")**

The Committee produced the updated Guide this year pursuant to the Solicitors' Accounts Rules which came into effect on 1 July 2016. The purpose of the updated Guide is to identify the available practice management software with an objective assessment of their respective features/functionalities/comparative pricing.

## **The Technology Roadmap**

Towards the end of the year, the Committee was tasked with the important responsibility of producing, within two months, a Roadmap outlining what The Law Society should do to assist the profession to take advantage of the technology, the relevant timeframe and the cost. The first draft of the Roadmap was produced in December identifying a few product deliverables to be further considered in 2018.

## **Access to Justice Innotech Law Hackathon**

The Committee's innovative idea of hosting a Law Hackathon, a competition for young professionals, students, and interested members, on designing and developing technology-enabled solutions to improve access to justice, was approved towards the end of the year and put into action. The Hackathon will be held in April 2018.

## **Others**

During the year, the Committee further:

- (a) made submission to Hong Kong Monetary Authority on their '*Study on Distributed Ledger Technology*';
- (b) considered the use of artificial intelligence in e-discovery as well as other areas;
- (c) considered Big Data and its influence in the legal profession;
- (d) considered proposed amendments to the Law Society's Guidance Note on '*Storage and Destruction of Old Files*';

- (e) considered the proposed amendments to the Solicitors Practice Rules on the requirements for law firms to show certain information on their letterhead and electional mail and made recommendations to the Guidance Committee;
- (f) made recommendations to the Working Party on Virtual Office;
- (g) co-organized a seminar on ‘Blockchain & Artificial Intelligence: Will they revolutionize the Law Practice?’ with the Practice Management Committee; and
- (h) prepared a set of Information Security Guidelines recommending good practice in the area of information security and seeking to provide general principles and specific security actions to help legal practitioners to satisfy their fiduciary and legal obligations to their clients.

The name of the Committee was changed to Innotech Committee towards the end of the year to reflect the diversified and innovative scope of the Committee’s initiatives.

## WORKING GROUP ON THE LAW SOCIETY’S APP

Are you one of the 7,195 members who have already downloaded the Law Society App for your iOS or Android device? There were 843 new activations in year 2017 alone. Are you one of the regular users who together interacted with the App over 1 million times in 2017 alone to read *Hong Kong Lawyer*, see the President’s Message, search the members database, download event photos, keep track of and sign up for numerous recreation, sports, members’ benefit events and CPD courses and add to your calendar with a simple click? Thank you for contributing to the success of the Law Society’s App --- the first of its kind introduced by law societies around the world. We have listened to your suggestions and continued to improve its functionality since its first release in 2013. We will soon be introducing payment functionality to make life even easier!

Initiated and chaired by Nick Chan, Council Member and Vice-Chairman of our InnoTech Committee, the Working Group is tasked:-

- (a) to gather and consider members’ views/suggestions/comments from the use of the App;
- (b) to promote the widest use of the App amongst Law Society users;
- (c) to encourage Law Society committees to make use of the App for promoting Law Society’s events, improving the efficiency, simplicity and accuracy of event planning and execution, and effective communication with members including members’ benefit;
- (d) to liaise with the App service provider for the development of new features, feature updates / enhancement as shall be decided by the Technology Committee/this Working Group;
- (e) to oversee and manage the services of the App service provider and ensure it is up to satisfactory level; and
- (f) to make recommendations on feature updates and enhancement to the Technology Committee for consideration and approval.

In early March, the Standing Committee on Member Services initiated the trial use of QR code to facilitate proper record keeping of the registration and attendance of the events coordinated by Member Services Department which was subsequently extended to



CPD/RME courses maintained by The Hong Kong Academy of Law. To further improve the efficiency and simplify the procedures of QR code event onsite registration, the Working Group proposed the development of virtual membership card (“Virtual Card”) with individualised QR code embedded. The Virtual Card will be linked with the mobile App registration form. Event attendance can be electronically recorded by scanning the QR code. The Virtual Card will also enable members to check their event registration and attendance status/history anytime. The Virtual Card will be rolled out in the second quarter of 2018!

To encourage increased use of the mobile App, the Working Group has been actively promoting The Law Society’s mobile App as an effective platform for various committees/working parties/working groups to advertise their events, collect views/suggestions/comments on specific issues and accept event registration via mobile App form.

The Working Group has received very good feedback from hundreds of members and their family members who happily use the App to sign up for our annual Members and Family Fun Day and annual Swimming Gala. More activities will be enrolled through the App to save time for members to spend with their family and on billable matters! For example, the Young Solicitors’ Group’s annual mentorship programme “CONNECTED”, with nearly 300 participants in 2017, will also adopt the use of mobile App registration form for members’ registration in 2018.

## **LAW FIRM TECHNICAL SUPPORT INTEREST GROUP**

The Committee formed a Law Firm Technical Support Interest Group for members, trainee members and law firm technical support staff. Its main function is to provide a forum for sharing of experience and resources and exchange of views relating to technological issues in legal practice.

## **YOUNG SOLICITORS’ GROUP (“YSG”)**

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YSG was established to serve the needs and interests of young members with less than five years’ post-qualification experience and trainee solicitors. Its mission is to facilitate and assist the career and personal development of young members by offering diversified services and activities that are interesting and beneficial to them. Additionally, YSG also serves as a platform to enhance communications among trainee solicitors, young members, senior members and law students.

### **YSG Survey**

YSG launched the “Survey on Young Members’ Needs and Preferences” in May 2016 to better understand the needs of Law Society members, especially young members. Throughout 2017, YSG has collected members’ feedback and suggestions which would be used to further enhance YSG’s services and to improve its events in the future.

## **Secondees to London Unite**

To facilitate trainees and young lawyers on secondment or otherwise working in London for mutual support and community-building, YSG coordinated the exchange of contacts between interested members. Around 30 members participated and numerous events were organised amongst themselves.

## **One Day Seminar on Contract Management 2017**

The ‘One Day Seminar on Contract Management 2017’ was jointly organised by the young members’ groups of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators (East Asia Branch), the Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers (Hong Kong Branch), the Institution of Civil Engineers, the Hong Kong Institute of Surveyors and the Hong Kong Institution of Engineers, and supported by YSG. This year, the Seminar was held on 22 April and around 300 professionals from The Law Society and the five other professional institutions took part.

## **Meet & Greet – Trainees & New Members Friday Lunch / Drinks**

This gathering (formerly known as “Friday Lunch”) was held once every month with a view to introduce our new members and trainee solicitors to The Law Society and YSG in an informal and relaxed setting. It aims to foster communications between junior and senior members of the profession.

In 2017, nine gatherings were conducted including one after work drinks which provided an alternative to attendees who could not attend the lunchtime gatherings.

Throughout the year, 108 newly admitted solicitors and trainee solicitors attended the gatherings.

## **Welcome Cocktail Reception for Trainee Solicitors**

To welcome trainee solicitors to The Law Society, a “Welcome Cocktail Reception for Trainee Solicitors” was held on 6 November.

The Reception is an annual flagship event organised as an induction programme for first year trainee solicitors who have just entered the profession and an important social event for second year trainees. About 110 trainee solicitors and 30 practitioners and guests attended the event.

For the first time, the Reception was held at the Function Hall of Justice Place. The evening kicked off with a welcoming speech by President Thomas So and a speech covering YSG services and activities by Chairlady Bonita Chan, followed by an inspiring speech and introduction of the “Legal Trainee Scheme” of the Department of Justice by Solicitor General Wesley Wong. All trainee solicitors were introduced to a variety of other young lawyer-focused initiatives, such as international exchange programmes, recreation

and sports activities, as well as the Law Society member benefits programmes.

Other senior legal practitioners also shared practical career advice with trainee solicitors on the occasion.

## **Communication with Law Students and Promoting Student Membership**

YSG held the annual “Meet the Practitioners Drinks Reception for Law Students” on 15 September when over 100 law students and 40 practitioners gathered at a social enterprise café in Admiralty.

The reception was well attended by law students from the Chinese University of Hong Kong (“CUHK”), City University of Hong Kong (“CityU”), the University of Hong Kong (“HKU”) and members of the Asian Law Students’ Association. Representatives from The Law Society who were in attendance included President Thomas So, Vice-President Melissa Pang, Immediate Past President Stephen Hung, Past President Huen Wong, Council Members Mark Daly, Nick Chan, Serina Chan, Warren Ganesh, as well as YSG committee members led by Chairlady Bonita Chan.

Both President and YSG Chairlady delivered welcoming speeches introducing the work of The Law Society and activities organised by YSG. The evening ended with experienced legal practitioners and members of YSG sharing their own personal experience and inspirational views with the law students.

On 30 September, YSG took part in the “Hong Kong Law Fair 2017” held at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre. At the Fair, YSG promoted student membership and introduced the function and structure of The Law Society, answered enquiries about eligibility requirements of Law Society student membership and general questions related to the legal profession.

To further promote student membership, student membership application forms were also distributed at law schools’ orientation camps and other Law Society’s gatherings.

A total of 152 new student membership applications were received in 2017.

## **Law School Career talks**

On 12 October, a career talk was held at CityU for law students. Council members Nick Chan, Roden Tong and a member of the Standing Committee on Standards & Development Mr. Albert da Rosa spoke to CityU students about the legal career paths as private practitioners and in-house lawyers, and introduced some of the events organised by The Law Society for its members.

On 31 October, Council Member Serina Chan together with Mr. Albert da Rosa offered useful interview tips to HKU students on how to boost their chances of getting a trainee contract.

Another career talk for CUHK law students will be held in the first quarter of 2018.

## **Distinguished Speakers' Luncheon**

The first YSG's Distinguished Speakers' Luncheon was held on 29 April when Professor Lam Chiu-ying, SBS, former-Director of the Hong Kong Observatory and current Adjunct Professor of the Department of Geography and Resource Management with the Chinese University of Hong Kong, shared his views on "Laws of Nature".

On 26 August, almost 70 members attended a luncheon with The Honourable Chief Justice Geoffrey Ma as the Guest of Honour. The Chief Justice spoke on the topic "Twenty Years of the Court of Final Appeal".

Members found the guest speakers' sharings highly enlightening and insightful.

## **Macau Study Trip**

YSG together with the Macau Lawyers Association ("MLA") and Young Barristers' Committee ("YBC") of the Hong Kong Bar Association ("the Bar Association") successfully co-organised a Macau Study Trip entitled "After Brexit: Capitalising on Market Opportunities of Hong Kong and Macau Lawyers in Portuguese-Speaking Countries / Territories" on 14 January which was attended by 30 Law Society, 16 YBC and 15 MLA members.

The one-day study trip began with a seminar on Post-Brexit market developments and Brexit's impact on legal practice given by Dr. Vicente Manuel, Deputy Secretary General of the Forum for Economic and Trade Co-operation between China and the Portuguese-speaking Countries (Macau); Dr. José Luis de Sales Marques, President of the Institute of European Studies of Macau; and Dra. Maria João Bonifácio, Trade & Investment Commissioner of the Portuguese Trade and Investment Agency, Counselor for Economic and Commercial Affairs for the Consulate General of Portugal in Macao and Hong Kong.

Following the seminar was a panel discussion at which Dra. Joana Alves Cardoso, registered lawyer with MLA; Mr. Fred Kan, Chairman of Belt and Road Committee ; Ms. Serina Chan, Council Member and then Chairlady of YSG; and Mr. Hugh Kam, Vice-Chairman of YBC shared their views and insights on Post-Brexit market opportunities and cooperation between Macau and Hong Kong lawyers.

The seminar was followed by a networking luncheon during which our young members mingled with their overseas counterparts, as well as exchanged insights on the practice of common law and civil law systems. In the afternoon, members visited a number of remarkable sites including the Museum of the Macau Holy House of Mercy, Dom Pedro V Theatre, and The Taipa Houses Museum.

## **Explore HK Series**

To allow young members the opportunity to have outdoor get-together and explore the lesser known sides of Hong Kong, YSG organised two exploration related activities in 2017, namely World War II Heritage Exploration Tour at the underground tunnels in Tai

Tam Country Park on 30 April and a guided tour of Tai O heritage sites and Yi O farm in Lantau Island on 22 October.

### **Social Awareness Outreach & Training Programme**

A social awareness outreach and training programme (“the Programme“) was held on 9 September to provide the opportunity for members to better understand discrimination related issues in Hong Kong from various perspectives through the speakers’ presentations.

69 members attended the Programme which was held at the Kowloon Mosque and Islamic Centre (“Mosque“) in Tsim Sha Tsui. After the opening speech by Vice-President Amirali Nasir, the three speakers, Mr. Peter Reading, Legal Counsel of the Equal Opportunities Commission; Ms. Kayla Tam, Campaign Officer of Hong Kong UNISON and Mr. Michael Vidler, Sole Proprietor of Vidler & Co., shared their expertise and experience on the topic.

The Programme concluded with a guided tour and group sharing session by Imam Sulaiman Wang of the Mosque.

### **CONNECTED Mentorship and Buddy Programme**

“CONNECTED”, a mentorship and buddy scheme for mentee-trainee solicitors, has become a flagship event organised by YSG over the years, enjoying tremendous popularity among trainee solicitors and members alike. In 2017, “CONNECTED” programme has attracted nearly 400 member-participants.

The purpose of the programme is to provide opportunities for trainee solicitors to meet both junior members (their “buddy”) and senior members (their “mentor”) of The Law Society, and establish “mentorship to life-long friendship” relationships through participating and interacting in a series of team-building activities. The activities held throughout the year were as follows:

- Kick-off event : “Professional Zen : CONNECTED De-Stress Drinks” on 10 March
- Brewery Tour on 15 July
- “Let’s Learn and Serve!” on 16 September
- Closing event : Beachside BBQ Closing Party on 9 December
- Other social gatherings self-organised among mentors, buddies and mentees

Apart from the exciting activities, panels of 3 to 4 mentors would share their career and personal experience at the events.

### **Cross Strait Four Regions Young Lawyers Forum 2017**

YSG and the Greater China Legal Affairs Committee jointly organised the *Cross Strait Four Regions Young Lawyers Forum 2017* with a theme entitled “*The New Global Political and Economic Landscape and the Future of Young Lawyers*” on 20

October. Distinguished guests from the four regions, including government officials, representatives from the legal sector and academics, were invited to share their insights and experience on topics such as the impact of technology development and artificial intelligence on the legal profession, international dispute resolution procedure, and competition law in the four places.

The event attracted 250 attendees from 30 lawyer associations, a new record since its debut in 2011.

### **Joint Professional Activities**

To foster closer relationships with other young professionals, YSG with the support of the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority organised the “Joint Professional Art Appreciation and Networking Drinks” on 27 May together with the Hong Kong Institute of Architects, the Bar Association, the Hong Kong Institute of Certified Public Accountants, the Hong Kong Dental Association, the Hong Kong Institute of Landscape Architects, the Hong Kong Medical Association, the Hong Kong Institute of Planners and the Hong Kong Institute of Surveyors.

The afternoon began with a sharing session featuring guest speakers Mr. Kevin Lim, Architect and Managing Director of an award-winning design studio, and Ms. Kate Jones, Creative Consultant, and moderator Ms. Serina Chan, Council Member and then Chairlady of YSG. During this session, the guest speakers shared their journeys in discovering interesting artists and offered advice on how to begin building one’s own personal art collection.

On 30 June, YSG together with other member bodies of the Young Coalition Professional Group (“YCPG”) of Hong Kong Coalition of Professional Services co-organised “Joint Professional Networking Party 2017 – Jungle of Parties” in Lan Kwai Fong. This was one of the most anticipated events of YCPG and was well attended by over 350 members and friends from 10 professional institutes.

YSG, as a member body of the YCPG, together with the Education Bureau, co-organised the third “Joint Professional Career Day” on 11 March. The Programme targeted to provide career guidance support to students from secondary schools with lesser resources. The Career Day was well received with 192 students from various secondary schools in Hong Kong attending.

Four Law Society members, including Ms. Linda Ngan, Ms. Daphne Lo, Ms. Judy Wong and Ms. Minnie Chang served as speakers at the breakout sessions. Together with two representatives from the Bar Association, they gave students a broad introduction of what solicitors and barristers do and various practice areas in the legal field. They also shared their experience and insights on how students should prepare themselves if they wish to become a lawyer in future.

## **Community and Pro Bono Services**

YSG has been collaborating with the Tung Wah Group of Hospitals (“TWGHs”) to provide voluntary community services to help young children of under-resourced families for the past decade. The programme aims to raise awareness among the children about the importance of abiding by the law and the core values of the Hong Kong legal system, strengthen their interest and confidence in using English, as well as broaden their general horizons through interactions with Law Society volunteers.

The Law Week Organising Committee held two children's programme on 9 and 16 December with the support of YSG, TWGHs and Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups, to nurture children to become law-abiding citizens and broaden their horizons through interactions with Law Society volunteers. Over 25 volunteers participated in this programme.

## **WORKING PARTY ON HISTORICAL ARCHIVE**

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The Working Party is tasked to recommend a policy for the establishment and maintenance of an archive (“Archive”) for The Law Society so that documents and materials of historical value can be systemically preserved, maintained and made accessible in the future.

The Standing Committee on Member Services reviewed the Report of the Working Party and endorsed their suggestions for Archival policy, the selection and acquisition of relevant documents and materials for the Archive, Archive storage; and the broad principles for future access to the Archive.

The Working Party will consider forming a sub-group to perform the Archive work, and whenever necessary, make further recommendations on the compliance and implementation of the archival policy.

## **WORKING PARTY ON LAW LIBRARY**

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The Working Party on Law Library was set up to reorganise the existing law library collection and facilities with an aim to better serve our members.