

**Extract of Director of Administration's letter
dated 16 July 2003 to the Clerk to Panel
concerning the submission from the Bar Association**

Item III – Review of provision of legal aid services

You invite the Administration to prepare a paper to respond to the written submission from the Bar Association (“the submission”) on the provision of legal aid services. The submission was tabled at the last Panel meeting held on 23 June 2003.

We note that a large part of the submission centers round the Bar Association’s comments on the system of the legal aid fees. In this regard, Members may recall the discussion at the Finance Committee (“FC”) meeting on 13 June 2003 on the Administration’s proposal to adjust the criminal legal aid fees, prosecution fees and duty lawyer fees. The Administration, together with FC Members, were advised vide a submission from the Law Society that, the Bar Association and the Law Society have formed a joint working party to review Hong Kong’s criminal legal aid fees system, and that the working party would be in a position to finalise its joint report shortly. As the Director of Administration has made clear during the FC discussion, which we have subsequently confirmed in writing with the two legal professional bodies, the Administration would stand ready to consider the views and detailed representation from the joint working party upon receipt of the review report. We look forward to receiving the report and shall provide the Administration’s responses to issues raised therein in due course.

As regards the Bar Association’s submission on the scope of the Supplementary Legal Aid Scheme, you may wish to refer Members to paragraphs 63 to 67 of the Administration’s paper on the Five-yearly Review of the Criteria for Assessing Financial Eligibility of Legal Aid Applicants, which was already circulated to Members prior to the June 2003 meeting.