

**Embargoed till 3 September 2016**

**SPEECH FOR PRESIDENT OF LAW SOCIETY  
MR THIO SHENG YI  
FOR LAUNCH OF LAW AWARENESS WEEK @CDC 2016  
ON SATURDAY, 3 SEPTEMBER 2016 AT 10AM  
AT WATERWAY POINT**

Deputy Prime Minister & Coordinating Minister for National Security, Mr

Teo Chee Hean,

Mayors,

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

**Welcome**

On behalf of the Law Society of Singapore, welcome to the launch of the Law Awareness Week 2016 @ CDCs. Thank you for taking the time to join us this morning as we kick off what will undoubtedly be an informative and enriching month ahead for the community as well as our volunteers from the legal profession.

**Law & Society**

Law affects everyone. Every day. It is fundamental to how we order our businesses, our communities and our lives. Our laws are the organising principles upon which society is structured. We therefore believe that a minimal knowledge of the law is essential to ensure protection of one's own interests and rights, appreciation of one's obligations, and good

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citizenship as a whole. Yet the law is inherently complex and often inaccessible to laypersons. It is our duty as lawyers to help bridge that gap.

### **Law Awareness Week 2016**

We are honoured and grateful to collaborate with the 5 Community Development Councils and the People's Association to organize the annual Law Awareness Week @ CDCs, or L-A-W, LAW for short. LAW 2015 was a resounding success with 1,200 participants attending the 30 talks that ran across Singapore in a week. We received encouraging feedback from residents who attended the talks. LAW 2016 has therefore put on weight. This year, we hope to build on last year's success by bringing legal awareness to a wider audience. We will discuss more topics, and enlarge LAW 2016 by running it over the course of an entire month.

We recognize that the law pervades every segment of the community and almost all aspects of life. With that in mind, a multitude of topics are covered, ranging from "traditional" popular topics such as family law and employment law, to the latest in trend topics such as new media and social enterprises. In fact, each of the CDCs worked closely with the Pro

Bono Services Office to curate talks that cater specifically to the needs of their residents.

Starting today, there will be talks on 2 diverse but oft-discussed topics - the responsible use of social media, and end of life issues.

### **Bringing Pro Bono Services to the Community**

LAW is just the base of the pyramid in our efforts to raise legal awareness and enhance access to justice. As a major stakeholder of the justice system, the Law Society advocates sustained involvement of our lawyers in the community.

The law is constantly developing, and it is important that every one of us has some awareness of the changes, as they may have a profound impact on our rights and obligations. Therefore, creating legal awareness must be a continuous and sustained effort. Besides LAW, there are numerous other law awareness initiatives. Our Pro Bono office publishes booklets that can be downloaded for free from its website.

One of our publications, Know the Law, provides basic legal information in plain language on the issues of law most likely to be faced by the layperson. More recently, LEGALESE, a legal toolkit for charities, non-profit organisations and social enterprises was launched in July this year. In addition, the Law Society also runs ongoing initiatives like Project

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Schools and Law Works, which target secondary school students and employees respectively.

All these programmes aim not only to increase knowledge of the letter of the law, but also to tell those in need of help where and how they can get help. The Pro Bono Services Office in some ways, plays the role of an honest broker between legal needs and legal assistance. We connect demand with supply.

### **Thank You**

LAW has allowed us to bring legal awareness to the community on a broad scale. It also provides meaningful and enriching opportunities for members of the legal profession to better understand the common issues facing the community and to contribute to society. This would not have been possible without strong support and network of the CDCs, the People's Association, and our supporting partners:

Community Mediation Centre (CMC);

Inland Revenue Authority of Singapore (IRAS);

Singapore Council of Women's Organisations (SCWO); and

TOUCH Cyber Wellness.

Last, but certainly not least, we extend our deepest appreciation to our volunteer lawyers, law firms and law students, who have devoted much

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time and effort to developing the content for this week's LAW, and for taking time off their hectic schedules to be a part of this event. All the stakeholders have worked together to build a public-private and people partnership that delivers real benefit to real people.

Thank you and have a great LAW 2016!