



17 April 2015

The Hon Tony TSE Wai-chuen, BBS
Chairman, Bills Committee on the Property Management Services Bill
The Legislative Council
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central, Hong Kong

Dear

Tony,

**Concerns about the proposals on the Property Management Services Bill
by the Home Affairs Department**

I write to express our department's great concern over the proposed licensing requirements for Property Management Practitioners (PMPs) as outlined in the paper recently submitted by the Home Affairs Department to the Bills Committee [LC Paper No. CB (2) 556/14-15(02) dated January 2015]. We appreciate the effort of the HKSAR Government to introduce a licensing system on property managers to ensure high quality property management services. However, we are very disappointed by this recent proposal allowing 'other degree holders' to become Tier 1 Property Management Practitioners if they have 5 years of local working experience in property management.

A vast majority of the residential properties in Hong Kong have been developed as large scale high-rise buildings and housing estates with multiple units and various common facilities and services. The complexity of our residential properties and related provisions and the large number of residents involved necessitate their management to be undertaken by professionals who have been trained rigorously and specifically by university degree programs in ways similar to those for other urban professionals. A professional housing manager is expected, in the main, to ensure a safe and amenable living environment, to manage property maintenance, to enforce relevant legislations, to handle the residents and owners' incorporations, to manage the financial matters, to balance the vested interests of different stakeholders, to enhance the asset value of the properties, and to facilitate community development. We could not conceive that a university degree holder who has no knowledge and training in all the above aspects will be able to pick up the knowledge and the professional skills in five years' time, and be able to handle these property management tasks competently.

Since 1992, The University of Hong Kong has put in a great deal of effort cooperating with the relevant professional institutes to provide self-financed rigorous undergraduate and postgraduate education in housing management to nurture future property managers in order to enhance the quality and the safety of the living environment of Hong Kong and to protect the biggest assets of the common people. We believe that this is an important factor for enabling Hong Kong to become the exemplar of a highly densed and yet well managed Asian city.

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We could not understand the rationale of government's proposal to allow degree holders not trained in property management to be eligible for Tier 1 Property Management Practitioners whilst other neighbouring countries, such as Malaysia, Taiwan and South Korea, look up to Hong Kong for advancing the professionalism of their property managers. We feel that the proposal is a big step backward, counteracting the initiative and the good work of the universities and the professional institutes to strengthen property manager services in the past years. We foresee that the proposal, if passed by LegCo, will eventually lower Hong Kong's standards of property management services, and put the interest of the public and the reputation of Hong Kong at risk.

For the above reasons, we strongly suggest that the requirements and criteria of the licensing system of the Property Management Practitioners be made comparable to other urban professionals, mandating university degree education in housing management as an essential criterion. We nonetheless acknowledge that to address the concerns of the existing non-degree practitioners in the property management industry, grace period and 'grandfathering' arrangements will need to be made. We urge Members of the Bills Committee to consider our opinions and convey our message to the legislature during the debate of the Bill.

Thank you for your attention. Should you require more information or to discuss the matter further, please feel free to contact me at 2859 2721.

Yours sincerely,



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c.c. Director of Home Affairs, HKSAR Government – Mrs. Pamela M.W. Tan, JP
Member, Bills Committee on the Property Management Services Bill