

ADVOCATES ASSOCIATION OF SARAWAK

MIRI BRANCH

[Chairman's Report at the ADC held on 10th December 2022]

1. INTRODUCTION

The last Annual General Meeting was held on 12th December 2020, wherefrom the current committee was elected to serve the AAS from 2020-2022. The current committee are as follows:-

- I. Chairman – Gurvir Singh Sandhu
- II. Vice-Chairman – Lee Jin Wen
- III. Secretary – Suzie Telen Gau
- IV. Treasurer – Sim Boon Hui

Committee members:-

- V. Simon Choo
- VI. Lydia Bedindang
- VII. Amanda Yong
- VIII. Lawrence Low
- IX. Zainuranisa Bani
- X. Ong Jing Yee

2. STATUTORY BODY

Throughout the 2020-2022 period, the President had made numerous attempts to find a common ground between the branches to achieve a consensus over the Statutory Body issue. Such attempts include numerous gatherings in Kuching with the current committee members and past presidents of the Association. Unfortunately, there was no common ground achieved and this issue did not make any meaningful progress in the 2020-2022 period. This issue was also raised to the previous Minister in the Prime Minister's Department, Datuk Seri Dr. Hj. Wan Junaidi Tuanku Jaafar MP (Parliament and Law) by a Senator from Sarawak, upon which, the department had a formal meeting with the Association. The Minister was briefed on the impasse and all branches were accorded an opportunity to share their branch position on the matter. Ultimately, the Minister expressed his view that the Association should come to a middle ground, and submit one version of a Statutory Body for their action.

We were recently cautioned that this concern will be taken up again with the next Minister, and the outcome may not be favourable to the Association.

3. PRACTICE IN LABUAN

On 15th May 2022, a Tripartite Meeting was called in Kuala Lumpur. This issue was not raised in the meeting as there were other urgent matters to attend to, namely the investigation being conducted/publicized against YA Dato' Mohd Nazlan bin Mohd Ghazali, and the request to change the name of the "Malaysian Bar".

(Note the position of the Sabah Law Society conveyed to the Association at the Tripartite Bar Meeting in July 2019 – wherein the SLS had stated that they will not support the Association in this endeavor)

4. LEGALISING CONTINGENCY FEES RULES

Central had forwarded a draft to the members for their view and feedbacks. At present, the general consensus was for the rules to be taken up when the Association becomes a Statutory Body.

5. CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION

The Association was unable to organize any seminars during the 2020-2022 years. Nonetheless, there were plenty of online seminars organized by CLJ/Lexis-Nexis and AAS Central Committee.

For 2023, the committee has organized the National Symposium on Islamic Banking & Finance scheduled for the 14th-15th January 2023 (in conjunction with the OLY 23 program). The speakers are Tan Sri Dr. Mohd Daud Bakar and Yang Arif Dr. Mohd Johan Lee, and YAA Tun CJ has kindly agreed to deliver a keynote address during the symposium.

6. YBGK

The requirement for newly called advocates to sign a pledge to do 20 YBGK cases before their next practicing certificate is to be renewed has been in place for a number of years now. If members are not able to fulfill the 20 pledges, they are required write to the Bar Room/Central for an extension of time to comply with the same. Members must attend YBGK Courses before they can do YBGK cases.

In the past, Miri has had the distinct honor of being the branch with the most amount of YBGK cases taken up by advocates in Sarawak – unfortunately, the participation of our members in YBGK cases have fallen drastically. It is our sincere hope that our members would be more willing to take up such cases.

The YBGK board is considering to revise the fees upwards, and we shall leave it the Central Committee to update the members in due course.

7. ERRANT LAWYERS

In the past years, we were informed of a number of advocates currently practicing in court without a valid PC. Please note that the court has been informed of this situation and have been actively inquiring on status of valid PC from time to time. The responsibility of obtaining and practicing with a Practicing Certificate is the responsibility of each advocate. The Central Committee has been actively issuing reminders to the members. As such, the Association will not hesitate to report

advocates to the Inquiry Committee if there are any advocates appearing in court without a valid PC.

8. AMENDMENTS TO THE INQUIRY COMMITTEE RULES

The current Inquiry Committee has proposed certain amendments to the IC Rules. Such amendments were deemed substantial in nature, and it was resolved that a meeting be held with the Inquiry Committee to understand the proposed amendments before the same was considered by the Central Committee. At present, the Central Committee has yet to convene a meeting with the IC to receive feedback on the justification for such amendments.

9. 2020-2022 PROGRAMS

I. COURTESY CALL AND MEETING WITH THE NEW CHIEF JUDGE OF SABAH AND SARAWAK, YAA DATO' ABANG ISKANDAR BIN ABANG HASHIM

The Miri Branch had the opportunity of meeting CJSS on the 4th March 2020 at the Miri Court during CJSS's visit here. A number of issues were discussed with CJSS and on the upcoming events of the AAS.

II. DINNER WITH CJSS

On the 29th July 2020, the branch had the opportunity to host CJSS, Puan Amelati, YA Dean Wayne Daly and all Judicial Officers in Miri to dinner at Piasau Boat Club. The dinner was also attended by the President, Secretary and Treasurer of the Central Committee together with 30 other advocates from the branch.

III. DINNER FOR ANNUAL DELEGATES CONFERENCE IN MIRI – PULLMAN HOTEL

The ADC was held on 26th December 2020, and most of the delegates from other branches arrived in Miri on the 25th December 2020. As it was customary, the AAS Miri branch had organized a Christmas dinner for all the delegates in Pullman Miri.

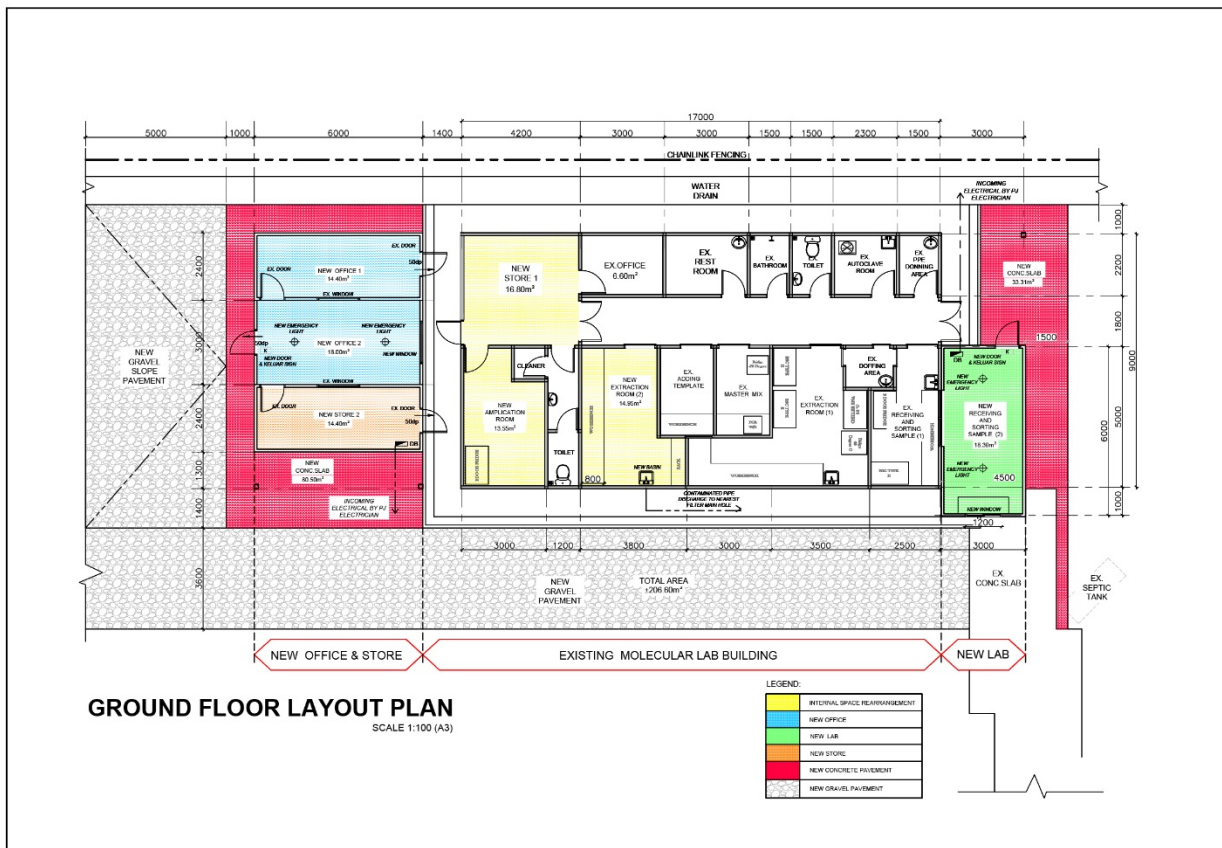
IV. EXTENSION OF THE PRESENT MOLECULAR LAB AT MIRI HOSPITAL

The Association was made to understand that the Molecular Lab in Miri Hospital was unable to fulfil the large numbers of PCR testing in Miri. Due to this, there was serious issues over the congestion and delays in the processing of PCR Swab tests. This in turn caused delays in KKM dissemination of information out to the persons concerned – and ultimately, this congestions unnecessarily causes extended quarantine periods for Persons under Surveillance.

The AAS together with Sarawak Housing and Real Estate Developers (Miri Branch), Rotary Club of Miri Oil Town (RCMOT), Federation of Miri Division Chinese Association Sarawak (Youth Section) decided to act on this issue to come up with solutions to alleviate the problems faced by the Molecular Lab in Miri Hospital.

This project commenced on 4th June 2021 and completed on 14th June 2021. Upon the completion of the project including the supply of medical laboratory equipment, the capacity of the Swab testing in Miri Hospital have increased from 800 tests per day to 1400 tests per day and will also expedite the delivery of positive and negative results to the relevant PUI/PUS. At present, we are informed that the turnaround time for PCR swab tests have been reduced from 72 hours to 24 hours and there are no longer any backlogs on tests results.

The layout for this project is as follows;-



The total breakdown of the costing of the project is as follows:-

No.	Particulars	Costs
1.	Building Works	RM200,000.00
2.	M&E Works	RM60,000.00
3.	Non-Medical Items for Laboratory	RM85,000.00
4.	Medical Equipment	RM405,000.00
	Total	RM750,000.00

The project was fully funded by the public and to this end, AAS Miri Branch wishes to record our sincere appreciation to all the members of the public and the other associations, and especially to our very own members for their kind support and contributions toward this project.

V. **DRIVE-THRU PHARMACY IN MIRI HOSPITAL & TUDAN POLYCLINIC**

This was a joint community project between the AAS Miri and Rotary Club of Miri Oil Town (RCMOT). We were made aware of parking and congestion issues caused by patients having to attend to the Hospital/Polyclinic just to obtain medication on a weekly basis – and this was more apparent during the Covid-19 pandemic where there was real risk that these patients may be infected by the virus whilst trying to obtain medication.

The solution to this problem was to set up a drive thru pharmacy at these 2 medical facilities. The cost for setting up one facility is approximately RM91,995.00 and we managed to complete both facilities with the support of other organizations (business and associations).



At present the facilities are used on a daily basis by at least **350 patients per day**.

VI. **DRIVE-THRU PCR SWAB TESTING AND VACCINATION FACILITY – INDOOR STADIUM**

At the material time, the indoor stadium is the sole PCR Swab Test collection facility in Miri. This facility also caters for all PUI's coming in from the interior. In order to ease congestion at the Indoor stadium, we came up with a proposal to set up a drive-through testing facility that can only be converted into a vaccine delivery facility.

This project has been successfully implemented and the facility has been handed over to the KKM. The total costs of the project amounts to **RM45,000.00** and the entire costs were covered through donations. This project was jointly organized with the Sarawak Housing and Real Estate Developers (Miri Branch), Rotary Club of Miri Oil Town (RCMOT), Federation of Miri Division Chinese Association Sarawak (Youth Section).

VII. **MITIGATION OF THE CONDITIONS IN THE VACCINE DELIVERY FACILITY – RIAM SCHOOL MIRI**

We were requested to assist the Miri Hospital in improving the Datuk Lee Tek Fook Hall which was then used as a vaccine delivery facility. The issues were humidity, lack of proper ventilation and heat.

The AAS Miri Branch, together with Sarawak Housing and Real Estate Developers (Miri Branch), Rotary Club of Miri Oil Town (RCMOT), Federation of Miri Division Chinese Association Sarawak (Youth Section), found solutions to these problems which include to set up a water sprinklerage system on the roof of the school hall, providing sufficient fans and coolers, and providing cold drinks and supply of food items to the frontliners working there.

The total costs incurred in this project is **RM47,754.00**. We are pleased to update the members that the entire costs were obtained from generous sponsors and contributions made from other associations.

VIII. **FOOD BASKET & CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE PUBLIC AFFECTED BY COVID-19**

Throughout the pandemic, the AAS Miri Branch, together with Sarawak Housing and Real Estate Developers (Miri Branch), Rotary Club of Miri Oil Town (RCMOT), Federation of Miri Division Chinese Association Sarawak (Youth Section), have been actively moving on the ground to provide necessary items to the members of the public which includes the frontliners whom are in need of assistance due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. The activities are as follows:-

- i. Weekly relief of fresh fruits and buns to the Covid-19 patients in Miri Hospital Quarantine Centre. The items were distributed between the Petronas Games Village, Hospital and Pujut Quarantine Centre. The weekly costs of **RM800.00** for this project was sponsored.
- ii. Relief to Miri prison to provide hygiene and sanitary items to the 454 prisoners and 135 guards. The items donated were fresh fruit (1000 apples and oranges), biscuits, toothpaste and tooth brush, Antibacterial soap (1000 pcs), hand sanitizer, face mask (3000) and vitamin C (3000 supplements). The cost of this project was **RM2995.00**, and was sponsored.
- iii. Delivery of Food Basket to Rh Angan Nuuh in Batu Niah – This project was as result of a call for assistance received from KKM, as this longhouse had 330 occupants and was placed under EMCO. We delivered 80 baskets of food items which include cooking oil, mineral water, rice, 3-in-1 hot drinks, eggs, instant noodles, and canned food. The total cost of **RM7015.00** was sponsored.
- iv. Contribution of packed cooked food to YB Datuk Sebastian Ting's food bank. We had contributed 50 packs of cooked food twice a week to the food bank,

costing **RM500 per week**, from 3rd July to 22nd July. This project was contributed by FeedMe.

- v. Purchase of personal protective equipment (PPE) for Miri Hospital. This was an answer to a call made by the director of the Miri Hospital for the urgent purchase of PPE for the use of doctors and nurses in the Covid-19 ward. The cost of **RM3,300.00** was incurred for this project.

The complete independent audit for the project was conducted and tendered in the 2022 AGM.

IX. **VACCINATION OF AAS MIRI MEMBERS**

AAS Miri Branch members had been working hard behind the scenes to try to secure the immediate vaccination of our members. We had a number of previous engagements with the KKM and Miri Hospital in the projects mentioned above. This resulted in the AAS Miri Branch being given the opportunity to receive early vaccination, wherein the first batch of advocates received their first dose on 15th June 2021. All advocates (including pupil in chambers) under the vaccination list received their first dose by 27th June 2021. Thereafter, the vaccination exercise of staff members commenced on 2nd July 2021.

X. **DINNER WITH CJSS**

On 9th December 2021, the Association, through its committee, hosted CJSS and the local Judges/officers for dinner in Grand Palace Miri. The dinner was also attended by the President, Secretary and assistance Secretary of the Central Committee.

XI. **PIASAU NATURE RESERVE CONSERVATION PROGRAM**

On 22nd April 2022, the Association together with the Sarawak Court Working Group on Environment (SWGE) and Miri Court organized this program in PNR to raise awareness towards the conservation of Hornbills in the gazette nature reserve. The Association donated 11 hornbill bird houses which is being used as an artificial home for the birds. The Association also donated 3 sets of signboards (hornbill conservation signage) erected at strategic areas within the boundary of the nature reserve to raise awareness towards the preservation exercise by the PNR.

After the preservation exercise, the association hosted all members and CJSS together with the Judges/Officers for dinner at Piasau Boat Club.



XII. **FAREWELL DINNER FOR MADAM NGU CUM COURT STAFF APPRECIATION NIGHT**

On 21st October 2022, the Association together with the Miri Court organized a dinner to bid farewell to Madam Ngu. At the dinner, the Association also acknowledged the 15 court staff members whom have assisted the Association in our previous programs (Criminal Law Conference). The officers were given hampers worth RM300.00 each as a token of our appreciation.

10. BOTTOM LINE

The accounts of the Miri Branch has a healthy balance, rendering all dinner sessions with the Judges/officers free of charge for all members. Balance in account as at 31st September 2022 – **RM795,400.00.**

11. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge the support and contribution from members of the AAS Miri Branch Committee and especially to the members of the Miri Branch who tremendously supported and had contributed to Association and the events. Further, our task would have been much more difficult if we did not have the support and guidance from the AAS Central Committee so we record our appreciation to Mr. Antonio Sim and his committee for their assistance.

We have had a number of projects in the 2020-2022 period, wherein the benefit of such projects were the Miri Community and our hornbills in PNR. We would not have been able to conduct these projects without the support of our friends from other associations, namely the Sarawak Housing and Real Estate Developers (Miri Branch), Rotary Club of Miri Oil Town (RCMOT), Federation of Miri Division Chinese Association Sarawak (Youth Section).

We also acknowledge our sponsors for their generous contributions to our projects.

Thank you.

**GURVIR SINGH SANDHU
CHAIRMAN
(MIRI BRANCH)
10th December 2022**