Justin Chia

Partner

Head, Asset Recovery, Restructuring and Insolvency

Head, Private Client Advisory



"Justin is well versed in the law."
Asialaw Profiles

justin@harryelias.com

+65 6361 9814

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Biography

Justin is Head of the firm's Asset Recovery, Restructuring and Insolvency practice, where he represents major institutional clients, including financial institutions, banks, listed companies, real estate investment trusts (REITs), and prominent commercial landlords. He has built a reputation for navigating complex restructuring and insolvency matters, offering strategic legal advice that balances technical expertise with commercial sensibility.

His broad experience spans acting for liquidators, judicial managers, receivers and managers, and accounting firms. He advises on both corporate and individual insolvency, representing creditors, shareholders, and companies across a wide range of restructuring exercises in Singapore. He is well-versed in statutory regimes such as the Land Titles Act 1993, Land Titles (Strata) Act 1967, and the Building Maintenance and Strata Management Act 2004, regularly appearing before the Courts and the Strata Titles Board on related matters.

Justin's litigation practice also extends to construction, engineering, and infrastructure disputes. He has significant experience in construction-related dispute resolution, serving as counsel in arbitration, adjudication, and court proceedings. His work has involved high-value, complex disputes concerning commercial, residential, and industrial developments across Singapore.

Among Justin's most notable cases is his representation of minority subsidiary proprietors in the landmark Horizon Towers en bloc dispute. In a precedent-setting decision, the Singapore Court of Appeal reversed prior rulings and upheld the rights of minority owners in a SG$500 million collective sale. This decision not only clarified the duties of sale committees and the responsibilities of the Strata Titles Board, but also marked a historic first in Singapore's collective sale jurisprudence.

In addition to the Singapore Bar, he has also been called to the Bar of Brunei Darussalam and has practised there. Justin is also a gazetted counsel representing the Singapore Government in matters involving State land.

Practice Areas

Asset Recovery, Restructuring and Insolvency

Dispute Resolution

Construction and Engineering

Private Client Advisory

Real Estate

Qualifications

Bachelor of Laws (Honours), National University of Singapore

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Experience

- Acted for landlord in successfully obtaining a carveout from moratorium orders sought by tenant under Section 65 of the Insolvency, Restructuring and Dissolution Act 2018 ("IRDA"). Milestone decision of the Court in respect of corporate group restructuring, balancing of the proprietary interests of landlords, and relevance of security deposit: see Re Picotin Pte Ltd [2024] SGHC 156
- Acted for a REIT in its ~SGD 108 million claim against the Hyflux Group for premature termination of long-term leases, which court proceedings involve pre-scheme moratoriums, parallel schemes of arrangement, judicial management, and winding-up.
- Acted for a creditor in its claim against Dimbulah Coffee (S) Pte Ltd, which had applied to Court for a pre-scheme moratorium.
- Acted for applicants in SK Engineering & Construction Co Ltd v Conchubar Aromatics Ltd and another appeal [2017] SGCA 51, a landmark decision on schemes of arrangement on novel issues of law, e.g. discounts on creditors' votes, certainty of schemes and assessing creditors' relatedness.
- Acting for and advising a bank in respect of the appointment of receivers over the assets of a debtor (which is a specialized local developer with a Class 1 General Builder Licence), and the debtor's application for a pre-scheme of arrangement interim moratorium, including an application for the bank to be carved out of the moratorium.
- Advising and acting for a commercial landlord in respect of applications commenced by a tenant and its group of companies for the Court to restrain proceedings against them to enable the tenant to propose a compromise or an arrangement between the tenant and its creditors. This involved approximately 200 creditors across the tenant's group of 5 companies, and an application by the landlord to be carved out from any moratoria granted by the Court in the tenant's favour.

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Experience

- Advised a franchiser of an international food and beverage brand on cross-border insolvency issues involving its franchisees.
- Advising a leading local private healthcare provider in relation to an employment dispute with a former director involving the alleged breach of non-competition and non-solicitation clauses as well as unauthorized disclosure of confidential information.
- Acted for a company in the business of TV programming and broadcasting communications in respect of winding up proceedings commenced against it.

Awards & Accolades

- "Highly Regarded" for Project Development, Restructuring and Insolvency (2026) – IFLR1000 Asia Pacific
- "Notable Practitioner" for Restructuring and Insolvency (2024-2026) – Asialaw Profiles
- "Ranked Practitioner" for Insolvency and Reorganization Law (2024-2027) – Best Lawyers Singapore
- "Litigation Star" for Insolvency (2025-2026) – Benchmark Litigation Asia Pacific
- "Notable Practitioner" for Project Development, Restructuring and Insolvency (2024 & 2025) – IFLR1000 Asia Pacific
- "Recommended Lawyer" for Restructuring and Insolvency (2019-2026) – Legal 500 Asia Pacific
- "Recommended Lawyer" for Projects and Energy (2019-2026) – Legal 500 Asia Pacific

Publications

- Contributing editor to the 2006 and 2013 editions of the Singapore Civil Procedure
- Co-author of Adjudication and insolvency: Interface of two statutory regimes affecting the construction industry published in Lexis Nexis
- Legal News 5 March 2025 (https://www.lexisnexis.co.uk/legal/news/adjudication-insolvency-interface-of-two-statutory-regimes-affecting-the-construction-industry) (also published in INSOL International Restructuring Alert)
- Interview with CNA938 on Tenancy Disputes (6 July 2021) (https://www.harryelias.com/partner-and-head-restructuring-and-insolvency-justin-chia-interviewed-cna938/)

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Professional Memberships | Directorships

- Member, Inquiry Panel of the Law Society of Singapore (2026-2028)
- Fellow, Insolvency Practitioners Association of Singapore
- Fellow, Singapore Institute of Arbitrators
- Member, Singapore Academy of Law
- Member, The Law Society of Singapore

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