

**2025 Pro Bono and Community Service
Award Presentation Ceremony
Friday, 12 December 2023 | 4:30 pm – 6:00 pm**

Welcome Address by President Mr Roden Tong

1. Chief Justice, Secretary for Justice, distinguished guests, fellow members of the legal profession, ladies and gentlemen.
2. Good afternoon. It is my great pleasure to welcome you to The Law Society of Hong Kong's 2025 Pro Bono and Community Service Award Presentation Ceremony - an occasion that honours service, celebrates leadership, and reaffirms the values that anchor our profession.
3. As a statutory self regulatory professional body, the Law Society carries a clear responsibility: to uphold professional standards and to advance access to justice for the community we serve.
4. Pro bono is one of the most tangible ways we live that responsibility transforming expertise into impact and ensuring that the law is not just a system of rules, but a practical means of help, guidance, and protection for all.
5. In recent weeks, our community faced the fire in Tai Po. The Law Society and the wider profession mobilised swiftly launching the Emergency Free Legal Helpline the day after the incident, operating daily from 9am to 9pm.

6. The helpline covers key areas of law including personal injuries, civil litigation, insurance, building management, and wills and probate, providing immediate, reliable preliminary legal assistance.
7. We then expanded support through on site Emergency Free Legal Advice Service Counters at five locations across Tai Po, Ma On Shan, and Yuen Long, enabling face to face guidance for affected families.
8. What mattered most was not only the scale of the response, but its spirit: the discipline, empathy, and professionalism shown by hundreds of volunteer solicitors and volunteer call operators.
9. Your actions brought reassurance in uncertainty and turned legal knowledge into practical support at pace. This is pro bono at its best - service that is swift, accessible, and anchored in care.
10. Since its launch in 2010, our Pro Bono and Community Work Recognition Programme has acknowledged nearly 2,700 solicitors and 390 law firms, collectively contributing hundreds of thousands of hours to pro bono and community work.
11. This year, the figures tell a compelling story once again: 308 individual lawyers, 41 law firms, and 16 students are being recognised for over 70,000 hours of service.
12. Many of you have supported the Programme consistently since its inception; your dedication has strengthened our profession's culture of giving and our city's confidence in the rule of law.

13. To our awardees, mentors, clinic lawyers, and outreach volunteers - thank you. Whether you offered direct legal assistance, delivered community education, or guided younger colleagues into service, you have demonstrated professionalism, integrity, and public trust.
14. Pro bono work generates more than case outcomes; it generates insights - patterns and practical lessons about how people encounter the law in their daily lives.
15. Drawing on what we have heard through the helpline and our service counters, the Law Society will continue to collaborate with all newly elected LegCo members including the representative for the Legal Functional Constituency and with relevant government authorities.
16. Our aim is to ensure those insights help shape follow up actions, improve claims and housing processes, and enhance support for families navigating complex legal issues.
17. In this way, your service at the frontline informs better systems, and your time today becomes lasting impact tomorrow.
18. I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the Judging Panels of the Distinguished Pro Bono Awards and the Distinguished Community Service Awards, and to the Pro Bono Committee and the Pro Bono and Community Work Recognition Committee.
19. Your careful stewardship has sustained the Programme's credibility and reach, and helped make pro bono a defining characteristic of our profession in Hong Kong.

20. Looking ahead, our commitment is clear: we will continue to reinforce the culture of service, expand legal education and outreach, and support members in delivering pro bono work with rigour and care.
21. By maintaining high professional standards and sharing our expertise where it is most needed, we strengthen public confidence in the law and build a resilient, inclusive legal community.
22. My warmest congratulations to all awardees.
23. Thank you.