

Report of the Special Committee on Legal Aid Reform

1. During the year the following members served on this Committee:

Peter Duncan, SC (Chairman)
Neville Sarony, SC
Philip Dykes, SC
Ruy Barretto, SC
Joseph Tse, SC
Nicholas Pirie
Jeevan Hingorani
Tim Kwok
Valentine Yim
Ashok Sakhrani
Christina Lee
Selwyn Yu
Raymond Leung
Cindy Lee

2. This has been a relatively quiet year for the Committee: it has watched from the sidelines as endeavours have continued to have the new legal aid fees system implemented. Although there has for some time been agreement in principle between the Bar Association and the Legal Aid authorities, the absence of agreement between the latter and the Law Society has delayed matters.
3. During the year the Committee filed a written submission with regard to the need for an independent legal aid authority in the light of the administration's proposal to transfer responsibility for the legal aid portfolio from the office of the Chief Secretary for Administration to the Home Affairs Bureau.
4. Also during the year the Committee filed detailed comments with regard to the updating of the manual for Legal Aid practitioners, prepared by the Legal Aid Department.
5. I take this opportunity of thanking members of the Committee for their support. In particular I would record my appreciation to Mr. Ruy Barretto, SC whose long association with these matters was of immense benefit in filing the submissions above referred to.

Peter Duncan, SC
Chairman
Special Committee on Legal Aid Reform