



29 September 2026

Dear Members,

I hope you had a wonderful Mid-Autumn Festival and enjoyed some mooncakes with family and friends. For many in our community the weekend was also defined by the footy, and it was an AFL grand final worthy of the name: a genuine contest to the final quarter, Kylie Minogue lighting up the MCG, and the Brisbane Lions holding on to claim a third consecutive premiership. Congratulations to the Lions faithful among you. To the rest, there is always next year.

As we settle back into the working week and turn our attention back to business, I want to touch on a development that speaks volumes about Hong Kong's evolving role in the region. When we talk about Hong Kong's standing as an international financial centre, the conversation naturally gravitates toward the big numbers like IPO pipelines, asset management flows, and capital raised. But there is another, equally crucial pillar to a world-class IFC, and that is how it handles disagreements. Capital flows to where the opportunities are, but it anchors where it knows it can be defended and where disputes can be resolved fairly.

Last Thursday, former Secretary for Justice Teresa Cheng spoke at a forum about the International Organisation for Mediation (IOMed), which is now headquartered right here in Hong Kong. She highlighted that the body is poised to take on cross-border disputes within the Greater Bay Area, as well as multinational disagreements across the Belt and Road economies. While it might not have dominated the front pages, it is a significant step forward.

The arrival of IOMed gives Hong Kong a truly unique toolkit. We now have a globally respected common law court system, a top-tier arbitration centre in the HKIAC, and an intergovernmental mediation body all operating within a few miles of each other.

For our members, the practical benefits of this are significant. The Greater Bay Area is an incredible economic engine, but it is also a complex landscape where three distinct legal systems intersect, bringing together Hong Kong's common law, Macau's civil law, and the mainland's framework. If you are running a joint venture in Guangdong or managing supply chains across the border, navigating that complexity when things go wrong can be daunting. Having a dedicated body designed to sit across these systems, staffed by experts who understand all three, is a massive advantage.

Furthermore, mediation inherently suits the way we prefer to do business in this part of the world. Most Australian companies operating here would much rather preserve a long-term commercial relationship than win a bitterly fought court judgment. A mechanism that allows both sides to find common ground and walk away with their partnership intact is incredibly valuable. If your firm is currently drafting or reviewing dispute resolution clauses for GBA contracts, it is certainly worth discussing this new landscape with your legal advisers.

Finally, a word on Aichi-Nagoya. Hong Kong's largest ever Asian Games team has been putting on a spectacular show, highlighted by Siobhan Haughey's continued brilliance in the pool and a historic first-ever wushu sanda medal already banked. It has been an absolute joy to watch our home city compete so fiercely. With National Day upon us this Thursday, the Games moving into their closing weekend, and the NRL Grand Final fast approaching this weekend, I hope you all find time to enjoy the celebrations and the sport.

Warm regards,
Mary Simpson, AustCham Hong Kong Chief Executive