

Can Parents Sell Their Children's Property? A Property Law Perspective

Wednesday, 4 February 2026 | 4.30PM to 5.45PM (SGT)
Clove Room, Shaw Foundation Alumni House



ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR RACHEL LEOW
LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AND POLITICAL SCIENCE

ABOUT THE SEMINAR

Christmas arrives. Nicki's nine-year-old son receives a gaming console and many soft toys as Christmas gifts from his doting grandparents. But Nicki's son already spends too much time playing games and his room is overflowing with stuffed toys. What can Nicki do? Can she sell the items, even if her son holds title to them? Will title pass unimpeachably to the purchaser?

This seminar, based on an article forthcoming in the Law Quarterly Review in 2026, examines these questions. It focuses on one core question: do parents with parental responsibility have powers to sell their children's property? Despite the importance of the topic, the law's position is unclear. The existing academic literature and case-law is sparse, often tentative, and polarized. From a property law perspective, the common assumption is that parents do not have such powers. *Nemo dat quod non habet*: one cannot give what one does not have. If parents do not themselves hold the relevant property rights, how can they have powers to give those rights to a purchaser?

In this seminar, it will be argued that contrary to the prevailing wisdom, parents with parental responsibility should, and plausibly already do, have the powers to sell property held by their minor children. The history of parental and non-parental guardianship, modern cases on overseas property, and the justifications for parental powers will be explored. This seminar also explores constraints on such powers, most notably by statute and fiduciary law.

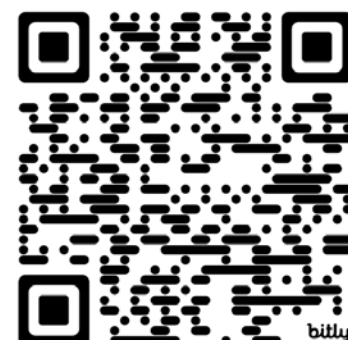
PROGRAMME

4.00PM : Registration
4.30PM : Start of Seminar
5.30PM : Moderated Q&A
5.45PM : End of Seminar

REGISTRATION

Register at bit.ly/4oeHdjs
or scan the QR code

Closing date: **4 February 2026**
For enquiries, email: ewbclb@nus.edu.sg



Speaker



Dr Rachel LEOW is Associate Professor of Law at the LSE Law School. She is a private lawyer whose main research expertise and interests span three broad areas: agency law, the law of unjust enrichment and restitution, and trusts and commercial equity. She also has a special interest in corporate attribution in private law, the subject-matter of her doctorate and first monograph, *Corporate Attribution in Private Law* (Hart Publishing 2022).

Her work has been published in leading generalist and specialist law journals, including the *Law Quarterly Review*, *Oxford Journal of Legal Studies*, *Cambridge Law Journal*, *Modern Law Review*, and the *Lloyds Maritime and Commercial Law Quarterly*. Dr Leow's research has been judicially cited by the Supreme Court of the United Kingdom, the High Court of Australia, the Singapore Court of Appeal, and the Singapore High Court. It has also been cited or discussed in many leading practitioner texts and important textbooks, including *Chitty on Contracts*, *Goff & Jones on the Law of Unjust Enrichment*, *Bowstead & Reynolds on Agency*, *Clerk & Lindsell on Torts*, and *Hayton, Mitchell and McFarlane on Equity and Trusts*.

Before coming to the LSE, Dr Leow was Assistant Professor at the National University of Singapore. She read for the LLM and PhD at Downing College, University of Cambridge, where she won the Gareth Jones Prize for the Law of Restitution with the then-highest mark on record and the Chancellor's Medal for English Law, which is awarded to a candidate of exceptional merit in English law.

Moderator



Hans TJIO has taught at the Faculty of Law, NUS, since 1990, and was previously Director of the Centre for Banking and Finance Law and Centre for Commercial Law Studies. He has published widely in international and local journals, and has written or co-written books on company law, securities regulation and trust law. He is also a contributor to *Halsbury's Laws of Singapore* on contract law and to *Palmer's Company Law* (Geoffrey Morse ed).

He was previously seconded to the Monetary Authority of Singapore and the Ministry of Law. He is presently serving on the Securities Industry Council, as Deputy Chairman of the SGX Listing Advisory Committee, and a consultant with TSMP Law Corporation. He has been a visiting professor at National Taiwan University, Auckland and Shanghai's ECUP and a visiting scholar at Stanford and Melbourne. He has also delivered public lectures at the law schools of NTU, Tsinghua and Zhejiang Universities and West Bengal National University of Juridical Sciences.