

IPBA Scholar Report of Isabel Tam

This is a report of my attendance at the IPBA 2017 Auckland Conference from 6 to 9 April 2017 as part of the IPBA Scholarship programme.

On 6 April, I met with the other IPBA scholars. Thanks to the programme arranged by the Auckland Host Committee and the IPBA Scholarship Committee, we visited the Auckland High Court (learning much about the Australian legal system in the process) and a law firm in Auckland. We also attended the reception for IPBA Scholars and new IPBA members. During the day, the IPBA scholars got to know each other and to understand each other's areas of practice in our respective jurisdictions. Afterwards, we ventured into the Welcome Reception and found that IPBA members were exactly as welcoming and friendly as various people had assured us they would be.

From 7 to 9 April, I attended various conference sessions. The conference sessions allowed me to see practitioners from a variety of jurisdictions discussing topical issues, demonstrating how a legal issue might be approached differently in different legal systems and the potential to learn from experiences beyond our borders.

I particularly enjoyed the sessions on arbitration. I attended two sessions of the Dispute Resolution and Arbitration Committee: the "Impact of ethical standards on international arbitration" and "Efficient arbitration –Techniques to minimize delay and expense in international cross-border disputes". The session on ethical standards was conducted in a novel and effective format –it was set up as a mock arbitration hearing. The panel speakers were arranged as if actually carrying out an arbitration case, in which the circumstances of the arbitration brought to head controversial ethical issues of arbitration procedure and practice. The panel speakers, acting as as arbitration counsel, made arguments for or against various stances on those issues. This format perfectly demonstrated through example how the issues could come into play in practice and also facilitated lively discussion of the issues.

I also made sure to attend sessions run by the Competition Law Committee. I attended the "Asian competition law policy and practice roundtable" and the "Competition law issues in M&A transactions". I was keen to attend the competition law sessions since

Hong Kong, with its newly implemented competition law regime, anticipates much use of overseas jurisprudence and experience in bringing the competition legislation into implementation. The roundtable sessions on Asian competition law were particularly eye-opening, as there was much discussion on the intersection between Asian business culture and its effect on competition law implementation which I found very relevant to on-going discussions in Hong Kong. The roundtable format encouraged audience participation, and it was also clear that the speakers were interested in engaging with each other and the audience, as speakers from each jurisdiction would frequently reference or incorporate comments made earlier during the roundtable. The session on M&A transactions was also interesting as it gave me a trailer of what to expect if Hong Kong decides to broaden its anti-trust regulation of mergers in the future, a matter alluded to by the Hong Kong government and discussed during the drafting of our competition legislation.

I also attended some sessions on topics outside the mainstay of my litigation practice, including the “Corporate criminal liability and investigations” session, the “FITs and starts: Recent trends in renewable energy generation in the Asia Pacific” and “Trade and the environmental goods agreement”. Whilst these practice areas do not currently constitute my main practice areas, I still found it useful and stimulating to hear the developments discussed and how the industry has responded to those developments. The interesting legal issues raised also piqued my interest in possibly developing my practice into those areas as well. Additionally, those sessions increased my conviction that whilst domestic regimes vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, many of the fundamental underlying issues are common between countries, whether it be resolving jurisprudential tensions such as that between corporate personality and corruption or criminal enforcement, or meeting modern global challenges to which the law must respond, such as climate change.

I also attended the IPBA AGM and gained an understanding of how the IPBA works. I was encouraged by its efforts to engage the younger generation of lawyers through establishing a new committee and impressed by the action taken to reach out to the wider public through technology and social media.

Finally, I must mention that as much as attending committee sessions broadened my horizons, I equally learnt as much from conversing with other IPBA members during

tea breaks, over lunch, at the Gala Dinner and at the Farewell Party. Lawyers both senior and junior freely discussed with me the types of work they were doing, trends they anticipated in the future and advice on building my legal career.

I wish to thank the IPBA for its scholarship programme and for giving me this excellent opportunity to attend its conference in New Zealand. My experience at the IPBA conference was extremely enriching and I look forward to contributing to the association's events in the future.