SAL SINGAPORE ACADEMY OF LAW



SOLIDARITY AND RESILIENCE :

# FORGING A FUTURE TOGETHER

THE SINGAPORE ACADEMY OF LAW
ANNUAL REPORT 2020/2021

## President's Review

**LOOKING BACK ON 2020/21:** AN INTERVIEW WITH CHIEF JUSTICE SUNDARESH MENON, PRESIDENT OF THE SINGAPORE ACADEMY OF LAW

- 2020/21 has been a challenging year. What are the key lessons for SAL members from the unprecedented conditions brought about by the pandemic?
- There have been significant changes to the administration of justice and the practice of law in the past year. What are the implications of these changes for the legal profession?
- What is your vision of the legal professional of the future, and how should SAL members prepare themselves for the future?
- With a change of leadership, 2020/21 was a watershed year for SAL. How will the milestones of the past year affect SAL going forward?

## Milestones

01. Leadership change

02. Updated mission statement

03. Supporting members and the public through the pandemic

04. New statutory services

05. Award for good data protection practices

MILESTONE

## Leadership change

On 8 February 2021, SAL welcomed a new Chief Executive, Mr Rama Tiwari.

> *Having spent time in practice and in-house, he brings an understanding of the legal profession and its needs that is deep as it is broad. This, together with his extensive regional and international experience in the technology sector, will put him in good stead to lead the Academy and assist the profession at this time when internationalisation and technology are going to be the key drivers of change*
>
> ***Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon***

Ms Serene Wee stepped down as SAL's Chief Executive after 27 years of distinguished service. Her dedication and service to SAL were recorded in a tribute which can be read here.

**SAL's new Chief Executive Mr Rama Tiwari presenting a token of appreciation to outgoing Chief Executive Ms Serene Wee.**

MILESTONE

## Updated mission statement

***Enabling Future-Ready, Trusted Legal Professionals***

SAL's new mission, approved by the Executive Board in late 2020, showcases the impact we can make on the profession. It was developed following extensive interviews and conversations with both internal and external stakeholders from various sectors of our membership base.

Our vision of making Singapore the legal hub of Asia remains unchanged.

MILESTONE

## Supporting members and the public through the pandemic

*As a membership organisation, it is critical that SAL stands in solidarity with our members at this challenging juncture, to provide the necessary help to tide them over this difficult period.*

**Rama Tiwari**
Chief Executive

### Member support package

*May 2020 – March 2021*

SAL rolled out an unprecedented S$4.2 million support package in three tranches.

**How it helps:**

- **Additional credits to register for SAL events and purchase Academy Publishing titles**
  Members have redeemed more than $1 million worth of credits since May 2020. Members continue to be able to use their credits for the rest of FY 2021/22.
- **Membership fee waiver**
  Membership fee waiver for more than 5,000 young members and those from small- and medium-sized firms. The total value of fees waived was $0.978 million.
- **Free business consulting programme for small law firms**
  Valued at $1,500 per firm, it provides advice on legal technology solutions for automation and helps firms improve their productivity through business process improvements. 35 applications were received. Since its launch in May 2020, five firms have completed and another 13 are in various stages of the programme.
- **Keeping members updated**
  A COVID-19 website was set up for members to obtain updates to legislation, legal news (including curated COVID-19 legal news in Asia) and relevant training.

### Other initiatives

- **Free mediation under SGUnited Mediation Initiative**
  *From 1 July 2020 to 31 August 2020*
  In partnership with the Supreme Court, and with the support of members, the Singapore Mediation Centre (SMC) administered more than 100 large commercial cases over a three-month period at no charge to the public.
- **Free public webinars**
  Attracting 702 registrants, these explained the key elements of the COVID-19 moratorium on debts by SMEs, to help lawyers and mediators better advise their clients about their contractual options during the pandemic.
- **Putting services online**
  Dispute resolution training was moved online to enable mediation training to proceed uninterrupted. Mediators and adjudicators were provided free training on how to use online platforms to conduct mediation and adjudication conferences.
- **A new e-filing system**
  A new e-filing system for adjudications under the Security of Payments Act was launched to enable law firms to continue to file their adjudications remotely.
- **Documenting impact of Covid-19 on legal profession**
  Over 10 oral history interviews were recorded with SAL members across the profession to document their experiences under the impact of Covid-19.
- **New forms of learning**
  Members could fulfil up to half of their private CPD requirements with an early trial of LIFTED - LinkedIn Learning in March 2020. Adopting a just-in-time learning approach, it offered members complimentary access to 15,000 professionally developed courses. LIFTED - LinkedIn Learning has since gone live, with a free one-year subscription for members. Activate yours here.

This poster was used to educate the public about the new legalisation process.

MILESTONE

## New statutory services

SAL undertook the following services previously provided by other entities:

**Wills Registry**

**Wills Registry** on 4 May 2020 from the Public Trustee's Office (PTO).

- **Legalisation of public documents for use overseas**
- **Issuance of apostille certificates**

MILESTONE

## Award for good data protection practices

**SAL was awarded the Data Protection Trust Mark ("DPTM") by Infocomm Media Development Authority ("IMDA") in April 2020.**

The DPTM certifies that **SAL demonstrates good data protection practices.** SAL was the first entity within the legal industry, the first entity in the professional services sector and the first industry association to achieve this certification.

AS AT 31 MARCH 2021

## SAL in Numbers

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **15,682**<br>**SAL Members** | **8,500**<br>people attended **39** learning programmes, all held virtually | **4,446**<br>members purchased an Academy Publishing title |
| **21**<br>**new Academy Publishing titles** in print and another **11** were released on LawNet | **45%**<br>increase in the number of **cases published in Singapore Law Reports** | |
| **20,347**<br>pages of Supreme Court cases | **13,964**<br>of State Courts cases were published as **unreported judgments on LawNet** | |

CONNECTING

## Our Pillars of Work

- Technology & Innovation →
- Strength Through Community →
- Legal Thought Leadership →
- Actionable Learning & Development →

## Legal Thought Leadership

**SAL and its subsidiaries enabled members to take the lead in research and innovation projects that have a significant impact on the practice of law in and outside of Singapore.**

### Legal development & content creation

We acquire and curate knowledge and disseminate it through multiple platforms. Over the years, we have earned a strong reputation for offering comprehensive, up-to-date legal content.

Highlights:

- An unprecedented 21 legal publication titles and 136 journal articles were published.
- In a first collaboration with the Malaysian judiciary, the SAcLJ Special Issue on Malaysian Law was published in which all articles were written by members of the Malaysian judiciary or Malaysian legal luminaries.
- A new Commercial Precedents collection was launched in LawNet Legal Research with 66 precedents, contributed by 25 firms. The database has been very well-received, averaging about 2,000 page views a month since its launch.

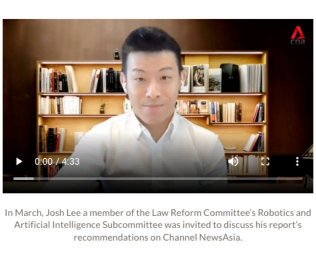
### Research on cutting-edge legal topics

International engagement is a core strategy in our law reform work. Besides sharing relevant insights and best practices, our work with 30 members in law reform has also strengthened our relationships with overseas counterparts.

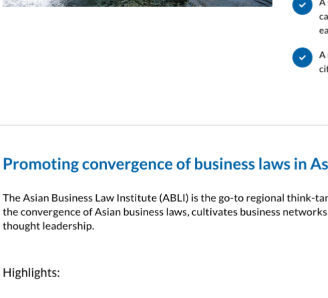
Highlights:

- 7 new reports were released, recommending legal reform that touched robotics and artificial intelligence, civil remedies, misuse of private information, trusts, insolvency, insurance and arbitration.
- A new periodic bulletin summarising key recent developments in law reform domestically and internationally was launched.

VIEW REPORTS



In March, Josh Lee a member of the Law Reform Committee's Robotics and Artificial Intelligence Subcommittee was invited to discuss his report's recommendations on Channel NewsAsia.



### Promoting usage and familiarity of Singapore law

SAL promotes Singapore as a leading legal hub and in line with this, we have been positioning Singapore Law as an alternative governing law for contracts whenever neutral law and venue are required.

Highlights:

- A series of Singapore-law focused webinars were held, covering Civil Law and Asian cross-border transactions, banking & finance, funds, insolvency, commodities and energy. It attracted 63 participants from five jurisdictions.
- A series of five modules presenting a deep-dive into a comprehensive range of topics related to early-stage venture capital fundraising and the VIMA documents for start-ups was also conducted, drawing an average of 70 participants each.
- A regional webinar on Singapore's shipping laws, targeted at the Chinese market, received 140 registrations from major cities in China, as well as Greece, Pakistan, and the United States.

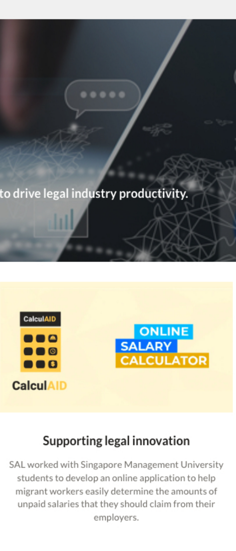
### Promoting convergence of business laws in Asia

The Asian Business Law Institute (ABLI) is the go-to regional think-tank for cross-border commercial law. It promotes the convergence of Asian business laws, cultivates business networks and drives the promotion of Singapore legal thought leadership.

Highlights:

- Five publications released
- Co-hosted/participated in 8 webinars focused on topics that were international in nature, providing the local profession with rare opportunities to hear first-hand from overseas speakers and delve deep into specific areas and practices of overseas jurisdictions.
- ABLI's work continues to gain recognition. In November 2020, ABLI's Data Privacy Project was selected from 850 submissions from 115 countries to be presented at the Paris Peace Forum. ABLI's Comparative Analytical Review on Data Transfers Regulations in Asia was awarded Privacy Papers for Policy Makers Award by the Future of Privacy Forum, the leading privacy think tank in the United States. ABLI's publication was considered a "must-read", the first time the award was presented for a paper focused on Asian laws.

VIEW PUBLICATIONS



## Technology & Innovation

**SAL continues to facilitate the development of development and adoption of technology solutions to drive legal industry productivity.**

**Redesigning LawNet**

LawNet will be relaunched in 2022 with improved legal research experience for users, including an improved search algorithm, reference trace, fully responsive interface and easier content navigation. A closed beta version of the platform was released in March 2021 to gather feedback from stakeholders.

LawNet will eventually serve as a single hub for all SAL content and services, offering, among other things, a new eReading service and Asian legal content.

LEARN MORE

**Uplifting the PIPD Bar**

Training materials, including step-by-step instructional videos, were created to enable the members of the Personal Injury Property Damage (PIPD) bar to more effectively utilise their existing Microsoft Office tools to manage asynchronous hearings. This helped our members to embrace digitalisation and a Do-It-Yourself approach while work-from-home arrangements continue.

WATCH THE VIDEOS

**Supporting legal innovation**

SAL worked with Singapore Management University students to develop an online application to help migrant workers easily determine the amounts of unpaid salaries that they should claim from their employers.

LEARN MORE

## Actionable Learning & Development

**SAL continued to make strides in building the capability of the legal profession by identifying future skills, career progression pathways and setting professional standards. With the pandemic making face-to-face activities impossible, programmes were delivered online.**

**LIFTED LinkedIn Learning**

A pilot with LinkedIn Learning in February 2020 allowed lawyers to sign up for their learning requirements on the LinkedIn platform while earning private CPD points. This was particularly timely given the COVID-19 situation as it allowed lawyers to fulfil their outstanding CPD requirements.

The take up by our legal community has been extremely encouraging and a full launch of **LIFTED LinkedIn Learning** as a new SAL offering was initiated. It comprises original content from SAL as well as content curated by its learning and development team. All learning pathways are mapped to the LIFTED competencies.

**TechLaw.Fest 2020 Cyber Edition**

TechLaw.Fest was held virtually for the first time. This free to attend event held over five days **featured 160 global speakers** in a variety of online formats. It has attracted more attendees than ever before, with almost **6,000 unique visitors** recorded.

Sign up for TechLaw.Fest 2022

**LIFTED Q&A on use of tech**

To support the profession during the pandemic, a series of five free webinars were organised relating to use of technology for remote working, crisis management, impact on legal business models, young lawyers' views on the state of the legal industry, and mental wellbeing. The sessions, which were mostly CPD-accredited, benefited over 1,500 attendees.

## Strength Through Community

**SAL will continue to invest in activities that support professional development of our members and create a sense of camaraderie in the legal community.**

- Sharing Expertise
- Virtual event on Singapore International Commercial Court
- Force Majeure
- Recognising the best
- Legal Heritage: Bringing our past into the present

## About Singapore Academy of Law

**Our Vision**

Singapore, The Legal Hub of Asia

**Our Mission**

Enabling future-ready, trusted legal professionals.

## The Senate

The 46 members of the Senate oversee the management of SAL, as well as its properties. Comprising esteemed members of the judiciary, legal service, Bar and academia, the Senate is led by Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon, who serves as its President.

The SAL Senate (As at 31 March 2021)

AS AT 31 MARCH 2021

## Executive Board

The work of SAL is largely driven by the SAL Executive Board which focuses on five key areas: Legal Education, Legal Publishing & Knowledge, Legal Development, Legal Technology and Corporate Development and Statutory Services.

**Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon**
President
President, Singapore Academy of Law
Chair, Board of Commissioners, Asian Business Law Institute

**Attorney-General Lucien Wong, SC**
Vice President, Singapore Academy of Law

**Justice Andrew Phang Boon Leong, JCA**
Vice President, Singapore Academy of Law
Chairman, Legal Publishing and Knowledge Council

**Justice Steven Chong, JA**
President, Singapore Mediation Centre
Chairman, Corporate Development and Statutory Services Council

**Mr Gregory Vijayendran SC**
Vice President, Singapore Academy of Law
Immediate Past President, Law Society of Singapore

**Professor Simon Chesterman**
Vice President, Singapore Academy of Law
Dean, Faculty of Law, National University of Singapore

**Justice Belinda Ang**
Chairman, Board of Governors, Singapore Mediation Centre

**Justice Lee Seiu Kin**
Chairman, Legal Technology Cluster
Chair, Board of Visitors, Veritas Unit

**Justice Quentin Loh**
Chairman, Legal Development Cluster

**Justice Tan Siong Thye**
Chairman, Corporate Development and Statutory Services Cluster

**Justice See Kee Oon**
Chairman, Legal Education and Knowledge Cluster
Chairman, Legal Publishing and Knowledge Committee

**Justice Audit Abdullah**
Chairman, Legal Publishing and Knowledge Cluster
Co-Chairman, Legal Technology Cluster

AS AT 31 MARCH 2021

- Board of Commissioners for Oath & Notaries Public
- Audit Committee
- Specialist Accreditation Board
- Board of Directors, Singapore Mediation Centre
- Board of Governors, Asian Business Law Institute
- Group Tech and Transformation Cluster
- Corporate Development and Statutory Services
- Legal Publishing and Knowledge
- Legal Development
- Legal Education
- Singapore Mediation Centre (Subsidiary)
- Asian Business Law Institute (Subsidiary)
- SAL Ventures Ltd (Subsidiary)

AS AT 31 MARCH 2021

## SAL Leadership Team

SAL's Chief Executive oversees its day-to-day running. Each of the Academy's three subsidiaries is managed by their respective directors.

**Mr Kenny Chuen**
Chief Executive

**Mr Paul Neo**
Chief Operating Officer

**Mr Baiy Shanmugam**
Director, Finance and Purchasing and Facilities

**Mr Ban Jun Ean**
Director, Corporate Development, Mediation Centre

**Professor Wu Tong Min SC**
Director, Academy
Academic Director, Master of Law programme

**Mr Mark Fisher**
Deputy Director, Asian Business Law Institute
Legal Counsel

**Ms Anita Parkash**
Senior Director, Legal Education

**Ms Angeline Poon**
Director, Legal & Compliance

AS AT 31 MARCH 2021

## Financial Statements

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