

MAKING LAWS EASIER TO UNDERSTAND

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MR ANDERS SEAH, who came up with the idea of the platform offering information on laws arising from the Covid-19 situation.

RAISING AWARENESS OF RELIEF MEASURES

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WEBSITE CO-FOUNDER MARK TANG



National University of Singapore professor Alan Tan (middle row, centre), faculty adviser for the COV-AID project, with the platform's co-founders Mark Tang (front row, second from left) and Anders Seah (front row, third from left) – who are in their third year of law school – as well as students of the project's executive committee. PHOTO: NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE

NUS law students help shed light on Covid-19 legal measures

They set up website with info on topics from financial aid to contracts to enable public to make sense of regulations

Amelia Teng
Education Correspondent

A group of National University of Singapore (NUS) law students have set up a website to help the public understand new and evolving laws arising from the Covid-19 situation.

The website, launched in August, provides information on topics ranging from contracts to social distancing regulations to financial aid.

It also explains guidelines in a range of areas, from marriages and religion to sports and contracts re-

lated to events and tourism, as well as court proceedings.

It is the work of co-founders Anders Seah and Mark Tang, both 23 and in their third year of law school, and seven other students in the executive committee of the project known as COV-AID.

Mr Seah, who came up with the idea for such a platform in April, said: "In the middle of Covid-19, the Government was passing many laws and regulations, and it was quite hard to keep track of everything.

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tions being passed. We wanted to simplify and consolidate all the information on laws and regulations, as well as government grants."

Mr Tang said: "The usual safe distancing measures, like wearing of masks, are well known. But others like the Covid-19 (Temporary Measures) Act can be confusing, and a lot of people were not even aware that they could rely on this Act for relief when they're unable to perform their contractual obligation."

Professor Alan Tan, who is faculty adviser for the project, said the students laid out clearly the categories of claims covered by the Act, from event cancellations to rental relief and property tax.

Since May, the team has spent several months wading through legal

jargon to make sense of documents for the general public. It also listened to parliamentary speeches to keep the site's information fresh as changes were made to regulations.

The team is uploading articles on the rental relief framework for small and medium-sized enterprise tenants who need help to recover from the impact of Covid-19.

Said Mr Tang: "That took us more than a month to summarise and simplify as it was very complex. The framework has many different components and eligibility criteria, and how the rental waivers are implemented can get quite confusing."

Nearly 100 law students have contributed to the project, in areas such as research, writing, outreach and interviewing.

The website also features videos of NUS law students interviewing lawyers such as family litigation lawyer Malathi Das on how Covid-19 has affected different sectors.

Said Prof Tan: "It is a nice balance of not just corporate, money-oriented issues like intellectual property, mergers and acquisitions... but also the impact of Covid-19 on society."

So far, about 30 lawyers have been interviewed.

Prof Tan also roped in his colleagues to pen pieces on the impact of Covid-19. About 20 articles have been written so far on topics such as data protection and criminal law.

Mr Seah and Mr Tang said they are glad they had a chance to do something meaningful during this difficult time.

"We were told that our website is being used by social workers who find it useful, and that's encouraging," said Mr Seah. "Sometimes we have people leaving nice comments on the website telling us that they will be applying for a certain grant."

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For more information, visit <https://nus-covaid.com/>