

AGC Law Reform Essay Competition 2014

1 At this year's AGC Law Reform Essay Competition, suggestions from the 28 essays submitted on the topic of reforming the law in Singapore to reduce domestic violence include expanding the Personal Protection Order (PPO) regime under the Women's Charter so that co-habitees may also apply for a PPO, allowing a person to apply for a PPO on behalf of a relative and empowering the court to appoint a "best interest representative" for children and young persons to represent the child's best interest during court proceedings.

2 When Solicitor-General Lionel Yee presented the awards to the prize-winners at the prize presentation ceremony held in the Ngee Ann Kongsi Auditorium of the Singapore Management University on 7 October 2014, he said in his speech at the ceremony that this year's topic about domestic violence is "a painful and sensitive one" which is "close to the hearts of many people and an area worthy of exploration".

3 Praising the quality of the essays received this year, SG Yee said: "Even though their authors were young, they were acutely aware of the delicate balance that the policy maker has to thread between the public and private faces of domestic violence — private because it is domestic, yet public because of the element of violence."

4 Sharing the reason for AGC's support to the competition, SG Yee said AGC welcomes the drive towards greater awareness of law reform work as it is difficult but of great public importance. "We, who are implementers and advisors on the law, acutely feel the effects of law reforms in our daily lives," he added.

5 This means that recommending policy reform is a huge task. The policy makers have to look at what other countries have done and assess if the policies have worked. They must also distinguish Singapore's experience and plug the gaps to suit Singapore's needs. Sometimes, no other country may have done what the policy makers are trying to do, said SG Yee.

6 SG Yee said: "Whatever it is, you need imagination, creativity, a lot of logic, practical knowledge of the issue at hand, statistics, and a lot of input from the people your policy will affect."

7 The top three winners received a 4-week internship opportunity with the Legislation and Law Reform Division of AGC and cash prizes ranging from \$500 to \$1500. The top three winners of this year's competition are:

First prize winner	Dierdre Grace Morgan	Singapore Management University
Second prize winner	(1) Dominic Low Ting Hui (2) Leong Kit Yu	National University of Singapore
Third prize winner	(1) Kenneth Lim Chi Shen (2) Yeo Gek Min	Singapore Management University