

Law Reform in Practice – The Singapore Academy of Law Experience

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Chief Executive, Singapore Academy of Law

- Singapore Academy of Law (**SAL**) is a self-funded statutory body created by the Singapore Academy of Law Act 1988.
- Its law reform mandate comes from Section 4(1)(c) of the Act.

Singapore Academy of Law Act 1988

Functions and powers of Academy

4. – (1) The functions of the Academy are as follows:

...

(c) To promote legal research and scholarship and **the reform and development of the law;**

...

Speech at the Opening of the Singapore Academy of Law in August 1990

... Its many Sub-Committees are actively engaged in various fields such as continuing legal education, **law reform** and the dissemination of information about developments in the law. A great number of persons have committed themselves towards working on these aspects ...

- SAL undertakes law reform work under the auspice of the Law Reform Committee (**LRC**), one of SAL's inaugural committees.
- LRC has always been chaired by a serving judge of the Supreme Court of Singapore.



THEAN Lip Ping
1989 to February 2002



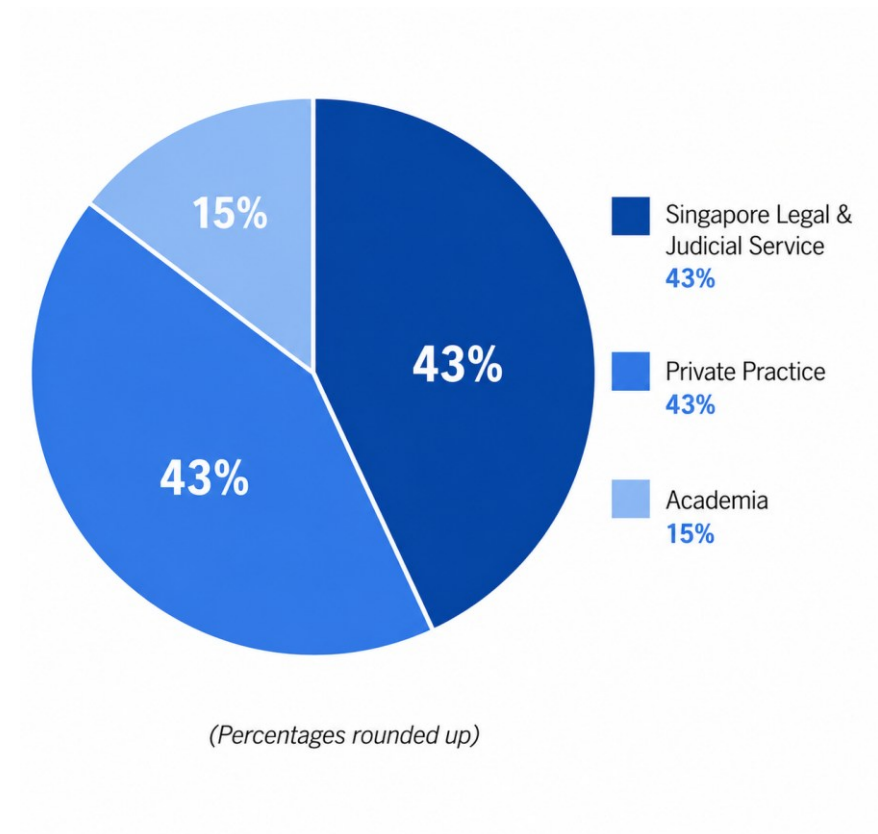
Judith PRAKASH
February 2002 to March 2024



Justice Audrey LIM
March 2024 to present

- Members of the LRC are appointed by SAL's Executive Board.

- LRC currently has 14 members, including Chair, comprising
 - ☐ private practitioners
 - ☐ legal professionals in the Singapore legal and judicial service (e.g., Attorney-General's Chambers, Ministry of Law, the Judiciary, etc.)
 - and
 - ☐ academics



Current LRC composition

- LRC's main activity is the publication of reports that recommend reform and development of Singapore law, both statutes and common law.
- Publications are mainly in the form of law reform papers (+80%), but may also be discussion papers, consultation papers, responses and guides.

70+

Total number of reports
published to date

~40%

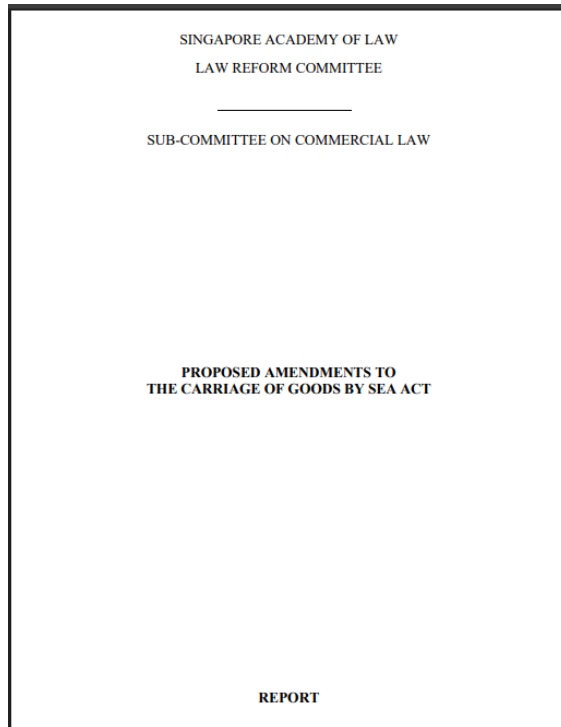
Percentages of reports
whose recommendations
are adopted by Parliament

3

Shortest period for
Parliament to adopt
recommendations was **3
months** from publication

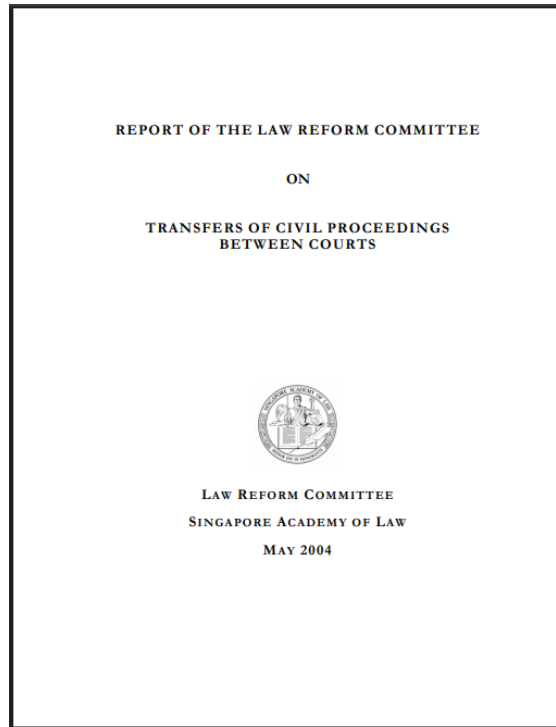
Over more than three decades, LRC has consistently been a trusted contributor to the development of Singapore law, with many of its recommendations informing and shaping legislation and legal practice.

Carriage of Goods By Sea (Amendment) Act 1995



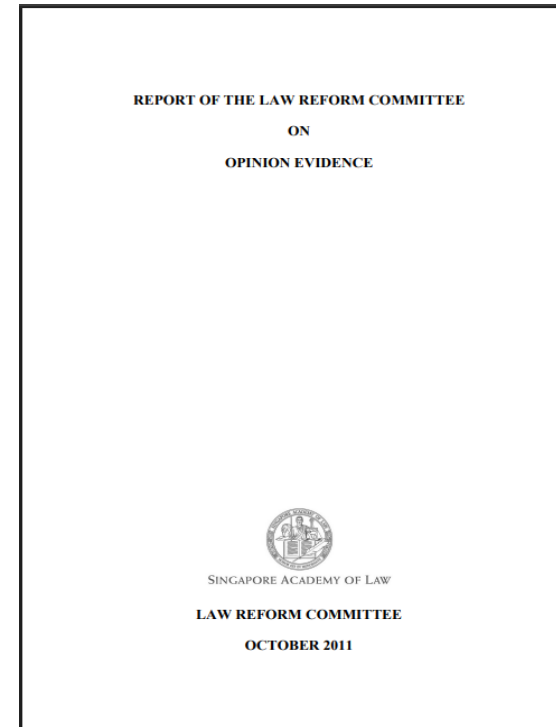
Substantive law

Subordinate Courts (Amendment) Act 2005



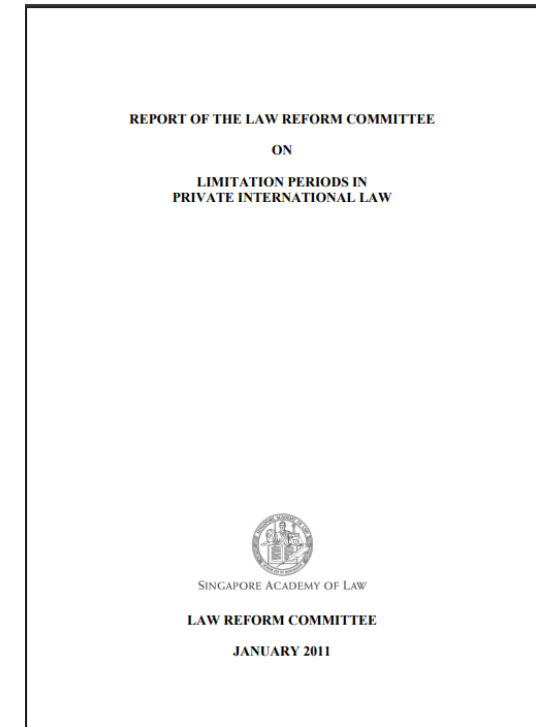
Procedural law

Evidence (Amendment) Act 2012



Evidence law

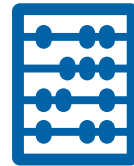
Foreign Limitation Periods Act 2012



Private international law

Then

- Legal changes were mostly incremental.
- Law reform typically culminated in comprehensive reports.
- Recommendations informed subsequent legislative reform.



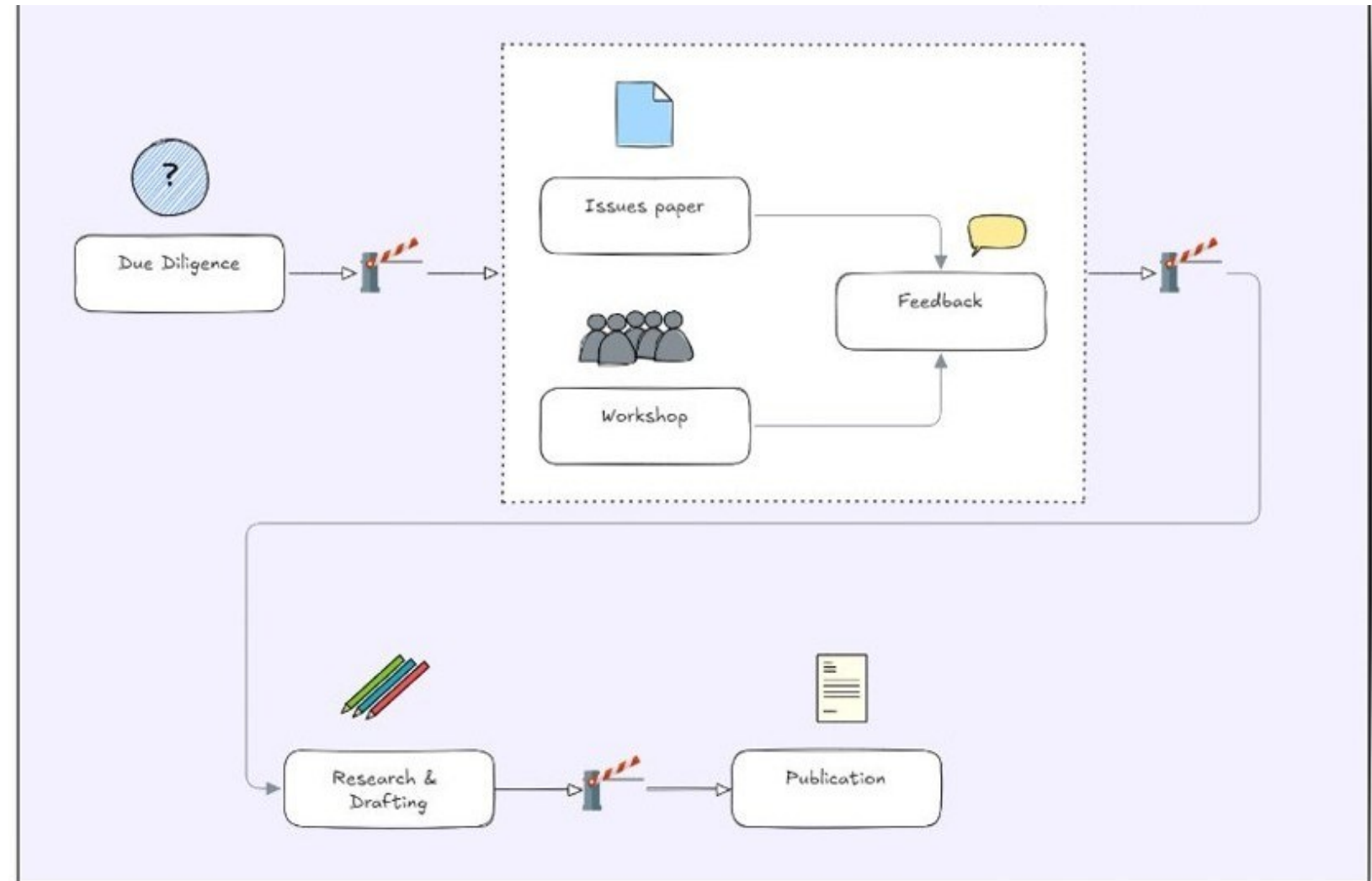
Now

- Legal changes are much faster, more interconnected and yet more specialised at the same time.
- Policy development is increasingly iterative.
- Law reform adds greatest value if it moves upstream.

LRC accordingly has refined its way of working to

- play the “**right**” role
- land on the “**right**” topic
- work with the “**right**” stakeholders
- keep output on the “**right**” track with governance controls

to make even more impactful contribution to Singapore law development.



Current LRC law reform journey

- Law reform ideas come from LRC members as well as ecosystem stakeholders such as government agencies, the legal profession, academia, etc.
- In particular, LRC partners government agencies in two main ways.

“seed” model

“tree” model



Credit: <https://www.dreamstime.com/illustration/seed-to-tree.html>

- Under the “seed” model, LRC supports early law reform idea development by conducting research, convening discussions, and publishing reports that help shape future public consultations.

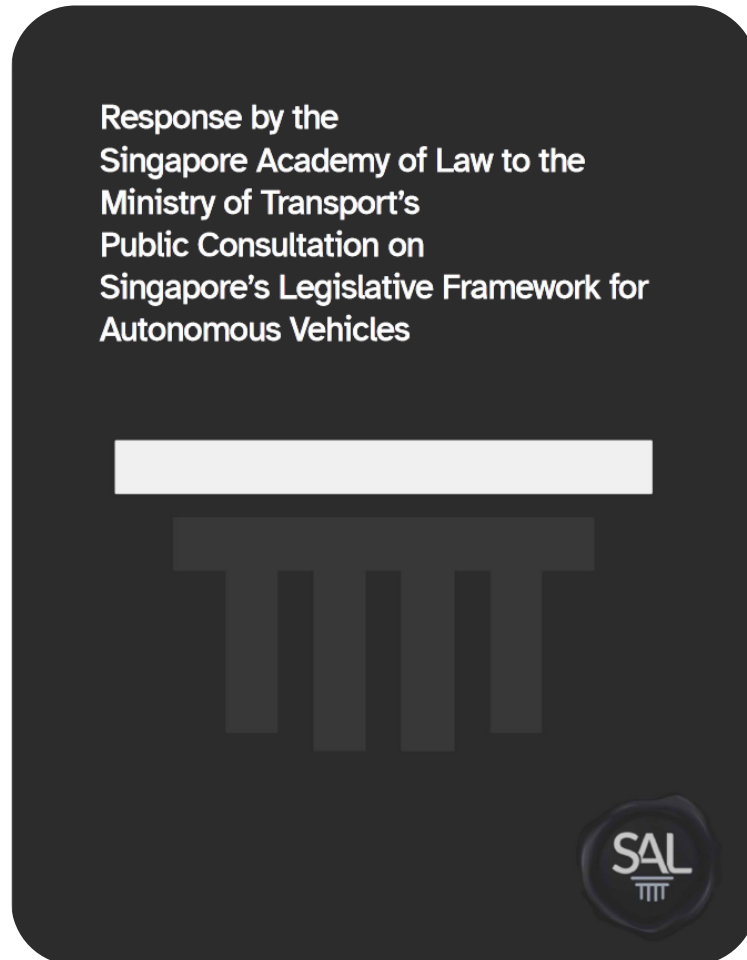
Reform of the Computational Data Analysis Exception

Reform of Copyright Subsistence in Light of Generative AI

Reform of Copyright Infringement in Light of Generative AI

- The LRC published a trilogy exploring the copyright-Gen AI interface, drawing from discussions at roundtables it convened in 2025.
- Public consultation on Singapore’s Copyright Act is expected in the second half of 2026.

- Under the “tree” model, LRC brings together subject matter experts to develop and submit formal responses to public consultations launched by government agencies.



- The LRC submitted a formal response to public consultation on Singapore's legislative framework for autonomous vehicles at the end of June 2026.
- The response is based on closed-door discussions among lawyers specializing in personal injury, insurance, data protection and cybersecurity.
- A piece of autonomous vehicles legislation is currently scheduled to be tabled before Parliament in 2027.

Thank you!