

RESPONSE FROM SCCA PRESIDENT ANGELINE LEE TO TODAY ON 14 MAY 2009

The SCCA has received e-mails dated 8 May 2009 and 14 May 2009 from Mr Tongel Yeo.

The e-mails have sought clarification about the involvement of corporate counsel in pro-bono legal advisory work and whether such conduct contravenes the Legal Profession Act.

The SCCA is currently looking into this matter. We appreciate that this matter is of public interest and we would like the opportunity to comprehensively consider this issue.

Questions from TODAY Newspaper, 14 May 2009

We would like to seek SCCA's help for a story we are working on. We understand that an official complaint was sent to SCCA against Mr Siew Kum Hong on the basis that as a corporate counsel and not a practising lawyer, he should not have acted as a legal adviser for the Association of Women for Action and Research (AWARE).

Would greatly appreciate if AGC can respond to the following questions:

1. Can SCCA confirm whether it received a complaint against Mr Siew? If yes, what is the nature of the complaint?
2. How would SCCA be handling the complaint?

Email from Tongel Yeo to the President, SCCA dated 8 May 2009

To :

1. The Attorney-General
2. President of the Academy of Law
3. President of the Law Society
4. President of the SCCA

Dear Sirs/Madam,

I attach herewith a letter which I had submitted to the Straits Times forum on 5th May in the hope that it would be published. I have been informed that it will not which, although disappointing, is not altogether surprising. I believe that the letter raises an important point for all in-house Counsels, ie the extent that they may represent themselves to be "legal advisors" to parties other than their employers. Can I, for example, go on record as being the legal advisor of the Management Corporation of my condominium on which I sit ? I am assuming, of course, that legal advice, when dispensed in such capacities, is pro-bono but I believe that the Legal Profession Act goes further to prohibit such "holding out". I could, of course, be wrong.

This was one of the many issues which were informally discussed by "legal eagles" arising from the AWARE debacle but no one seemed to have a definitive answer.

I shall be grateful if you could address this as a matter of interest, at least, to a large sector of stakeholders in the "legal industry" and let me have a response in due course.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,
Tongel Yeo [attachment "Letter to STforum (5.5.09).pdf]