

JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

Multiagency effort to support private bus industry impacted by COVID-19

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1. The COVID-19 situation has impacted the private bus industry, which includes around 5,000 private bus operators, managing around 13,500 private buses (including coaches) operating tour bus services, school bus services, worker transport services, and ad-hoc chartering services. These key segments complement Singapore's public bus transportation services. Overall, the tourism business has experienced a 60% decline, as all bookings for private bus services have been cancelled until June 2020.
2. The Express and Excursion Bus Association (EEBA), the Singapore School Transport Association (SSTA) and the Singapore School and Private Hire Bus Owners' Association (SSPHBOA), have worked with Enterprise Singapore (ESG) to identify priority areas of support, to provide immediate relief for the private bus industry to sustain itself. The emphasis of the support is to preserve jobs, ensure company survivability¹, and proactively reskill workers to prepare for a recovery. The efforts affirm the significant role Trade Associations and Chambers (TACs) play in the stewardship of the SME ecosystem.
3. In light of the feedback and the situation faced by the private bus industry, the Government has put together a **Private Bus Support Package (PBSP)** amounting to an **estimated S\$23 million** of targeted support for this industry. The components of the PBSP include:
 - a) **Road Tax Rebate.** All existing private bus owners (i.e. excursion buses, private hire buses, private buses and school buses) will receive a one-year road tax rebate which will be credited directly to them in May 2020.
 - b) **Class 2 Bus Service Licence Fee Refund/ Waiver.** A refund of up to S\$750 per licence for Class 2 Bus Service Licence holders. The licence holders for existing

¹ Companies can tap on the Temporary Bridging Loan, announced at Budget on 18 February 2020.

services, such as premium bus services, shuttle bus services and tourist bus services will receive refund for their licence fees for the period from 1 April to 31 December 2020. In addition, new licence holders from 1 April 2020 will have their licence fees waived until the end of the year.

- c) **Season parking fee waiver.** Current private bus (including coach) season parking pass holders at all Government-owned car parks will receive a 6-month waiver of season parking fees from 1 May to 31 October 2020. The season parking fee waiver, will apply to all HDB, URA, JTC, MOE and SportSG car parks.

 - d) **Enhanced Absentee Payroll and Course Fee Support for training and reskilling.** As part of the Training Support Package, private bus companies who send their staff for these selected courses from 1 April to 31 December 2020 will receive (i) enhanced Absentee Payroll at 90% of hourly basic salary (capped at S\$10 per hour), and (ii) enhanced course fee support at up to 90% of course fees. SkillsFuture Singapore (SSG), together with ESG, EEBA, SSTA and SSPHBOA, has curated a list of relevant courses for bus drivers and administrative staff of bus companies. The courses were selected based on discussions on the learning and reskilling needs of their workforce. The Training Support Package will fund more than 5,200 training places over the next three months. SSPHBOA, SSTA and EEBA have committed to send 1,050 drivers and administrative staff for training during this period. SSG will work closely with ESG and the relevant TACs to monitor the training demand on the ground and provide further support as necessary.
4. Besides the support provided under PBSP, self-employed private bus drivers can also look forward to the Self-Employed Person Income Relief Scheme (SIRS) announced today. SIRS will provide eligible self-employed persons with S\$1,000 per month for nine months, and will be administered by the National Trades Union Congress (NTUC).
5. **Mr. Phillip Peh, President, SPSHBOA,** “We appreciate that our feedback to the government has been heard and addressed. The travel restrictions in and out of Singapore have affected the private bus sector and the support measures will help defray our members' daily expenditure. The training measures we have curated with SkillsFuture Singapore for our drivers, many who are aged 50 years and older, will enable the sector keep our workers during the slowdown as we prepare for recovery.”

6. **Mr. Voo Wei Keong, President, EEBA**, “A priority for us is to help our workers keep their jobs and to manage costs amid booking cancellations and falling transport demand. The parking and licence fee waivers, and road tax rebates are welcomed measures that can help companies stay afloat during the slowdown. Our members would be able to keep their drivers and back-end staff during this difficult period.”
7. **Mr. Aloysius Ang, First Deputy Chairman, SSTA**, “While our members continue to ferry workers and school children, costs have increased with additional efforts to clean and sanitise vehicles. Members also make sure hand sanitisers are available in vehicles for passengers and drivers. The support measures will alleviate these mounting costs as we continue to take the necessary precautions during this difficult period”.

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About Enterprise Singapore

Enterprise Singapore is the government agency championing enterprise development. We work with committed companies to build capabilities, innovate and internationalise.

We also support the growth of Singapore as a hub for global trading and startups, and build trust in Singapore's products and services through quality and standards.

Visit www.enterprisesg.gov.sg for more information.

About Land Transport Authority

The Land Transport Authority (LTA) spearheads land transport developments in Singapore. We plan, design, build and maintain Singapore's land transport infrastructure and systems. We aspire to strengthen Singapore's land transport connectivity and integrate a greener and more inclusive public transport system complemented by walk and cycle options. We harness technology to strengthen our rail and bus infrastructure and develop exciting options for future land transport.

Visit www.lta.gov.sg for more information.

About SkillsFuture Singapore

SkillsFuture Singapore (SSG) drives and coordinates the implementation of the national SkillsFuture movement, promotes a culture of lifelong learning and a quality ecosystem of adult education and training in Singapore. Through a holistic system of national SkillsFuture initiatives, SSG enables Singaporeans to take charge of their learning journey in their pursuit of skills mastery. SSG also works with key stakeholders to ensure that students and adults have access to high quality and industry-relevant training, that meet the demands of different sectors of the economy for an innovative and productive workforce.

Visit www.ssg.gov.sg, for more information.