



Hong Kong Gay and Lesbian Attorneys Network

Dear HKGALA Members and Supporters:

Welcome to the **Fall 2017 Edition** of our update newsletter. We are delighted to share with you highlights of recent and upcoming events and initiatives.

Recent Completed Events

- **Pink Dot HK** (October 22): HKGALA was proud to support this year's Pink Dot HK as a **Supporting Partner**. In addition, we wish to recognize the **11 HKGALA Supporting Firms** that sponsored the event – **Allen & Overy, Baker & McKenzie, Bank of America Merrill Lynch, CMS, Davis Polk, Freshfields, Herbert Smith Freehills, Harneys, Hogan Lovells, Linklaters, and Paul Weiss.**
- **Diversity in Recruitment Panel co-hosted by Pink Season & The Economist** (October 25): A panel of industry leaders and professionals, including HKGALA-Co-Chair Marc Rubinstein, led a discussion on how Hong Kong can create a more inclusive workplace.
- **QSA Inclusion Recruitment Conference** (October 12) – A record number of law firms supported this year's QSA Inclusion Recruitment Conference, an annual recruitment event focused on recruiting LGBT+/Ally students from local universities. At the conference, HKGALA Co-Chair Wally Suphap participated in a panel discussion on the topic of coming out at work.
- **Launch of Herbert Smith Freehills' IRIS Network** (October 12) - We wish to congratulate Herbert Smith Freehills on the successful launch of their internal diversity network, IRIS (Inclusion, Respecting Identity and Sexuality).
- **HKGALA/Interbank Surrogacy and Family Planning Event hosted by ANZ** (September 1) –HKGALA partnered with the LGBT+ Interbank Forum to host a panel discussion focusing on family planning and surrogacy issues for the LGBT+ community. The panel was moderated by HKGALA Co-Chair, Marc

Rubinstein, with Alfred Ip from OLN Law (a HKGALA Supporting Firm) providing his legal insights on the topic.

- **HKGALA Supporting Firm Roundtable** (July 12) - Special thanks to **Freshfields** for hosting last quarter's roundtable with our Supporting Firms that was attended by over 30 representatives.

Legal Updates

- **Notable landmark decisions involving LGBT+ rights in Hong Kong** - HKGALA welcomed the legal recognition of LGBT+ rights in two recent judicial decisions. In the case of [QT v Director of Immigration](#) (decided in September 2017), the Court of Appeals unanimously ruled in favor of the appellant QT, finding that the Director of Immigration's policy of denying dependent visas to same-sex partners in a civil union entered into outside Hong Kong was legally unjustifiable. In the case of [Leung v Commissioner of Inland Revenue](#) (decided in April 2017), the High Court decided that a civil servant in a same sex marriage performed abroad was entitled to the same benefits and allowances that the Government provides to civil servants in heterosexual marriages. While both cases are under appeal and do not provide for marriage equality itself in Hong Kong,, we welcome these decisions as a significant step in the road to LGBT+ equality.
- **Taiwan marriage equality** – In May, Taiwan's Constitutional Court ruled in favor of same-sex marriage, paving the way for Taiwan to be the first country in Asia to allow same-sex marriage within no later than two years from the decision. We applaud the Court's decision and hope that countries that have not yet adopted full marriage equality will review their laws in light of this ruling.
- **Hong Kong Public Consultation on Adoption of a Gender Recognition Law** – The Hong Kong Government earlier this year formed an Inter-departmental Working Group on gender recognition to review whether Hong Kong should adopt a comprehensive gender recognition scheme and, if so, what the parameters of such scheme should be. The IWG has launched a consultation to seek views from the public on these questions. HKGALA is currently preparing a response to the public consultation and we encourage our Supporting Firms to consider preparing their own submissions in support of this important legislation to protect the fundamental human rights of transgender persons. An on-line petition has also been launched where individuals and organizations can show their support – we encourage you to sign at the link [here](#).

Launch of HKGALA Sub-Committees

HKGALA is delighted to announce the formal launch of **Sub-Committees** to oversee projects and initiatives central to our network's mission and objectives. The initial five Sub-Committees include:

1. **Programming and Events Sub-Committee** (to engage the HKGALA

- membership and the legal community through events and initiatives) – initial sub-committee members: Marc Rubinstein, Jenny Chan
2. **Membership Sub-Committee** (to build membership and participation both at the individual level and firm level) – initial sub-committee members: Su-Ming Tan, Jenny Chan
 3. **Public Policy Sub-Committee** (to engage in public policy awareness programs) – initial sub-committee members: Marc Rubinstein, Henry Li
 4. **Pro Bono Sub-Committee** (to facilitate pro bono work) – initial sub-committee members: Wally Suphap, Mike Kung
 5. **Ally & Community Outreach Sub-Committee** (to promote outreach to allies and the greater community) – initial members: Su-Ming Tan, Adeline Chin

We are now **seeking volunteers** from our members to join one or more of these Sub-Committees. Each Sub-Committee is expected to meet periodically (around once every 1-2 months). To express your interest, please email us at info@hkgala.com with your name and desired Sub-Committee(s) by November 15, and we will be in touch with further details.

Upcoming Events

- **Pink Season** (on-going) – Join events organized by Asia’s premier LGBT festival, celebrating acceptance, inclusion and awareness. Upcoming events include the **Ultimate Networking Event this Thursday, October 26**, co-sponsored by HKGALA (**note the new location @ Picada, 29 Wyndham St.**) and a panel discussion on **Lessons Learnt from Taiwan** (on November 1). A full calendar of events is available at www.pinkseason.hk.
 - **HKGALA Supporting Firm Roundtable** (October 31) – Our next Supporting Firm Roundtable meeting will be hosted by **Hogan Lovells**. We look forward to a productive meeting with representatives from our Supporting Firms.
 - **AIDS Concern Gala Dinner** (November 17) – We encourage our members to support the work of AIDS Concern by joining the annual AIDS Concern Gala Fundraising Dinner. To secure a seat or a table, contact Andrew Chidgey at Andrew.Chidgey@aidconcern.org.hk.
 - **OUT Leadership’s Asia 2017 LGBT+ Senior Leader Summit** (November 14-15) – OUT Leadership is returning to Hong Kong to host a series of events at the upcoming LGBT+ Senior Leader Summit. HKGALA has been allotted a limited number of tickets for these events. If you are interested in attending, please contact us at info@hkgala.com.
 - **Hong Kong Pride Parade, in partnership with Baker & McKenzie** (November 25 - Save the Date!) – This year HKGALA is proud to partner with Baker & McKenzie to sponsor the annual Hong Kong Pride Parade. Please look out for further details on how you can join us at the Pride Parade march.
 - **QSA/FinS Mentorship Program** (on-going) – Now in its eighth year, the QSA / FinS Mentorship Program is seeking volunteers to serve as mentors to university students in Hong Kong. Further details on how you can sign up will be distributed via separate cover.
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- **2018 Hong Kong LGBT+ Inclusion Awards** – Building on the momentum of last year’s Awards, Community Business has announced plans for the 2018 LGBT+ Inclusion Awards. The Awards will be open for nominations from November 2017. Visit Community Business’s [website](#) for further details.

Ideas, Suggestions and Feedback

As always, we welcome your ideas, suggestions and feedback. Please take a moment to share with us an idea for a future event or any suggestions on how we can continue to enhance and grow the network. You can contact us at info@hkgala.com or reach out directly to any of our Executive Committee members.

We look forward to seeing you at our upcoming events.

Sincerely yours,

HKGALA Executive Committee

Wally, Marc, Mike, Jenny, and Su-Ming

Website: www.hkgala.com

Email: info@hkgala.com

Facebook: www.facebook.com/hkgala
