



23 August 2019

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SMRT Buses Deepens Commitment to Inclusive Service Delivery, Signs MOU with Community Partners

1. As part of our ongoing efforts to provide a higher level of public transport service for all commuters, SMRT Buses signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Agency for Integrated Care (AIC) and four social service agencies (SSAs), to express their commitment to support and enhance the quality of life for people with disabilities and dementia, and help them better integrate into society.
2. SMRT's collaboration with AIC, Alzheimer's Disease Association (ADA), Guide Dogs Singapore (GDS), Handicaps Welfare Association (HWA), and Singapore Association of the Visually Handicapped (SAVH), is to enhance the exchange of information and knowledge between partners, by tapping on each other's experience and expertise to enhance inclusive service delivery in the public transport network.
3. Associate Professor Muhammad Faishal Ibrahim, Member of Parliament for Nee Soon GRC and Senior Parliamentary Secretary for the Ministry of Social and Family Development; Dr Alvin Tan, Director, Disability Office, Ministry of Social and Family Development; as well as SMRT's Chairman Seah Moon Ming and Group Chief Executive Officer Neo Kian Hong witnessed the signing of the MOU at the upcoming Yishun Integrated Transport Hub (YITH).
4. SMRT is committed to serving commuters with special needs and the elderly since the launch of the Inclusive Service Delivery Programme in October 2017 for SMRT Trains and Buses, by equipping staff with practical skills and confidence to assist priority passengers.
5. In addition to signing the MOU, AIC, GDS, and HWA have also trained and certified SMRT Buses staff to teach others how to approach and help people with disabilities and dementia to commute in the public transport network.

Media Release

SAVH has commenced training for the SMRT trainers, while ADA will be conducting its dementia-related training in upcoming months.

6. To date, five SMRT Buses staff have completed the Train-the-Trainer programmes by AIC, GDS and HWA. They are certified trainers who are able to teach inclusive service delivery techniques to SMRT staff and others, and recently trained their first batch of nearly 40 SMRT staff. For example, the AIC training programme includes education on how to identify people with dementia, how to approach and communicate with them, and how to reunite them with their families.

7. The five SMRT trainers shall be conducting inclusive service delivery sessions at YITH, SMRT Buses' first venue to host training for inclusive service delivery. SMRT Buses aims to train all its frontline staff at its interchanges in inclusive service delivery.

8. Mr Tan Kian Heong, President, SMRT Roads, said: "As an inclusive public transport service provider, we want all commuters, especially the elderly and those with special needs, to feel safe and comfortable when they travel in our network. As a first step, we are happy to partner these five agencies to provide training to our Bus Captains and frontline staff to assist commuters who have different abilities and commuting needs."

9. Mr Eugene Lee, one of SMRT's five inclusive service trainers, said: "It's a great responsibility and privilege to be able to pass on the knowledge I have learnt to my colleagues in SMRT, so that more of us at SMRT are able to help commuters who have special needs travel safely and comfortably in our network."

10. Mr Tan Kwang Cheak, Chief Executive Officer of AIC, said: "With Singapore's ageing population, there is a need to enhance community support for seniors and persons with dementia so that they can live and age well at home and within the community. AIC is pleased to partner with SMRT Buses to make public bus travel safer and more supportive for this group as part of our national Dementia-Friendly Singapore initiative. Besides providing advice on making physical spaces more dementia-friendly, we have also worked with SMRT Buses on training their trainers and in establishing the first Go-To Point (GTP) sited in a transport hub at YITH."

11. Mr Jason Foo, Chief Executive Officer of ADA, said: "ADA is pleased to sign this MOU with SMRT to train their frontline staff to be better equipped with

the knowledge and skills to look after the needs of their customers with dementia. This partnership is part of our 'Forget Us Not' initiative in collaboration with Lien Foundation and is in line with our strategy to bring the 3Ps (People, Private and Public sectors) together to build a dementia inclusive society for persons with dementia and their caregivers.”

12. Ms Vanessa Loh, General Manager of GDS, said: “Working together with stakeholders is important in transforming Singapore into an inclusive society. As such, we’re honoured to partner with SMRT to better our transportation infrastructure and services so travelling can become friendly towards people with different needs, such as for our clients with visual impairment and guide dogs.”

13. Mr Edmund Wan, President, HWA, said: “The Handicaps Welfare Association (HWA) is honoured to be a partner of SMRT to ensure the safety and proper handling of commuters using various personal mobility aids by their front-line staff. Public transport remains the most convenient and affordable form of transport provision for all sectors of commuters including people with physical impairments and facilitates their integration in the community.

HWA will impart its years of experience in developing the training material, especially the do’s and don’ts in dealing with people with mobility impairments. We applaud SMRT for their on-going concerns and efforts to include the care and safety of the people with physical impairments as a priority.”

14. Mr Joshua Chegne, Executive Director, Singapore Association of the Visually Handicapped, said: “SAVH lauds SMRT’s commitment to serving commuters with special needs and the elderly through the launch of its comprehensive delivery service programme. SAVH looks forward to working with SMRT to build a more inclusive and caring transport system network, so that all commuters with disabilities and their caregivers can enjoy safe and comfortable travel, confident that help is readily at hand should they need it.”

15. YITH, which is operated by SMRT Buses, will commence operations on 8 September 2019.

16. It is also the first bus interchange to be appointed by AIC as a Dementia Go-To Point (GTP). As a GTP, it is a resource centre for caregivers, and a support point for persons with dementia when they go missing or get lost. Members of the public can bring these persons to YITH, where trained SMRT staff will calm them down and contact their next-of-kin.

17. Reinforcing the importance of building an inclusive, caring community in its transport network, SMRT Buses worked with the Public Transport Council to locate two Heart Zones within YITH. In the Heart Zones, commuters are encouraged to walk with hospital patients or visitors to the Khoo Teck Puat Hospital and Yishun Community Hospital, or provide directional assistance to them.

18. Mr Richard Magnus, Chairman, Public Transport Council, said: “PTC is glad to be able to locate two Heart Zones at the Yishun Integrated Transport Hub and work with SMRT to create an inclusive commuting experience to meet the diverse needs of different commuters. We will continue to actively partner our stakeholders within the land transport eco-system to create and foster an inclusive and gracious commuting culture that is underpinned by care among different stakeholders, including operators and commuters alike.”

-end-

Media Contacts:

SMRT Corporation Ltd

SMRT Corporate Communications

Tel: +65 9822 0902

Email: media@smrt.com.sg

Agency for Integrated Care (AIC)

Elizabeth Njo

Senior Manager, Corporate & Marketing Communications

Tel: +65 9846 2476

Email: elizabeth.njo@aic.sg

Alzheimer’s Disease Association (ADA)

Jeremy Khoo

Head, Public Relations, Communications and Volunteer Management

Tel: +65 6389 5123

Email: jeremykhoo@alz.org.sg

Guide Dogs Singapore (GDS)

Dawn Chan

Senior Executive, Community Partnership

Tel: +65 6339 7900

Email: dawn.chan@guidedogs.org.sg

Handicaps Welfare Association (HWA)

Eugene Lim

Executive, Corporate Communication

Tel: +65 6311 9263

Email: eugene.lim@hwa.org.sg

Singapore Association of the Visually Handicapped (SAVH)

Chong Kwek Bin

Advocacy, SAVH

Tel: +65 8727 2353

Email: kwekbin@savh.org.sg

About SMRT Buses Ltd

SMRT Buses, a subsidiary of SMRT Corporation Ltd, is a public bus service operator in Singapore. Anchored on our core competencies in operations, maintenance and training bus professionals, we operate bus services and manage bus depots and interchanges. As the second largest public bus service operator in Singapore, we strive to deliver the best commuters' experience by valuing commuters as our operational focus, developing our people as a key differentiator and innovating as an enabling strategy.

We have set our core values to be Integrity, Safety and Service, and Excellence and have committed to provide safe, reliable and comfortable service for all our commuters.

About Agency for Integrated Care (AIC)

The Agency for Integrated Care (AIC) aims to create a vibrant care community for people to live well and age gracefully. AIC coordinates and supports efforts in integrating care to achieve the best care outcomes for our clients. We reach out to caregivers and seniors with information on staying active and ageing well, and connect people to services they need. We support stakeholders in their efforts to raise the quality of care, and also work with health and social care partners to increase services for the ageing population. Our work in the community brings care services and information closer to those in need. For more about us, please visit www.aic.sg.

About Alzheimer's Disease Association (ADA)

ADA was formed in 1990 because of a growing concern for the needs of persons living with dementia and their caregivers. The Association hopes to reduce stigma by increasing awareness and understanding of dementia; enabling and involving persons living with dementia to be integrated and accepted in the community; and leading in the quality of dementia care services for persons living with dementia and their families. Striving towards a Dementia Inclusive Society through its four strategic service pillars – Centre-Based Care, Caregiver Support, Academy and Community Enabling - ADA aims to advocate and inspire the society to regard and respect persons living with dementia as individuals who can still lead purposeful and meaningful lives. For more information, visit <http://alz.org.sg/>.

About Guide Dogs Singapore (GDS)

Guide Dogs Singapore Ltd (GDS) is a social service agency and charity formed in 2006. It focuses on enhancing the quality of life for the blind and visually impaired community in Singapore through the provision of training and rehabilitation programmes such as Orientation & Mobility Training and Guide Dogs Programme. GDS actively advocates for an inclusive society where every person who is blind or has visual impairment is empowered for independent living. To date, GDS has served more than 300 clients with visual impairment and successfully paired six Guide Dog teams. GDS is an associate member with the National Council of Social Service (NCSS) and holds the Institute of Public Character (IPC) status which allows it to give 250% tax deduction for direct donations S\$10 and above. For more information on GDS, please visit www.guidedogs.org.sg.

About Handicaps Welfare Association (HWA)

Handicaps Welfare Association (HWA), was founded in 1969 by a group of 23 persons with disabilities to promote self-help and provide mutual support among the disabled in Singapore. HWA is an organisation run by people with disabilities, for people with disabilities. It was first registered as the Singapore Handicaps Friendship Club. It later became known as Singapore Association for the Disabled in 1975. In 1976, it adopted the present name – Handicaps Welfare Association. Currently, HWA supports the varied needs of its 2,065 members and hundreds of beneficiaries especially the elderly with disabilities through its services such as Rehabilitation, Home Care and Transport Services and other activities. HWA is a full member of National Council of Social Services (NCSS) and an Institution of a Public Character (IPC).

About Singapore Association of the Visually Handicapped (SAVH)

The Singapore Association of the Visually Handicapped (SAVH), formerly known as the Singapore Association for the Blind (SAB), is the national voluntary welfare organisation for the visually impaired. Founded in 1951, the association is affiliated to the National Council of Social Services (NCSS) and is an approved Institution of a Public Character (IPC). Our vision is to promote the needs, interests and aspirations of the visually handicapped, and our mission is to help the visually handicapped help themselves by acquiring new skills and gaining self-reliance to cope with the integration into society.