

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

I thank everyone for his or her contribution to the work of the HKMLA over the last year. I would especially like to thank Mr. Edward Alder, our Hon. Secretary, for the time and effort that he has put into HKMLA's business. The commitments of time and energy required from those serving as Hon. Secretary are great. But the HKMLA would not function in the way it does without the Hon. Secretary. It is accordingly inspiring that so many of Hong Kong's busiest shipping law practitioners are prepared to volunteer their time and effort to serve in such position.

In contrast to the Hon. Secretary, the work of the chairperson is relatively light. Nonetheless, as I noted in last year's Report, I have been aware that my other commitments have prevented me from spending as much time in Hong Kong or on HKMLA business as I would have liked or have done in the past. I consequently asked in last year's Report whether it was time to consider someone else taking over as chairperson in 2017. I think that it is appropriate to raise the matter again in this Report, particularly given the recent appointment of Mr. Justice Anthony Chan as Admiralty Judge in place of Mr. Justice Peter Ng. As noted in my 2016 Report, the practice in the past has been for the Admiralty Judge to be chairperson of the HKMLA.

My 2016 Report also proposed that the HKMLA consider having a system whereby its chairperson was appointed from among members for a fixed term. This is because, as I pointed out, the HKMLA operates on the goodwill and dedication of its members. As a courtesy, an incoming Admiralty Judge might be invited to serve as chairperson. But where the Admiralty Judge declines to do so for some reason, perhaps an HKMLA member might be appointed instead to serve for a fixed term. In that way, the position of chairperson will be constantly renewed and re-invigorated to deal with an ever-changing world.

In conclusion, I should highlight Hong Kong Maritime Week, which will take place this year from 19 to 26 November. As proclaimed by the event's website (hkmlw.hk/english/index.html), the purpose of Maritime Week is to "'Propel Hong Kong' as a renowned international maritime center". Such endeavor will, however, require the cooperation and effort of everyone involved in the shipping industry. Numerous exciting events have been scheduled with numerous interesting and provocative speakers from Hong Kong and abroad lined up to share their views on a wide range of aspects of the shipping industry. I encourage all HKMLA members to take as much part as they can in the week's activities.

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