

**Consumer Council's
Submission to Legislative Council Bills Committee
on Legal Practitioners (Amendment) Bill 2009**

In its letter dated 18 August 2006 to the Secretary to the Chief Justice's Working Party on Solicitors' Rights of Audience, the Consumer Council has expressed its support and expectation for the direction of extending the rights of audience in the higher courts to suitably qualified solicitors.

2. The Council is pleased to note that the Bill has responded positively to its demand made in the said letter for an independent and credible accrediting authority, by providing for the establishment of a Higher Rights Assessment Board, and the pertinent rules and procedures to it. Hopefully, the assessment mechanism will assure the quality of advocacy service rendered to litigants.

3. The Council welcomes the provisions of section 39Q that provide for a list of persons with higher rights of audience to be kept in the Council of Law Society, which is available for public inspection during office hours without payment. The Council further suggests the list to include further information, such as specialized areas and year of admission of the solicitors that may assist consumers in making an informed choice of advocates.

31 August 2009