



### **Higher Rights of Audience for Solicitors**

The Law Society welcomes the report by the Working Party appointed by the Chief Justice. It marks an important step forward on an issue for which the Law Society has campaigned for many years and is a fitting end to the Society's Centenary Year.

The Law Society is delighted at the positive indications from the Chief Justice that he supports the proposal to allow solicitors to exercise rights of audience in the higher courts. The Law Society believes that it is in the public interest that there should be greater freedom of choice of advocate for litigants and that appropriately qualified solicitors will add to that choice and provide healthy competition with the independent bar.

The details in the report as to how and when higher rights of audience will be granted broadly followed the Law Society's suggestions to the Chief Justice's working party. The Law Society's own working party is already well advanced in preparing draft legislation, rules and setting up the process of assessment and ancillary matters necessary in order to assist solicitors in gaining higher rights of audience as soon as possible.

We note that the matter has been passed to the Secretary for Justice for implementation and we urge him to proceed without delay.

**The Law Society of Hong Kong**

**29 November 2007**