

MPA, NUS set up maritime law centre

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ALREADY known for its transshipment port, the Republic now wants to make a splash in the international arena of commercial maritime law – a field currently dominated by the likes of London and New York.

The local port regulator has teamed up with a university here to set up a research centre for commercial maritime law, it said in a press release on Friday, adding that this would make Singapore an even stronger international maritime centre.

This new Centre for Maritime Law – jointly established by the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA) and the National University of Singapore's (NUS) Law Faculty – was launched on Thursday along with a new professorship in maritime law.

It will focus on maritime law research in Singapore and the region, in areas such as international trade, transport and issues related to shipping law, MPA and NUS said in their joint press release. Its activities will also include dispute settlement and maritime arbitration.

MPA chief executive Andrew Tan noted in a statement that Singapore has more than 5,000 “maritime establishments”, including the port, shipping and maritime services such as ship broking, marine insurance as well as maritime law and arbitration. “A strong pool of maritime legal expertise will reinforce Singapore’s development as a leading maritime legal and arbitration centre,” he added.

MPA has set aside S\$2 million to support the running of the centre over five years, it said in the press release, and has also forked out S\$1 million to set up a permanent professorship in maritime law. The inaugural MPA Professor in Maritime Law will be Stephen Girvin, a faculty member at NUS Law since 2008.

NUS law dean Simon Chesterman said the new centre and the professorship would “complement the wider efforts to promote Singapore as a full-service maritime centre and ensure that its voice in commercial maritime law issues is heard”. The centre is also partly funded by Singapore’s Law Ministry.