

A group of four elderly people are playing ukuleles in a room. In the center, a man wearing a blue and yellow floral shirt and a straw hat stands and plays a red ukulele while smiling. To his left, a woman in a white top and light green pants sits and plays a light blue ukulele. To the far left, a man in a light blue shirt sits and plays a yellow ukulele. To the far right, a man in a yellow shirt sits and plays a yellow ukulele. They are all looking upwards and smiling. In the background, there is a projector screen displaying a map of Singapore and some text. A string of colorful triangular bunting hangs from the ceiling. The scene is set in a well-lit room with wooden floors and black speakers on stands.

# *I feel young in my Singapore!*

**ACTION PLAN FOR SUCCESSFUL AGEING**

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**ISBN 978-981-09-8536-3**





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## FOREWORD



# Let's re-define ageing

Last year, we celebrated a significant milestone for Singapore. Our baby boomers have grown up with our nation and the majority will turn 65 over the next two decades. There is no better time to plan for an ageing population as we progress towards SG100.

This Action Plan is our blueprint to enable Singaporeans to grow older with confidence. Between June 2014 and May 2015, we engaged Singaporeans in conversations about ageing and what it means to age successfully. This Action Plan contains their ideas, suggestions and plans.

We hope that Singapore will remain a good place to grow old in, where there are opportunities for Singaporeans of all ages. We want to build a cohesive “kampong” for all ages, where there is inter-generational harmony and understanding. Our city will be a city for all ages, designed sensitively and lovingly for seniors to age gracefully among family, friends and neighbours, leveraging on the potential of modern technology.

I would like to thank everyone who has participated and contributed ideas, and the people and private sector organisations for working with us on the initiatives in this Action Plan.

Together, we can re-define ageing and build a Nation for All Ages which we are proud to call home.

**Gan Kim Yong**

Minister for Health and Minister-in-charge of Ageing Issues  
Chairman of the Ministerial Committee on Ageing





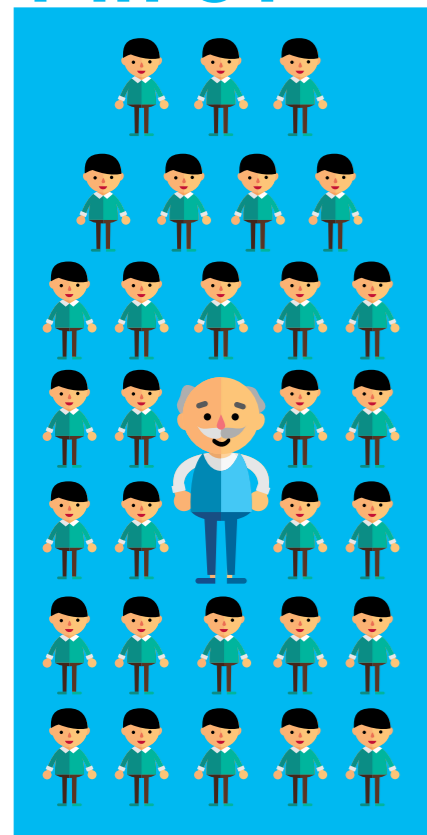
## CHAPTER 1

# OUR ASPIRATIONS FOR A SILVER SINGAPORE

**Singapore is ageing rapidly, though our society can remain dynamic and cohesive.** Many Singaporeans shared with us their aspirations and ideas on how to transform the face of ageing in the next 50 years.

# HOW MANY SINGAPOREANS ARE 65 OR OLDER<sup>1</sup>?

1 in 31

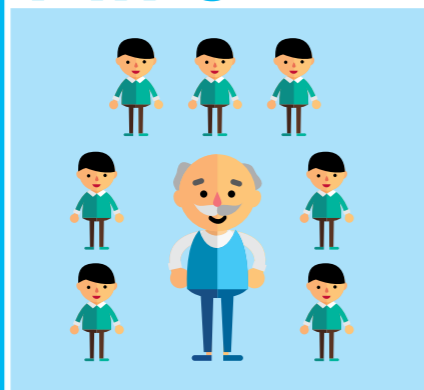


1970

## OUR POPULATION IS AGEING RAPIDLY.

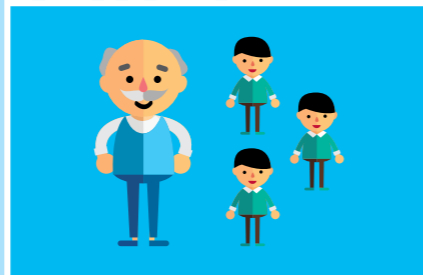
In 1970, **1 in 31** Singaporeans was 65 or older.  
 In 2015, it was **1 in 8**. By 2030, it will be **1 in 4**.  
 We will have over 900,000 seniors, approximately double the current 440,000.

1 in 8



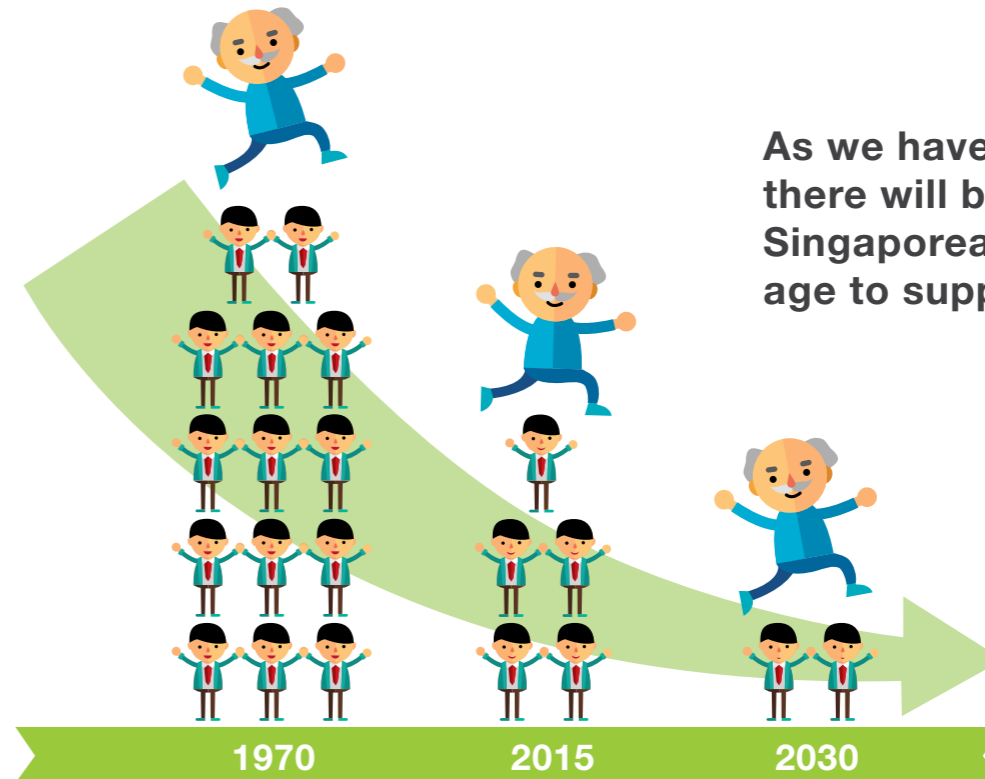
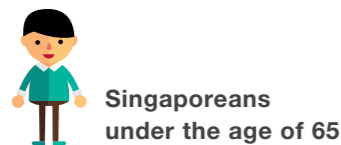
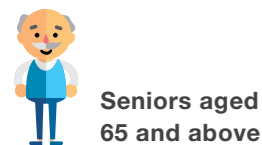
2015

1 in 4



2030

YEAR



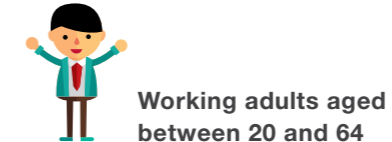
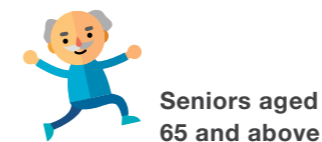
As we have fewer babies, there will be far fewer Singaporeans of working age to support our elderly.

1970

2015

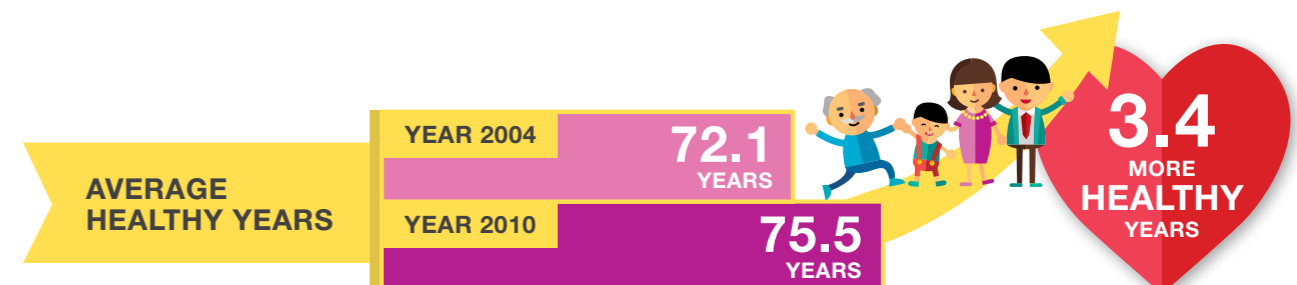
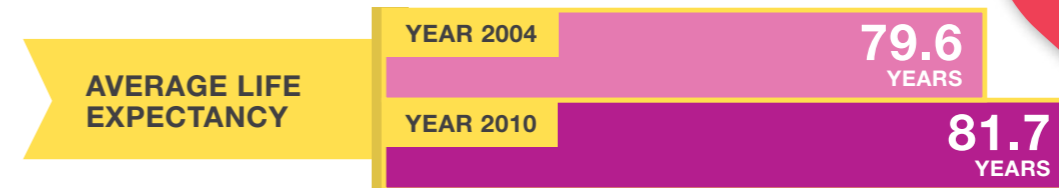
2030

YEAR



## Singapore Residents are also LIVING LONGER AND STAYING HEALTHY FOR LONGER.

Ageing need not cause worry and gloom. If we plan ahead, ageing can be a positive experience for all.



<sup>1</sup> Source: Department of Statistics & Epidemiology and Disease Control Division, MOH.



# Public consultation WE HEARD YOU

Between June 2014 and May 2015, the Ministerial Committee on Ageing and our partners engaged over 4,000 Singaporeans from all walks of life to hear their aspirations and ideas on how we can help Singaporeans age well.



▶ Almost 50 focus group discussions



▶ “Listening points” at public spaces like libraries, shopping malls and universities



▶ Online consultations



▶ Participants included Singaporeans from various walks of life – students, taxi drivers, academics, rental block residents, senior volunteers, grassroots leaders, senior learners and human resource practitioners.



▶ We also consulted union members, and reached out to different communities – the Islamic Religious Council of Singapore (MUIS) and self-help groups such as the Chinese Development Assistance Council (CDAC), Mendaki and the Singapore Indian Development Association (SINDA).

## 10 TOPICS THAT WERE DISCUSSED

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <p><b>1 EMPLOYABILITY</b><br/>Ageless workplaces, lifelong employability</p>      | <p><b>6 AGED CARE SERVICES</b><br/>Ageing-in-place, remaining independent</p>          |
| <p><b>2 LIFELONG LEARNING</b><br/>Never too old to go back to school</p>          | <p><b>7 HOUSING</b><br/>Supporting changing needs</p>                                  |
| <p><b>3 SENIOR VOLUNTEERISM</b><br/>Helping others, fulfilling lives</p>          | <p><b>8 TRANSPORT</b><br/>Re-defining the travel experience</p>                        |
| <p><b>4 HEALTH AND WELLNESS</b><br/>Healthy seniors, happy seniors</p>            | <p><b>9 PUBLIC SPACES</b><br/>Making our urban infrastructure more senior-friendly</p> |
| <p><b>5 SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT AND INCLUSION</b><br/>Connecting people of all ages</p> | <p><b>10 RESEARCH ON AGEING</b><br/>Understanding needs, encouraging innovation</p>    |



# 1 EMPLOYABILITY

Ageless workplaces, lifelong employability



“ I want to work for as long as I can. It keeps my mind active. ”

**Many seniors want to work beyond the official retirement age to remain financially independent and keep themselves active. Seniors hope to have meaningful job opportunities to fulfil their aspirations at their stage of life; a fair and inclusive workplace to work in; and an enabling workplace that is safe and uses technology to help them excel in their jobs.**

To make workplaces “ageless”, suggestions from seniors and employers include:

- ▶ Re-design jobs to offer older workers greater flexibility.
- ▶ Make training accessible and effective for older workers.
- ▶ Set up a dedicated seniors-only national job bank.
- ▶ Promote workplace health and safety.
- ▶ Review or extend retirement age – some think it should be extended to 70, while others feel it should be abolished entirely.
- ▶ Provide good career guidance and transition programmes a few years ahead of the re-employment age.
- ▶ Promote mind-set change among employers on the value of older workers.
- ▶ Allow older workers to try out jobs via internships or job trials.
- ▶ Recognise employers who treat older workers well.
- ▶ Promote inter-generational workplace harmony.

# 2 LIFELONG LEARNING

Never too old to go back to school



“ I learnt how to use Facebook at a polytechnic! Now I train other seniors to do the same. Can we have more of such courses? ”

**Seniors want to keep learning, for work and for personal interest. Learning helps them to keep their minds active and to stay in touch with society. Seniors cite affordability, access and entry requirements as some barriers to lifelong learning. Seniors hope to see a more diverse range of learning opportunities that are easily accessible. They also want courses tailored for their age and to be recognised for skills and experiences they have acquired. They also feel that more can be done to publicise learning opportunities for seniors.**

Suggestions on how to encourage more seniors to pursue lifelong learning as a way of life include:

- ▶ **Accessibility**
  - ▶ Increase the variety of learning options. Seniors want to take courses at Institutes of Higher Learning but without sitting for examinations.
- ▶ **Affordability**
  - ▶ Bring learning to the community, such as at Residents' Committee centres and other suitable facilities.
- ▶ **Adult education**
  - ▶ Train teachers in the art of teaching older learners.
  - ▶ Facilitate peer learning where “seniors teach seniors”.
  - ▶ Promote inter-generational learning.
  - ▶ Promote new modes of learning, such as e-learning, modular learning, interactive and experiential learning.
- ▶ **Awareness**
  - ▶ Increase awareness of senior learning opportunities through a one-stop portal, distribution of flyers and outdoor advertising.



# 3 SENIOR VOLUNTEERISM

Helping others, fulfilling lives



“ I am setting the example for my children and grandchildren. I want them to know that giving back is the right thing to do. ”

Seniors can and want to give back to society. Volunteerism is a meaningful way to do so while creating a positive impact. Seniors would like to have volunteering opportunities that interest them and where they can apply their skills and expertise. Some prefer more flexible arrangements, including being able to volunteer closer to where they live. Seniors would like volunteerism among older people to be promoted nationally and for recognition to be given to senior volunteers. They would also like more training courses to empower them to be effective volunteers.

Organisations that recruit senior volunteers regard them as valuable assets, given their skills and experience. However, these organisations face challenges in attracting senior volunteers, in part because there is currently no dedicated platform or mechanism to match seniors (according to their interests, skills, preferred venues and availability) to volunteering opportunities. Organisations are aware there is a need to design more suitable volunteering opportunities for seniors, particularly those that are less physically demanding. Many also lack the resources to set up and maintain sound volunteer management systems and practices, including IT, manpower systems and volunteer training.

Suggestions from seniors and volunteer organisations on how to encourage older people to volunteer include:

### Recruitment

- ▶ Start a national movement to promote senior volunteerism.
- ▶ Create diverse volunteerism opportunities that seniors can choose from, to best suit their interests and skills.
- ▶ Help seniors find volunteer opportunities near their homes.
- ▶ Keep volunteer sign-on processes simple and provide induction training for new volunteers.

### Retention

- ▶ Provide training and support for senior volunteers.
- ▶ Support senior volunteers' out-of-pocket expenses, such as travel costs.
- ▶ Create volunteer development pathways so that the more experienced ones can take on leadership roles and mentor newer volunteers.

### Recognition

- ▶ Recognise and appreciate senior volunteers.

# 4 HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Healthy seniors, happy seniors



“ I am most worried about depression and loneliness after my children have married and moved out and my husband has passed on. ”

Seniors say that to age well, one must be healthy – physically, mentally, socially, and emotionally. Seniors want to live more healthily, with access to information on health issues for people their age, health checks and exercise opportunities near their homes or at their workplaces.

Suggestions on how we can keep our seniors healthy, happy and well include:

### Awareness

- ▶ Give seniors a health journal in which they can keep track of their health screening and vaccination details. This journal could also contain tips on staying healthy.
- ▶ Conduct health and wellness talks on a wider range of issues, such as how to maintain a healthy relationship between spouses as well as gender-specific issues.
- ▶ Develop a guide to affordable and healthy diet options for seniors. Deliver health promotion messages to seniors' doorsteps, via mass media and the distribution of flyers.

### Access

- ▶ Create one-stop wellness hubs in the neighbourhood which offer a range of health and wellness activities and services, such as talks and seminars, health screening, and simple information and referral services.
- ▶ Enhance screening packages to include screening for fall risk, vision and hearing.
- ▶ Educate seniors with different physical abilities on the types of exercises that they can do.
- ▶ Provide mobile health services to seniors living in the community.

### Active community

- ▶ Tap on volunteers to befriend seniors at home or to accompany frail seniors to their medical appointments.
- ▶ Design health activities for the whole family, so that seniors can get involved along with their family members.
- ▶ Encourage employers to promote a healthy lifestyle to their mature workforce.



# 5

## SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT AND INCLUSION

Connecting people of all ages

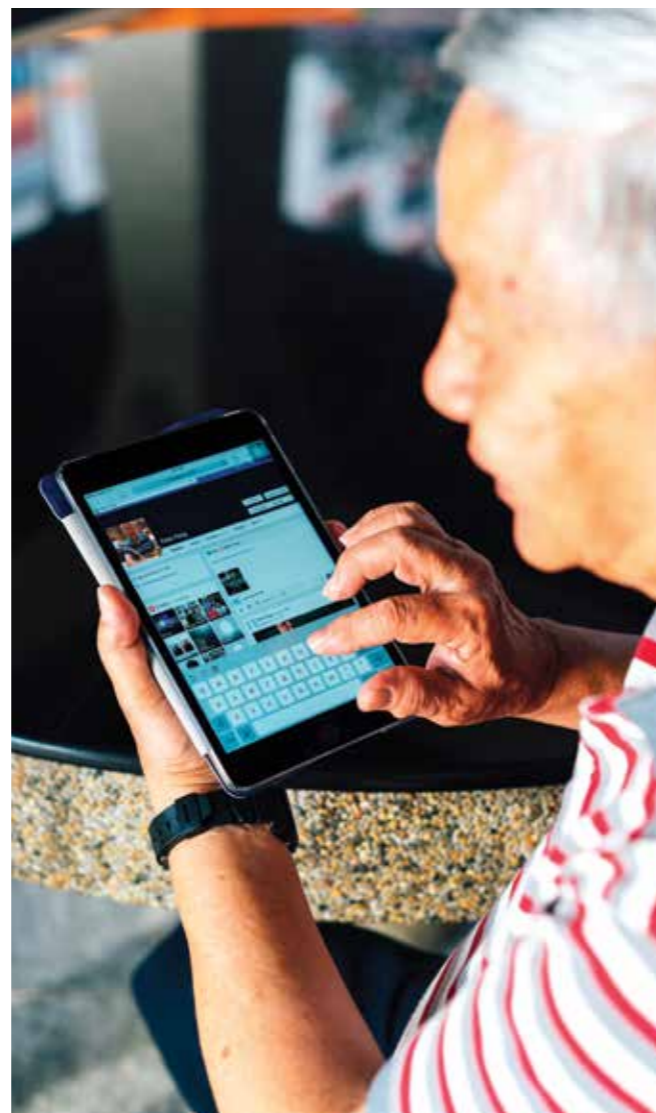


“ I think young people should respect seniors but I also think that seniors should respect young people. ”

Seniors hope to see an inclusive society where the young respect and care for the old. They also hope for more social spaces near their homes where they can interact frequently with other seniors so that they will be less lonely.

Suggestions on how we can strengthen care and respect for seniors include:

- ▶ Leverage technology such as chat groups on mobile platforms to build social support networks within the communities.
- ▶ Work with schools to nurture a culture of respect for seniors among our youth.
- ▶ Create more opportunities for inter-generational interaction, for instance by co-locating eldercare and childcare facilities.



# 6

## AGED CARE SERVICES

Ageing-in-place, remaining independent



“ Can we have day and night care in the void deck? We would like to take care of our elderly parents but when we cannot manage, can we bring them downstairs to a professional? ”

Seniors want to age comfortably and gracefully in the communities where they live. Seniors want eldercare centres and primary care services like General Practitioner (GP) clinics and polyclinics nearer their homes. They also hope that aged care facilities will offer a wider range of activities in the future to keep their minds and bodies active. Meanwhile, caregivers want more support in caring for their elderly loved ones, such as respite care and financial support.

Suggestions on how seniors can be supported to remain independent and to age in the community include:

### Greater support for caregivers

- ▶ Equip caregivers with better caregiving skills.
- ▶ More respite services for caregivers.
- ▶ Introduce eldercare leave.

- ▶ More assistance with information and referral services.

### Increase accessibility to home and community services

- ▶ Increase homecare and eldercare centre capacity.
- ▶ Better organisation of transport services to help seniors get access to centre-based aged care services.
- ▶ Wider range of home and community care options for seniors in need of care.
- ▶ Eldercare centres should provide a wider range of meaningful activities.
- ▶ Bring health services closer to the community. These include consultations with dieticians and medication reconciliation services.

### Affordability

- ▶ Provide greater funding support for aged care services, especially for the needy.



# 7 HOUSING

Supporting changing needs



“ I think the elderly like my parents’ generation would like to stay in their current homes. At that age, it’s a bit stressful for them to move, to have to restart over. ”

**Many seniors prefer to be independent and do not want to live with their children as they fear they may be a burden.**

Seniors hope to see more health and social services better integrated into housing options in the future. They also hope that their homes will be retrofitted with features to make them safer and more senior-friendly, e.g. light switches placed low enough for seniors in wheelchairs to reach, a clothes-drying system that is easier to manage, an emergency alert system and safer stoves which do not pose fire hazards.



# 8 TRANSPORT

Re-defining the travel experience



“ We should encourage more bus drivers to display considerate behaviour, such as waiting until an elderly person is seated before driving off. ”

**Seniors want to lead independent and active lives, and hope to see a more senior-friendly transport system that enables them to make their own way around Singapore more easily, safely and comfortably.**

Some transport improvements suggested by seniors include:

### Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) system

- ▶ Improve signage in MRT stations to aid wayfinding and reinforce seniors’ confidence in taking public transport.
- ▶ Allow seniors more time to board trains.
- ▶ Reduce the speed of escalators as well as the opening and closing of fare gates during off-peak hours.

### Bus system

- ▶ Larger bus service numbers for improved visibility.

- ▶ Audio announcement system in buses to help seniors keep track of the route and stops made by the bus.
- ▶ Automatic mechanism to help seniors in wheelchairs to board and disembark from buses.

### Walking and cycling

- ▶ Separate paths for walking and cycling to ensure safer commuting.
- ▶ Lifts or escalators at pedestrian overhead bridges.

### Social behaviours on public transport

- ▶ A sustained public education campaign to encourage users to move to the back of buses or to the middle of train cabins and to give up seats for seniors.
- ▶ Remind bus drivers not to accelerate or brake too suddenly which may cause seniors to lose their balance and fall.



# Re-defining the journey home

THE Land Transport Authority (LTA) held a series of Focus Group Discussions and a “Senior Footprint” Mapping Exercise, where LTA officers accompanied some seniors on their daily public transport journey, to better understand their travel patterns and needs.

On 20 August 2015, 24 seniors were invited to take part in a “footprint mapping” exercise at Bishan MRT station. These seniors were unfamiliar with Bishan MRT station, and were tasked with completing a series of simple wayfinding “missions” centred around the station.

LTA officers accompanied the seniors throughout the exercise to observe, and better understand and empathise with seniors’ experiences of our public transport system. This also allowed them to obtain direct feedback on how to make the transport network more senior-friendly.

Madam Tan Joo Geok, a 56-year-old participant said: “I am glad I had the chance to share my thoughts with the LTA officer who accompanied me. It is good that the government is making the effort to hear our views.”

The feedback from this exercise will go into LTA’s review of the design and placement of directional signs in bus interchanges and MRT stations, to better cater to seniors’ needs.



**1** Madam Tan embarked on her first mission to take the train from Toa Payoh station to Bishan station. She easily found the escalator at Toa Payoh station leading to the platform to take the train.



**2** Madam Tan managed to find a seat within the train. She constantly checked the MRT display routemap to ensure she knows where she was and how far she was from her stop.



**3** Madam Tan arrived at Bishan station and continued on her second mission to find her way to the Circle Line and the train platform indicating the way to Serangoon station. She suggested clearer signages could be placed to help her better navigate the transport system. LTA is reviewing how to improve the wayfinding signage at the interchange stations.



**4** Next, Madam Tan was asked to find her way to the tap-out area of Bishan station. She was glad that there was a sign at the platform that led her to it.



**5** Her next task was to find the nearest toilet. The sign says 240 metres, yet at the end of the 240 metres is... this lift. Where is the toilet?



**6** She approached an SMRT officer for help and realised she needed to take the lift and tap out of the station in order to get to the nearest toilet like at all other stations. LTA is reviewing the signage.



# 9 PUBLIC SPACES

Making our urban infrastructure more senior-friendly



“Senior-friendly design should not be an afterthought.”

**Seniors want to lead active lives. They tell us that we need to make our public places “safer”, “friendlier” and better equipped with amenities. Seniors feel that the government should actively promote awareness and interest in senior-friendly urban design.**

Specific suggestions include:

### Safer

- ▶ Increase the lighting along pedestrian pathways and use non-slip flooring. Surfaces with grooves should be replaced so that wheelchair-users can navigate these pathways too.
- ▶ Improve steps and stairways. There should be ample handrails and the height of the steps should be kept lower. Steps should also be wide enough and have good colour contrast.

### Friendlier

- ▶ Improve wheelchair access to public amenities such as hawker centres and eating outlets.
- ▶ Install signage with wordings in bigger fonts in public areas.
- ▶ Install more sheltered walkways with railings and gentle ramps.
- ▶ Install more benches with backrests and handles on both sides so seniors can sit down and stand up easily.

### Additional amenities

- ▶ Install more senior-friendly toilets in public places.
- ▶ Situate essential services such as clinics, aged care facilities and food establishments near residences.
- ▶ Create more social spaces within residential areas, to encourage seniors to meet with friends and neighbours.

# 10 RESEARCH ON AGEING

Understanding needs, encouraging innovation



“It is worth studying the differences among different ageing sub-populations, to understand what matters in enabling people to age in a better way.”

**Experts highlighted the need for Singapore to conduct more research into ageing. Research should be specific to the local context and involve researchers from various disciplines. Research outcomes should also be applicable to real life scenarios.**

Experts identified the following research priorities for Singapore:

### Expanding health span

- ▶ Research into the prevention as well as the management of age-related conditions.
- ▶ Research into effective programmes that can delay the decline of brain function.

### Productive longevity

- ▶ Research into retirement adequacy or ways to help seniors transit from employment to retirement, and how to meet their

need for social connectivity.

- ▶ Research into the factors that motivate seniors to remain in the workforce and to engage in lifelong learning and volunteerism.

### Ageing-in-place

- ▶ Study how urban design and architecture affects a person’s living space as they age. “Living Laboratories” can be created to study how adaptable design concepts can be applied to address the ageing community’s evolving needs.
- ▶ Research into care models that can better and more effectively support seniors and their caregivers.
- ▶ Research on seniors’ social connectivity, and its link to depression and loneliness.





## CHAPTER 2

# ACTION PLAN FOR SUCCESSFUL AGEING

**A Nation for All Ages.** We want Singapore to be the best place for Singaporeans to grow old in, and a model for successful ageing.



# THE ACTION PLAN FOR SUCCESSFUL AGEING

is jointly developed by government agencies, voluntary welfare and non-profit organisations, academia, businesses, community and union leaders, with feedback received from our public consultation.

There are more than 70 initiatives in 12 areas – health and wellness, learning, volunteerism, employment, housing, transport, public spaces, respect and social inclusion, retirement adequacy, healthcare and aged care, protection for vulnerable seniors and research – to prepare Singapore for rapid population ageing in the next decade.



## 1 A SUCCESSFULLY AGEING SINGAPORE

This is what a successfully ageing Singapore will be like:



### OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL AGES

Singapore will be a place where everyone, including seniors, can continually learn, grow and achieve their fullest potential.



### KAMPONG FOR ALL AGES

Singapore will be a caring and inclusive society that respects and embraces seniors as an integral part of our cohesive community.



### CITY FOR ALL AGES

Singapore will be distinctive globally not just for its economic success, but also as a model for successful ageing.



## 2 OUR KEY INITIATIVES AND TARGETS\*



### Lifelong Employability

- ▶ The re-employment age will be raised from 65 to 67 by 2017, to enable workers to work longer if they are willing and able to, with the possibility of further increases in the future as our population ages.

### Health and Wellness

- ▶ A National Seniors' Health Programme that will reach over 400,000 older adults.
- ▶ A new workplace health programme that will target 120,000 mature workers aged 40 and above.

### Senior Learning

- ▶ A National Silver Academy that will eventually provide some 30,000 learning places for seniors to pursue their interests.
- ▶ We aim to have 100 schools and Voluntary Welfare Organisations/ community organisations to come on board the Intergenerational Learning Programme.



### Senior Volunteerism

- ▶ We aim to recruit an additional 50,000 senior volunteers.

### Community Befriending

- ▶ Expand home visitation programmes in at least 50 neighbourhoods to keep social isolation and poor health at bay among vulnerable seniors.

### Inter-generational Harmony

- ▶ Co-locate eldercare and childcare facilities in some 10 new Housing & Development Board housing developments.

### Aged Care

Between 2015 and 2020, the Ministry of Health (MOH) will:

- ▶ More than double the number of Community Hospital beds.
- ▶ Increase nursing home capacity by more than 70%.
- ▶ Increase home and community care places by 50% and 100% respectively.

### Active Ageing and Assisted Living

- ▶ MOH has planned another 40 day centres for seniors by 2020. About a quarter of these centres will be large Active Ageing Hubs in housing developments, providing active ageing and assisted living services to seniors.

### Transport

The Land Transport Authority will:

- ▶ Implement 35 Silver Zones by 2020.
- ▶ Double the number of Green Man Plus traffic lights from the current 500 to 1,000 by end-2018.
- ▶ Install lifts at an additional 41 pedestrian overhead bridges by 2018.
- ▶ Replace all buses with wheelchair-accessible ones by 2020.

### Research

- ▶ The National Research Foundation will set aside up to \$200 million for a National Innovation Challenge on Active and Confident Ageing to catalyse research related to ageing.

\* We plan to achieve the targets within the next 10-15 years, except where stated otherwise.





### CHAPTER 3

# OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL AGES

**Longevity is Opportunity.** Seniors will have opportunities to continue working, learning and growing as they enjoy many more years of healthy life.





# 1 LIFELONG EMPLOYABILITY

In the past decade, Singapore's tripartite partners — the government, unions and employers — have introduced a number of measures to facilitate the lifelong employability of our older workers. For example:

- ▶ The **Retirement and Re-employment Act** was enacted in 2012 to provide more opportunities for workers to work beyond the statutory minimum retirement age of 62 and up to the age of 65.
- ▶ The **Special Employment Credit**, which offsets the monthly wages of Singaporean employees aged above 50 earning up to \$4,000 a month, was introduced in 2011.
- ▶ The government expanded and enhanced the system of **Continuing Education and**

**Training (CET)** to help Singaporeans re-skill and up-skill, as they progressed in their careers or switched jobs.

- ▶ The **Tripartite Alliance for Fair and Progressive Employment Practices (TAFEP)** was formed in 2006 to encourage employers, employees and the general public to view older workers more positively.
- ▶ In 2013, the tripartite partners introduced the **WorkPro** programme to help employers put in place initiatives to improve work-life harmony, and to recruit and retain older workers and back-to-work locals to meet their manpower needs.

The positive outcomes are:

- ▶ Our employment rate for residents aged 55 to 64 grew by 13.5 percentage points from 2006 to 2015 to reach a record high of 67.2% in 2015<sup>2</sup>. We have one of the highest older population employment rates amongst OECD<sup>3</sup> countries.
- ▶ Our re-employment rate is also high; nearly all local employees who turned 62 between July 2013 and June 2014 were offered re-employment.
- ▶ Median gross monthly incomes of older full-time employed resident workers aged 55 and above grew by 2.6% per annum in real terms over the last five years<sup>4</sup>. This was higher than the increase for full-time employed residents in general.

**The government will continue to maximise the employability of Singaporeans throughout their longer life spans.**



<sup>2</sup> Source: Comprehensive Labour Force Survey, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM.

<sup>3</sup> Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

<sup>4</sup> Data pertain to gross monthly income from work (including employer CPF contributions) of full-time employed residents, excluding full-time National Servicemen. The compounded annual growth rate was derived for the period of 2009 to 2014 based on incomes deflated by the Consumer Price Index for all items at 2014 prices. Source: Comprehensive Labour Force Survey, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM.



In the next five years, we will introduce a number of new initiatives to help Singaporeans remain employable as they age. These initiatives address seniors' call for more job and training opportunities, as well as their different aspirations.

- ▶ **The re-employment age will be raised from 65 to 67 by 2017, to enable workers to work longer if they are willing and able to, with the possibility of further increases in the future as our population ages.**
- ▶ **SkillsFuture will enable seniors to take ownership of their training and career needs and embrace lifelong learning.**

#### THE RANGE OF SKILLSFUTURE INITIATIVES INCLUDES:

##### Skills-Based Modular Courses offered by Post-Secondary Education Institutions (PSEIs)

- These provide more flexible, bite-sized and targeted learning opportunities at PSEIs for working adults to acquire relevant skills without necessarily pursuing a full qualification programme.

##### SkillsFuture Mid-Career Enhanced Subsidy

- Since the second half of 2015, all Singapore Citizens aged 40 and above enjoy higher subsidies of up to 90% of course fees for Singapore Workforce Development Agency-supported certifiable courses. They also enjoy at least 90% of programme cost for Ministry of Education-subsidised full-time and part-time courses (Nitec to postgraduate courses) at the Institute of Technical Education, polytechnics and publicly-funded universities.



- ▶ **The government will continue to support employers to re-design jobs for seniors and create age-friendly workplaces.** Under WorkPro, there are various grants to support employers to re-design their workplace practices, processes and jobs. WorkPro will be extended and enhanced in 2016 to catalyse companies' efforts to re-design jobs for older workers. To build capabilities, the tripartite partners are working with Institutes of Higher Learning to further develop a **training programme specific to the management of older workers in Singapore.** The programme covers core topics including human resource management, sociological aspects of ageing, workplace safety and health and job re-design. In addition to building local capabilities in age management, we are developing a **job re-design toolkit** to provide practical guidance to companies on re-designing jobs for a mature workforce.

- ▶ **TAFEP will continue to shape a fair and inclusive workplace culture by educating and supporting employers to adopt age-inclusive employment practices.** This is complemented by the Ministry of Manpower's interventions, where companies found to have discriminatory employment practices will have their work pass privileges curtailed.
- ▶ **The Ministry of Health (MOH) and the Health Promotion Board will bring healthy lifestyle activities to the doorstep of mature workers.** A new workplace health programme will be implemented across seven sectors targeting 120,000 mature workers aged 40 and above. As part of the programme, we will survey the workers to understand the key health issues that they face, provide health screenings at the workplaces and design workplace-specific preventive health programmes to address

the health issues most salient to them.

- ▶ **Some Voluntary Welfare Organisations, such as Centre for Seniors (CFS), have developed programmes to help older workers seeking a career transition as well as those preparing for retirement.** The CFS programme will help seniors better understand government schemes in housing, healthcare and retirement adequacy. There will also be a programme to train union leaders to be effective advocates of re-employment and retirement matters. After the training, they will be able to coach older workers in their respective sectors on related topics, such as how to plan for retirement or switch to a new career.
- ▶ **MOH hopes to partner community organisations and companies to provide more bite-sized job opportunities for seniors within the community.**





## Taxi drivers get a “tune-up”

IT IS not easy being a taxi driver in Singapore. They are on the road for 12 hours a day or more, rain or shine, dealing with passengers of all types, taking short breaks for a hurried meal or a trip to the toilet. By the time they get home, they are too exhausted to think about exercise or even having a healthy meal.

ComfortDelGro taxi driver Lim Ah Bah (facing page), 65, has been plying the streets of Singapore for 37 years and confesses that indulging in his favourite dishes like nasi briyani and char kway teow makes him happy after a long day at the wheel.

SMRT taxi driver Mazlan Mohamed Ali (below) also faces the same problem. The 41-year-old, who has been driving taxis for almost three years, treats himself to his favourite meal of hamburgers, especially if he has had a tough day on the road.

The two men, however, had to take a different route with their lifestyle when health coaches from the Health Promotion Board (HPB) and Alexandra Health System visited their respective taxi service centres as part of a new workplace health screening programme called “Check Car, Check Body” which started in June 2014. While their taxis are being serviced, the drivers get a “tune-up” themselves.

The programme offers taxi drivers a free health screening for high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes and obesity. Health coaches stationed at the service centres conduct monthly one-on-one follow-up sessions to customise a health plan for each driver. The coaches also advise them on how to prevent or manage chronic diseases, how to put less stress on their necks and backs while driving as well as how to deal with fatigue. A second screening is then conducted around twelve months later to determine any improvement to their health status.

This partnership with ComfortDelGro and SMRT is part of HPB’s efforts to step up its workplace health promotion programmes, especially for mature workers who are not desk-bound, work shifts and may find it difficult to fit in a visit to the doctor for a health check.

And the programme has garnered success. HPB found that 50% of taxi drivers who had high blood pressure, blood glucose or cholesterol readings at the first screening and returned for the second health screening have shown improvement in their screening results. They also made changes to their diet and made an effort to exercise frequently. Since 2015, the programme has been extended to more ComfortDelGro and SMRT service centres around the island, reaching out to more than 8,800 taxi drivers.

For Mr Lim, the programme proved to be a great motivator. He said: “After three to four months, I now go easy on the char

kway teow and have switched from kopi (coffee) with sugar and milk to now kopi-o kosong (black coffee with no sugar). I also ask for less rice and more vegetables. I lost around 4.5kg; my trousers feel loose and my blood pressure has gone down too.” Now he encourages his taxi driver friends to attend the “Check Car, Check Body” programme too.

For Mr Mazlan, the hamburgers have taken a backseat. He said: “My diet now consists mainly of fish and vegetables. They are not my favourite, but I have to think of my health for the longer term.”

He has shed 5kg after six months and hopes to drop a few more. “Like those mobile health screening buses that came to my school when I was younger, this ‘Check Car, Check Body’ programme has been a wake-up call for what we take for granted and forget to take care of in our busy schedules... our health,” added Mr Mazlan.





## May the SilverForce be with you



WHEN his mother struggled to find ways to spend her time meaningfully after his father's passing, an idea formed in Mr Eugene Goh's brain. The 39-year-old former civil servant thought if his mum had a hard time feeling productive, what about other people her age? At the same time, he knew that local Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) were struggling with manpower issues, given the national move to cut back on the reliance on foreign labour.

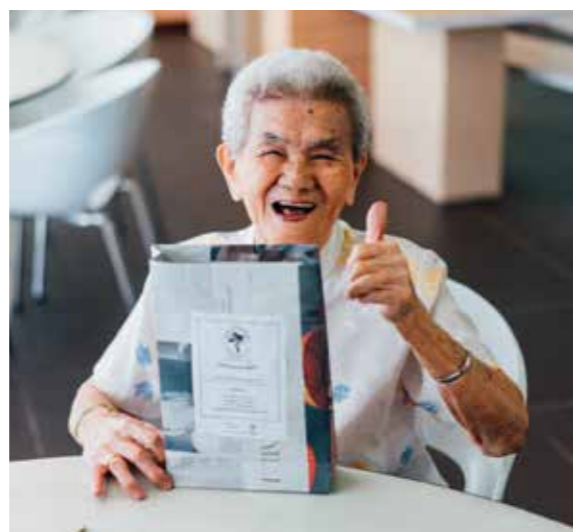
Tapping on his experience as a former management consultant, he became a matchmaker... of sorts. In late 2014, he set up SilverForce, a social enterprise that matches SMEs with senior citizens who can provide a service while working from their homes or activity centres.

For example, he convinced Bollywood Veggies, an organic farm in Kranji, to buy newspaper carrier bags made by the seniors at NTUC Health's SilverAce Senior Activity Centre.

Mr Goh, who is now the managing partner in a firm that offers training for management consulting skills, said: "Providing such services gets the seniors out of their houses and into social spaces. It helps them learn problem-solving skills and lets them earn some pocket money. At the same time, businesses can have a local source of labour at competitive rates and this reduces the need for outsourcing."

And it is a promising win-win situation for some seniors. Madam Chung Len Neo may be 88, but her fingers are still deft enough to transform newspapers into 100 carrier bags a week. She earns 15 cents a bag but chooses to donate her "wages" to charity. The sprightly widow who lives alone in a two-room flat in Lengkok Bahru said: "Some may want to earn the money but I want to donate it."

The newspaper carrier bags are just a start. Mr Goh is exploring ways for 2,500 seniors to be gainfully employed through micro-work like making gifts, packing wedding novelties or labelling items by hand.



## 2 LIFELONG LEARNING

As a society, Singapore places a high premium on education and training. The government has invested heavily in developing a strong education and training system for both our young and adult workforce. Since its establishment in 2003, the Singapore Workforce Development Agency (WDA) and its partners have set up a network of career centres to help Singaporeans with their employment and training needs, supported many training providers to offer quality training for our workers, developed national **Singapore Workforce Skills Qualifications (WSQ)** frameworks covering more than 30 industries, and set up an **Institute for Adult Learning** that trains adult educators. Our Post-Secondary Education Institutions (PSEIs) also offer Ministry of Education-subsidised part-time courses to working adults seeking to upgrade their skills. **SkillsFuture** will further drive national efforts to encourage lifelong learning and to help every Singaporean develop skills mastery for the future.

**Going forward, we will create more opportunities for Singaporeans to continue to enrich their silver years through the pursuit of lifelong learning.**

### ► SkillsFuture Credit

In January 2016, every Singapore Citizen aged 25 and above received an initial credit of \$500 which they can use to pay for about 10,000 approved skills-related courses, on top of existing government

subsidies. The credit will not expire.

### ► A new National Silver Academy will be set up to provide a wide range of learning opportunities for seniors to learn for interest and stay active. We aim to provide some 30,000 places for senior learners eventually.

The Academy will comprise a network of institutions such as Voluntary Welfare Organisations (VWOs), community organisations and PSEIs. Starting in mid-2016, seniors can participate in selected courses offered by PSEIs without having to take examinations and only for a token fee. Seniors can also attend short courses provided by the PSEIs as well as the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts, the LaSalle College of the Arts and non-profit community organisations and VWOs such as YAH! and Society for WINGS, an organisation that reaches out to women aged 40 and above. Short courses offered under the Academy will be subsidised by the government. Seniors will also be able to use their SkillsFuture Credit for selected Academy courses which are skills-related from the second quarter of 2016.

### ► The Council for Third Age aims to reach out to a total of 100 schools and VWOs to come on board the Intergenerational Learning Programme (ILP).

Organised by students, the ILP pairs students with senior learners to learn about various topics such as IT, social media and photography. The ILP serves as a platform for seniors to pursue lifelong learning and helps strengthen inter-generational ties through the sharing of knowledge and experiences between the young and the old.



## 70 and working on his fourth degree... and he is not done yet



HE HAS a bachelor's degree in management, an MBA, a DBA (Doctorate in Business Administration) and now, at 70, Mr Lee Chee Ngauk is two years away from getting his degree in accountancy.

"Since I was young, I knew I wanted to be an all-rounder, to know different things. As I run a management and consultancy business, there is an even greater need to be multi-disciplinary," he added.

In 2013, Mr Lee signed up at UniSIM for a degree in accountancy. "What I have studied so far is related to business. I needed the accounting know-how to better serve my clients," he explained.



Currently in his third year at UniSIM, Mr Lee is not fazed that he is attending classes with students who are his children's age.

He said: "Before I started the course, I was a little anxious and shy as 95% of the cohort is made up of youngsters. But they have taken to me and they are always asking me to team up with them for class discussions and projects."

He thinks he learns from them as much as they learn from him. "There is a lot of mutual learning between us. It makes things very lively."

Mr Lee doesn't plan to stop with this accountancy degree. He's already got his mind set on the next one, in law.

He said: "The more I know of one subject, the less I know of other topics. The law is required in anything we do, so it's important that I understand it. Once I graduate with that degree, what I really hope to do is pro bono work and give back to society."



### 3 SENIOR VOLUNTEERISM

**We have started a national senior volunteerism movement so that seniors can contribute their talents and experience. We aim to recruit an additional 50,000 senior volunteers.**

- ▶ **The President's Challenge will continue to champion a national senior volunteerism movement.** The National Volunteer and Philanthropy Centre (NVPC) has also introduced a new senior category in the annual President's Volunteerism and Philanthropy Awards, to provide national recognition to exemplary senior volunteers.
- ▶ **A Silver Volunteer Fund with a target size of \$40 million will be set up to help**

**community organisations better recruit and develop senior volunteers.**

The fund will be established through public donations, with a dollar-to-dollar match by the government, capped at \$20 million.

- ▶ **NVPC has been reaching out to businesses in its efforts to promote corporate giving in Singapore.** NVPC will encourage businesses to rally some 10,000 older employees to be involved in corporate giving or volunteerism opportunities.
- ▶ **NVPC has launched the Giving.sg portal to help individuals locate volunteer opportunities.** Seniors can use this portal to search for volunteer opportunities based on their interest, skills, availability or preferred volunteering location. The portal will facilitate an easier and more meaningful giving experience.





## The rainbow kuih lapis that helped build Jamiyah Singapore



WHEN Madam Hajjah Zainab Khamis (holding book) started volunteering 45 years ago, she had no idea her baking skills would have such an impact on Jamiyah Singapore (the Muslim Missionary Society of Singapore). Her weekly cooking classes and her rainbow kuih lapis raised much needed funds for the organisation founded in 1932 to help the Muslim community.

It all began in 1970 when her husband, the late Haji Abu Bakar Maidin, became the president of Jamiyah Singapore. With only \$5.60 in its kitty and 190 members, the society embarked on a fund-raising effort as well as a membership recruitment drive. The aim was to rebuild its headquarters in Geylang and fund its welfare programmes.

Madam Zainab chipped in by holding cooking classes which became hugely popular among the women in the community and her now-famous rainbow kuih lapis (rainbow steamed layer cake) sold like... hot cakes.

Now a sprightly 80, Madam Zainab, or Mak Nab as she is known around

Jamiyah Singapore, remains the advisor to the society's Women and Family Department. She organises charity carnivals, develops women's programmes and even opens her home to people of different races and religions for major occasions. She also rolls up the sleeves of her baju kurung and cooks up a feast when required, often encouraging other women to join her. In 2015, she helped volunteers pack 10,000 packets of bryani to feed those who attended Jamiyah's annual religious and cultural event Maulidur Rasul Jamiyah.

Jamiyah's vice-president Dr H.M. Saleem knows the value of a veteran volunteer like Madam Zainab. He said: "When we call, volunteers hesitate to come. But when she calls, they come. They respect her."

As for Madam Zainab, her decades of cooking and baking for Jamiyah have been worth it. "Jamiyah and the community are one family and that is very precious to me. I will sacrifice what I can for the good of the community. I will continue to serve for as long as I can," she said.



## I feel younger... when I help people to be happy



**Mr Albert Louis, 65**  
Active senior and drum expert

“ I HAVE been playing the drums for over 50 years... and I am convinced they have the power to heal. When I gave up a successful career in music — I was very tired of touring all the time — I wanted to devote myself to volunteering with children, the elderly and the mentally ill.

I wanted to stay creative and yet use drumming as a means to touch other people's lives. After all, I had co-founded two successful local bands — Culture Shock and Culture Vulture — in the 1980s and 1990s. I even toured for two years as a percussionist with Mando-pop artiste A-Mei in the late 1990s. I was paid very well but, after a while, it all became a job.

Now, when I see people play the drums, I can sense they are happy. I hope to bring this happiness to

the seniors especially those with dementia, Parkinson's disease or those who have a disability. I have seen how playing the drums can improve their coordination and, more importantly, restore their self-esteem and confidence.

I am also living proof that one is never too old to learn. At 65, after years of playing so many kinds of percussion instruments — from the Malay kompang to the Western drums, Chinese cymbals, Indian tabla and Korean janggu — I recently picked up yet another instrument called the Noodle, an electric percussion instrument that looks like a flat noodle. If I can do it, so can other seniors. We need to believe that we are just as good as a younger person. And we can and do want to lead meaningful lives. We need to be given the chance. ”





## 4 NATIONAL SENIORS' HEALTH PROGRAMME

Over the past few years, several organisations have introduced programmes to promote health and wellness among our seniors. In 2008, the People's Association introduced the **Wellness Programme** which encouraged older persons to go for regular health screening for chronic diseases as well as to remain physically and socially active through activities such as brisk walking and Tai Chi. The programme has since been implemented island-wide. In 2010, HPB introduced the **Community Functional Screening Programme (CFSP)** to detect early signs of functional decline in seniors aged 60 and above, so that they can go for appropriate treatment and make lifestyle changes to remain independent and active.

The CFSP comprises a series of tests and questionnaires that cover the following areas: continence, mood, physical function, oral health, hearing and vision. In 2013, the Agency for Integrated Care started working with community-based organisations to set up **Community Resource, Engagement and Support Teams (CREST)** to reach out to seniors who may be at risk of dementia or depression. CREST teams educate the public on the possible signs of dementia and depression, to raise greater awareness about these conditions so that more timely support and intervention can be provided to individuals at risk of or with dementia/ depression. Currently, there are 10 CREST teams in the community which have reached out to more than 32,000 seniors island-wide.



Going forward, the Ministry of Health will launch a new **National Senior's Health Programme** to systematically promote health education and preventive health services for older adults. The national programme will seek to educate seniors on key health issues related to age, encourage seniors to adopt healthy living habits and bring preventive health services to their doorsteps. We target to reach over 400,000 older adults.

Some of the new initiatives seniors can look forward to are:

- ▶ **A public education programme on dementia** to raise awareness about the condition so caregivers can seek help early if they identify signs in their care recipients.
- ▶ **A falls prevention education programme to equip seniors** with self-assessment tools, tips to reduce the risk of falls, and community-based interventions.
- ▶ **A set of strength and balance exercises suitable for seniors of different physical abilities** to encourage all seniors to exercise.
- ▶ **Practical healthy eating tips for seniors.**
- ▶ **A health booklet to help seniors keep track of their health status**, including screening results and vaccination records.
- ▶ **Mobile health services** to take preventive health services to the doorstep of seniors in their communities.
- ▶ **A pilot community dental programme to improve the oral health of seniors in the community.**





## Ready, get set, go!

SOME seniors think that as long as they exercise, their risk of falling is low. But the truth is that other factors like poor sight and hearing, medication and even insomnia can also add to the risk. To assess the fall risk of seniors and to educate them before accidents happen, Alexandra Health System has started a falls assessment programme that screens residents living in the North of Singapore either through walk-ins to the Community Nurse Posts such as the Wellness Centre @ Nee Soon South and Chong Pang Social Service Hub or public call-ins for appointments. The session gives the nurse a chance to assess the senior's risk of falling and share with them the things they could do to lower it. Madam Grace Seah, 70, thought she would give it a try as she had been feeling unsteady on her feet. She thought it might be because of her weak knees or insomnia.

The test starts with a nurse taking readings of Madam Seah's blood pressure and weight, and assessing her vision and health condition of her feet. This is followed by questions about her health and fall history. Next, a series of tests to check Madam Seah's strength, reflexes and visual acuity.

Madam Seah found the assessment useful. She said: "All along I thought it was my knees that were giving me problems because I can't squat easily and when I do, I find it hard to get up. But now that the nurse says it could be my back because that's where I'm experiencing pain, I might want to schedule some physiotherapy appointments to learn the right way to exercise my back."



**1** Madam Seah tests her grip strength as poor grip strength could suggest frailty.



**2** She clicks on the mouse each time the giant button on screen lights up. Normal reaction time indicates good eye-mind-hand coordination.



**3** To test her contrast sensitivity, Madam Seah has to match the symbol she sees. Poor contrast sensitivity would make driving or climbing the stairs in dim conditions difficult.

Next come the practical assessments.



**4** The Forward Reach Test assesses her ability to reach forward without losing her balance.



**5** The Chair Stand Test gauges her lower limb strength – she has to get up from a sitting position and sit down again, all the time with her arms folded across her chest.



**6** The Timed Up and Go Test measures Madam Seah's ability and time taken to stand, walk three metres, turn around at the cone, walk back and sit down safely. No sweat at all!





## 5 RETIREMENT ADEQUACY

Seniors want to feel assured that they can afford their living expenses, healthcare and long-term care needs, after they retire.

The **Central Provident Fund (CPF)** is a key pillar supporting the retirement needs of our population. To enable Singaporeans to save more for their own retirement, the government has been rebalancing the CPF system towards retirement and healthcare needs. In view of longer life expectancy, a national annuity scheme **CPF LIFE** was introduced in 2009 to provide a steady stream of income for life when Singaporeans reach their age at which they can start receiving their CPF LIFE payouts. To provide added retirement income, the Ministry of National Development (MND) has further enhanced the **Lease Buyback Scheme** and **Silver Housing Bonus** to provide greater flexibility to suit different needs and allow more elderly households to unlock their housing equity.

Seniors with healthcare needs can benefit from **enhanced subsidies and expanded Medisave use** for outpatient care. Premium subsidies for **MediShield Life** are available to seniors from lower and middle income households. Finally, for those who still cannot afford care, there is **Medifund**, a government endowment fund to ensure no Singaporean is denied good basic medical care because of the inability to pay. In November 2007, **Medifund Silver** was launched to deliver targeted assistance to needy elderly Singaporean patients.

For seniors who require long-term care, subsidy coverage was expanded in 2012 to cover up to

two-thirds of households. Subsidies for home- and community-based services such as day care for seniors were also increased to up to 80% to

better support ageing-in-place. The severe disability insurance scheme **ElderShield** provides a fixed-term monthly cash payout of \$300 or \$400 for up to 60 or 72 months respectively to help defray out-of-pocket expenses for the severely disabled.

The \$10 million Seniors' Mobility Fund was expanded into a \$50 million **Seniors' Mobility and Enabling Fund** in 2013 to help seniors live independently within the community, through subsidies for assistive devices such as walking aids, wheelchairs, geriatric chairs and hospital beds, transport to eldercare and dialysis centres funded by the Ministry of Health (MOH) and home healthcare items such as catheters and milk supplements. Drug subsidies were also progressively extended to MOH-subsidised

intermediate and long-term care patients in 2015. These recent steps to improve the affordability of long-term care have assuaged anxieties and reduced financial burdens.

To recognise the contributions of our Pioneers and give them peace of mind on healthcare costs, the government also introduced the **Pioneer Generation Package** in 2014. Pioneers receive additional subsidies on top of subsidies at polyclinics and Specialist Outpatient Clinics, and participating General Practitioner and dental clinics under the **Community Health Assist Scheme (CHAS)**. Pioneers also receive annual Medisave top-ups for life and special premium subsidies for MediShield Life. Under the **Pioneer Generation Disability Assistance Scheme**, disabled Pioneers receive life-long cash assistance to help with their care expenses.







Going forward, we want to provide Singaporeans with greater peace of mind.

- ▶ **The new Silver Support Scheme supplements the incomes of the bottom 20% to 30% of Singaporeans aged 65 and above, who have lesser means in their retirement years.** Silver Support is a permanent feature in our social security system. The assessment for Silver Support eligibility is done automatically, so there is no need for any application. Silver Support is paid out quarterly, with eligible seniors receiving between \$300 and \$750 per quarter. All seniors who qualify for Silver Support will receive these supplements for life, as long as they remain eligible.
- ▶ **Singaporeans aged 55 and above enjoy an additional 1% of CPF interest on the first \$30,000 of their CPF balances from 2016.** This means they can enjoy a higher risk-free interest rate of up to 6%.
- ▶ **CPF contribution rates for older workers** have increased to help Singaporeans save more while working. From 2016, workers aged 50 to 55 enjoy the same CPF contribution rates as their younger counterparts.
- ▶ **CPF monthly salary ceiling has increased from \$5,000 to \$6,000 from 2016.** This will enable more Singaporeans

to accumulate a higher level of CPF savings during their working years for their retirement needs.

- ▶ **Singaporeans now have more flexibility over their CPF savings.** Singaporeans can choose to transfer their CPF balances above their Basic Retirement Sum to their spouses so they can take full advantage of the extra interest on lower balances and enjoy a higher effective rate overall. They will also be given a choice to defer their CPF LIFE payout up to the age of 70, or top-up their Retirement Accounts up to the Enhanced Retirement Sum, to enjoy permanently higher payouts. Furthermore, CPF members will only need to choose their CPF LIFE plans at the time they wish to start receiving payouts. A one-to-one retirement planning service has also been introduced to help members

approaching 55 years of age to make informed decisions about their CPF savings.

- ▶ **The Ministry of Health will review the financing system for long-term care, to give Singaporeans greater assurance that they will be able to afford aged care services for themselves or their loved ones, should they need it.** The review will consider how to balance the affordability of long-term care with the need to ensure longer-term sustainability of our national expenditure on care. It will consider factors such as how much of the costs of aged care should be borne by individuals and their families and how much should be risk-pooled, and how to help Singaporeans save for long-term care needs when they are younger.







#### CHAPTER 4

# KAMPONG FOR ALL AGES

**Cohesive home with inter-generational harmony.** Singapore must be a cohesive community where seniors can age actively and happily. We should try to ensure that our seniors do not feel lonely or become socially isolated.





# 1 DEVELOP “COMMUNITIES OF CARE” TO HELP SENIORS AGE-IN-PLACE

As family sizes shrink, family support for seniors may weaken. The number of seniors living alone is likely to increase from 35,000 in 2012 to 83,000 in 2030. However, we can complement family support with community support. We can create more opportunities for friendship and mutual support among seniors and their neighbours in the community.

- ▶ **The People’s Association will leverage on its community facilities and network to deliver health services**

**and promote health education, senior learning and volunteerism under the Wellness Programme, so that we can eventually have a wellness hub in every mature neighbourhood.**

**The Wellness Programme will be implemented at suitable community facilities** for seniors to interact, make friends, attend health talks and exercise classes. The community facilities will also serve as health services delivery points for health screening.

- ▶ **Expand the network of social services to support low-income and vulnerable seniors.** In 2014, the Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF) organised its community-based social services into Senior Cluster Networks (SCN) within each Housing & Development Board town to better reach out to and support vulnerable seniors to stay engaged in the community and receive coordinated care. Each town is supported by a range of services comprising Senior Activity Centres, case management teams, assisted living options and volunteers to cater to the varying needs of low-income seniors with varying degrees of frailty and family support. MSF targets to set up 19 SCNs island-wide.
- ▶ **Expand home visitation programmes in at least 50 neighbourhoods to keep social isolation and poor health at bay.**

The Ministry of Health (MOH) piloted a community befriending programme in October 2014 in Bukit Batok, Bukit Batok East and Taman Jurong. The befrienders, who live in the same neighbourhood as the seniors they befriend, call and visit these seniors at least twice a month. During each visit, the befriender is trained to spot any change in the seniors’ mood, physical condition or living environment. If the seniors need help, the befriender then informs the care provider who will decide the next relevant step.

Going forward, MOH wants to work with various Voluntary Welfare and grassroots organisations to recruit volunteers in at least 50 neighbourhoods who can befriend seniors living alone in their communities and provide social support.



## I feel younger... when I am with my RC friends



**Madam Chew Siam Hiang, 68 (above)**  
Retiree

“ I AM very happy in my neighbourhood as there are always plenty of events and programmes organised by the Sunflower RC (Residents’ Committee). There is always something happening at the RC like folk dancing or walk-and-jog events. I especially like the health talks and the exercise classes like aerobics — I cannot walk very well, so I sit down and do the moves — or I join the balloon art class or sometimes they have a first aid class.

When there is a big event, many residents will come to volunteer their time. My RC even started a Nurse@RC programme so the old folks in the area can go for a check-up at the RC Centre at Blk 33 Bedok South Avenue 2.

Having the nurse come to the RC once a week is very good. Once, I stopped taking my blood pressure (BP) medicine because it made me feel giddy. The nurse, Miss Tan (Tan Kai Xin from Caring Hearts Nursing), insisted I see the doctor to change my medicine. She said my



BP was too high, about 150 to 160 and I must take medicine. So I went back to the doctor to change it.

My BP is now under control and the new medicine does not make me feel giddy. When Nurse Tan comes each week, she always checks on me and my husband, and gives me advice about my cholesterol and diet. That makes me happy. There are many old people in my area, so it’s good to have the nurse come once a week.

Apart from the nurse’s visit, there are also the volunteers from the Eastern Health Alliance who make friends with all the seniors and they also make sure we are okay. And because I have friends there, I keep up with my exercise. I feel happy and young. Before I couldn’t walk and needed my husband to push me in the wheelchair. Now I can walk, slowly, to the RC on my own. It makes me happy that I don’t need to rely on anyone to get me there. I can do it myself.

”

## I feel younger... when I help seniors in the community



**Madam Rosemary Lee, 70 (above)**  
Retired nurse

“ HAVING devoted five decades to healthcare as a mental health nurse, I was ready to retire to focus on my health and life. While chatting with my neighbour who is a member of the Residents’ Committee (RC), I found out about the ‘befrienders programme’ in my neighbourhood and immediately decided to help in whatever way I could.

I checked with the RC which coordinated the programme and they put me in touch with the Eastern Health Alliance which linked me up with 83-year-old Mr Teo Eng Swee in April 2015. He had been admitted to hospital thrice in the last couple of years, the latest being in March 2013 following a fall, and needed volunteers to check in on him. When I visit him every fortnight in his two-room rental flat, we spend most of the time chatting. He’s quite

reserved, but once you earn his trust, he opens up. We reminisce about the old days... he talks about the time he used to sell rojak, Hokkien mee, Teochew muay (Teochew porridge) and char kway teow at hawker centres. His memory is actually still very good. He still remembers the name of his Teochew muay stall... Peng You (Friends).

Having spent time with Mr Teo, I now understand how important it is to engage seniors in our community. After all, I am one too. At 70, I know I may not be as agile as I used to be in my younger days, but I can still contribute to our society. And, you know what, I don’t feel so old when I am useful and appreciated.

I hope more people my age or 10 years younger than me will come forward to volunteer; it will do us good to help others. ”





## 2 PROMOTE INTER-GENERATIONAL HARMONY

The Housing & Development Board (HDB) has introduced a number of policies to encourage Singaporeans to live close to and support their elderly parents: the **Multi-Generation Priority Scheme** encourages families to live close to each other in the same Build-To-Order projects where 2-room Flexi or 3-room flats are integrated with other flat types; the **Married Child Priority Scheme** encourages married children and parents to reside together, or within the same estate or neighbouring estates to foster mutual care and strengthen familial ties; and the **Senior Priority Scheme** gives priority to eligible seniors to buy 2-room Flexi flats in the same estate or near where they or their married children are living in.

More effort will be made to foster a cohesive society and strengthen inter-generational harmony:

- ▶ **A new Proximity Housing Grant (PHG) has been introduced to encourage Singaporean families to live closer together for mutual care and support.**

Families buying a resale HDB flat with or near their parents or married child receive a PHG of \$20,000. Singles buying a resale flat to live with their parents also get a \$10,000 grant.

- ▶ **HDB, the Ministry of Health (MOH) and the Early Childhood Development Agency (ECDA) will plan for eldercare and childcare facilities to be co-located in some 10 new HDB housing developments.** By co-locating the facilities and experimenting with shared spaces, we can create more opportunities for inter-generational bonding. MOH will also encourage existing operators of eldercare facilities to introduce innovative programmes that allow the young and old to interact.
- ▶ **Students will learn more about issues related to ageing as part of the school curriculum.** The Ministry of Education will incorporate issues related to ageing into our national school curriculum to instil in our young the importance of care and respect for seniors.



## 3 ENCOURAGE LOVE AND RESPECT FOR SENIORS

In 2015, the Ministerial Committee on Ageing partnered some 100 organisations to offer a suite of discounts and privileges for seniors in conjunction with our Golden Jubilee. The **SG50 Seniors** package included over 200 dining, leisure, lifelong learning, lifestyle and wellness privileges which were made possible with the support of public and private sector entities including Tote Board and the Singapore Business Federation (SBF).

We want to rally more organisations to come together and create a more inclusive and caring environment for our seniors.

- ▶ **A “PAssion Silver” Card will be issued to every Singaporean aged 60 and above or as they turn 60 years old.** This will serve as a clear age identifier for the people, public and private sectors to offer privileges to our seniors in honour of them. The People’s Association will work with its community, corporate and merchant partners, while SBF will encourage businesses and trade associations and chambers to support this initiative. The PAssion Silver Card will be launched in mid-2016.







# 4

## FUTURE-READY LEGISLATION TO PREPARE FOR SINGAPORE'S AGEING POPULATION

Today, there are two main Acts to protect vulnerable elderly. The **Maintenance of Parents Act** allows seniors who are unable to maintain themselves financially to obtain maintenance from their children. The **Mental Capacity Act** enables individuals to make a Lasting Power of Attorney to appoint someone they trust to make decisions on their behalf in case they lose mental capacity.

- ▶ **The government is looking into introducing a new Vulnerable Adults Act.** This will enable the State to intervene more effectively to protect vulnerable seniors and persons with disabilities who are suffering or at risk of harm due to abuse, neglect or self-neglect.







## CHAPTER 5

# CITY FOR ALL AGES

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**Live well and age confidently in place.** We want to transform Singapore into an age-friendly city where Singaporeans can age-in-place gracefully and confidently.





# 1 THE HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

The demographic challenge to the healthcare system is two-fold. First, demand for healthcare services will increase with an ageing population. Second, the supply of healthcare services will be constrained by low labour force growth.

The government has put in place a **Healthcare 2020 Masterplan** to expand our healthcare infrastructure to address growing healthcare needs. The Ministry of Health (MOH) is on track to meet its Healthcare 2020 commitments, with the completion of the Changi General Hospital-St Andrew's Community Hospital Integrated Building (2014) and the Ng Teng Fong General Hospital, Jurong Community Hospital and Yishun Community Hospital (2015). Going forward, MOH will open Sengkang General and Community Hospitals (2018), and a new Community Hospital in Outram (by 2020). Altogether MOH will increase the number of acute and community hospital beds, from 8,700 beds in 2014 to over 12,000 beds in 2020.

MOH is building new polyclinics in Jurong West, Punggol and Bukit Panjang as well as a primary care facility in Sembawang. It is also redeveloping the existing Ang Mo Kio and Yishun polyclinics, all by 2020, to increase capacity in the primary care sector.

Healthcare has become more affordable with the introduction of CHAS; expansion of Medisave use; enhancements to the subsidies for outpatient treatment and aged care; and the implementation of MediShield Life.

Going forward, MOH will shift the way it organises care in a few ways so that the healthcare delivery system will be better and more appropriate for older patients:

- ▶ **From disease-specific, fragmented care to person-centric care**

Seniors with more than one disease condition may need to make multiple visits to different clinics. We need to reduce the number of doctors they need to consult and focus on treating the person as a whole and not the diseases in isolation.

- ▶ **From hospital care to community care**

We need to build good models of care in the community, so seniors can be well supported where they stay, no matter their health condition.

- ▶ **From caring “for” to caring “with” our patients**

We need to help Singaporeans prepare for a long and healthy life. This includes understanding the motivation of seniors and their caregivers and empowering them with the knowledge and skills to take charge and manage their own health well.

**MOH will transform healthcare service delivery in the following ways:**

- ▶ **Enhance geriatric capability in acute hospitals**

- MOH will set up more inter-disciplinary Geriatric Care Teams (comprising doctors, allied health professionals and nurses) to provide holistic care for frail seniors.
- MOH will train more Geriatric Resource Nurses to advise care teams in adult wards on how to better care for very old patients.
- More healthcare professionals will be trained to care for seniors' needs.

- ▶ **Pilot community-based geriatric services to bring care closer to older Singaporeans in the community.**

A multi-disciplinary team of healthcare professionals will provide geriatric assessments, develop care plans and deliver team-based coordinated care for seniors to keep them well in the community.



## From 13 specialists to one GP



88-YEAR-OLD Madam Ang Hwea Kee had a doctor for most of her chronic conditions; a cardiologist, rheumatologist, ophthalmologist and respiratory physician. In one year, she had 13 specialist appointments and took about 16 different types of medicines. She and her family had trouble keeping track of the appointments and the progress of each condition. As a result, she was admitted twice to the hospital, staying a total of 13 days.

Her cardiologist then referred her to the Frontier Family Medicine Clinic (Frontier FMC) in Clementi to manage her heart condition. The FMC was set up in 2013 as part of an initiative by the Frontier Healthcare Group and National University Health System to better manage patients with stable and complex chronic conditions. Eventually, most of Madam Ang's medical conditions came under the family physician's care with close support from the hospital's specialists.

As part of the partnership, the family physicians have access to the patients' medical records at the National University Hospital. With access to Madam Ang's medical records, Dr Koh Thuan Wee and

the primary care team case manager were able to keep her out of the hospital several times when she had fluid in her lungs due to her weak heart. "There were other times when she developed a chest infection and consulted me first. I was able to treat her before the infection worsened," said Dr Koh.

A seamless exchange of patients' medical information between the GP and the specialists is crucial. He said: "If GPs don't have full view of a patient's medical history, they are more likely to send them to the Accident and Emergency (A&E) department for further management when they deteriorate."

The high quality, personalised care that doctors like Dr Koh provide, helps them build a strong rapport with patients and caregivers. "It is not only about treating the patients' medical conditions but also understanding their social background and needs," explained Dr Koh. For example, knowing Madam Ang's daughter had Tuesdays off from work helped the care team organise Madam Ang's medical appointments accordingly.

This integrated team-based care model is still being refined to help patients with multiple medical conditions.

Dr Koh said: "The overall improvement in patients' and caregivers' satisfaction by having a regular family physician, a primary care team to manage all their medical needs, with the hospital specialists' support, is undeniable. This warrants a further look at how we should continually innovate the way we deliver care."

Madam Ang's daughter, Ms Pauline Lim, is happy that her mum is under the FMC's care. She said: "Dr Koh is very warm and patient towards my mum. He or his team contact me when her condition isn't good. I am glad I let my mum come under their care in 2013."



### ► Develop Geriatric Dental Expertise and Services to improve the oral health of our senior population.

- With new dental facilities such as the Geriatric Special Care Dentistry Clinic at the National Dental Centre Singapore and the National University Centre for Oral Health, we will train healthcare professionals to better serve seniors and undertake more research in disease trends in geriatric dentistry.

### ► Further expand the capacity of intermediate and long-term care services between 2015 and 2020.

- More than double the number of Community Hospital beds.
- Increase nursing home capacity by more than 70%.
- Increase home and community care capacity by 50% and 100% respectively.

### ► Implement a new Masterplan on Home and Community Care to better support seniors to age-in-place.

- A new care assessment framework will be piloted to better evaluate seniors' needs so as to match them to appropriate services.

- MOH will work with providers to develop more holistic "packages" of home and community care to meet the needs of seniors. For example, seniors can be cared for partially at home and partially at day centres during the week and be provided with a more comprehensive suite of care services.

- MOH will introduce new aged care sector initiatives to support the sector's efforts in quality improvement, manpower and organisation development, and productivity.

### ► Ramp up manpower development to ensure there will be enough staff to support the expansion in aged care.

- MOH will step up the recruitment of Singaporeans into the aged care sector through job fairs, training and retention incentives.
- MOH will work with aged care providers to re-design more jobs so as to offer Singaporeans more flexible work arrangements in the aged care sector. We will also help aged care providers to increase manpower productivity through automation, adoption of technology and improvement of business processes.

### ► Expand community support for seniors with dementia.

MOH will reach out to residents, businesses and community organisations in different localities to form "dementia-friendly communities", where residents and staff of businesses can be trained to recognise and assist seniors with dementia who are in distress. This will give peace of mind to seniors and their caregivers. Seniors with dementia can remain active and move around in the community with less worry, because there will be helpful "friends of dementia" in their neighbourhoods to look out for them.





► **Enhance dementia care support at home and in the community.**

- The Agency for Integrated Care targets to expand the pool of elder-sitters from 90 to 160 by 2020. These elder-sitters can visit the homes of seniors with dementia to look after them and engage them in activities, while giving their caregivers a break.
- MOH also targets to increase the number of dementia day care places from 650 to 3,000.

► **Pilot new “Nursing Homes of the Future”.**

- MOH will experiment with new nursing home designs to create more dementia-friendly wards, as well as a homelier environment without compromising the affordability of care. New technologies will be tested in these homes to improve productivity.
- MOH will work with nursing home providers to pilot new programmes to rehabilitate residents so that they can recuperate faster and return home to their loved ones.

► **Test bed tele-health solutions to better care for older patients.**

MOH will test technologies, such as video consultation, tele-rehab and remote vital signs monitoring, to bring

care to the homes of seniors while making the delivery of healthcare more manpower efficient.

► **Enhance the capacity, affordability and quality of palliative care to support an ageing population.**

- MOH will increase the number of inpatient palliative care beds from 182 to 360 by 2020, and serve 1,000 more home palliative care patients.
- The Singapore Hospice Council will promote and implement a set of National Guidelines for Palliative Care.
- MOH has raised the Medisave withdrawal limits for both inpatient and home-based palliative care, and lifted Medisave withdrawal limits for home-based patients with cancer or end-stage organ failure.
- MOH has improved funding for home palliative care providers by moving away from funding based on the number of visits made to patients to funding based on a fixed amount for every patient under their care each month.
- MOH is also in the midst of rolling out subsidies for day hospice services, which brings together social and healthcare services for patients under palliative care.

## A home-like environment



AN UPCOMING nursing home in Ang Mo Kio has been designed to feel more home-like compared to existing nursing homes (artist impression above and below right). Visitors to the residential facility which is scheduled for completion in 2017 will be greeted by an apartment style set-up that encourages residents to live independently, like in their own homes. The facility has been designed with a common dining and activity area serving a smaller group of seniors who share the same living “cluster”. For those who prefer to have some private time, cosy corners will be scattered about where residents can read, nap or just watch the world go by. Adding to the tranquillity is a garden that also gives residents with green fingers a chance to potter about.

Building the facility this way affords some degree of privacy yet promotes social interactions among the residents. It also encourages residents to go about their daily activities with as little help as possible. This will help them adjust more quickly to life back home when they recover and return home. To cater

to this group, Ren Ci will test new short-stay services at this facility. The services will support seniors waiting for care arrangements to be made at home or who require some assistance while their conditions are being stabilised after a hospital discharge.

Ms Loh Shu Ching, CEO of Ren Ci Hospital said: “We want residents to feel that they are at home and not in a hospital. We also want them to lead independent, dignified lives regardless of their functional status. In addition, we feel a nursing home should be integrated with the neighbourhood and serve the needs of the community as much as the residents of the home. Hence the creation of a household unit layout and a nursing home without a fence.”







## 2 SENIOR-FRIENDLY HOUSING

The Housing & Development Board (HDB) has been making continuous efforts in a number of areas, to help our seniors age well. In 2013, HDB introduced the **Three-Generation, or 3Gen, flats** to encourage members of multi-generation families to live together for mutual care and support. Recently, in 2015, HDB replaced and merged Studio Apartments and 2-room flats under the **2-room Flexi Scheme**, which allows seniors to purchase 2-room Flexi flats with flexibility in the choice of lease length and fittings.

HDB has also introduced a number of hardware enhancements over the years. Since 1985, HDB made **barrier-free design** provisions at all levels of the neighbourhood, precinct and apartment blocks in its public housing towns.



<sup>5</sup> As at 31 Oct 2015.

<sup>6</sup> As at 31 Oct 2015.

HDB blocks built before 1990 did not have lift access at every floor. The heavily subsidised **Lift Upgrading Programme** changed that. Since 2001, about 5,000 blocks have been fitted with new lifts and/or have had their existing lifts upgraded. The **Enhancement for Active Seniors (EASE)** programme was introduced in 2012 to provide highly subsidised retrofit features such as grab bars, slip-resistant treatment to existing bathroom tiles and gentle ramps to make seniors' HDB flats safer. Since its launch, HDB has received more than 26,900<sup>5</sup> applications for EASE (Direct Application) and about 43,000<sup>6</sup> households have opted for EASE together with the **Home Improvement Programme** which addresses common maintenance issues that older flats face, such as spalling concrete.

Going forward, new initiatives are being planned to make our public housing heartlands more senior-friendly:

- ▶ **HDB and the Ministry of Health (MOH) will create “Continuing Care Precincts” in new housing developments.** In certain new public housing precincts, we are experimenting with the co-location of nursing homes and assisted living facilities with HDB flats in the same precinct, so that there is a “continuum” of options, from independent living to assisted living to residential nursing facilities, in the same precinct. The first two pilot projects are in Woodlands and Tampines North (artist impression of the new nursing home at Tampines North, below).



- ▶ **MOH has planned another 40 day centres for seniors by 2020 to provide integrated health and social care services to seniors.** About a quarter of these centres will be large “Active Ageing Hubs (AAH)” in HDB developments that will provide both active ageing programmes for active and ambulant seniors, as well as day care, day rehabilitation and assisted living services (such as housekeeping and grocery-shopping) for seniors who are frailer. These hubs can also be the venues for social and learning activities for all ages (artist impression of the interior of an AAH, below).



- ▶ **HDB will build “smarter” homes for seniors.** HDB is working with industry partners to explore suitable elderly monitoring and alert systems to monitor the safety and well-being of elderly HDB residents. These smart alert systems will be available for residents' subscription when the details are finalised.
- ▶ **MOH and the Ministry of National Development will promote senior-friendly towns.** Mature towns can be made safer and more senior-friendly in a number of ways, such as via the smoothing of pathways, installation of more rest stops, replacement of metal drain covers with less slippery concrete ones and heightening of colour contrasts for uneven surfaces.



## Making Marine Parade more senior-friendly

MARINE Parade was one of the earliest towns to be upgraded under the City For All Ages (CFAA) project. The vision of CFAA was to make each town more senior-friendly not just in terms of the infrastructure, but also in terms of better social programming to support seniors to age healthily, independently and confidently. Four years on, we take a look at the changes through the eyes of veteran grassroots leader Mr William Fletcher (below) who has lived in Marine Parade for the past three decades.



Mr Fletcher points out prominent block numbers.



At some junctions, the Green Man Plus facility has been installed to give seniors more time to cross the road. Seniors just have to tap their senior concession EZ-link card on the device to get 6 extra seconds.



Concrete slabs have also been placed over drains, making it safer for elderly pedestrians.



More benches with arm rests have been installed so seniors can sit down and stand up easily.



Void deck aprons which have been levelled, with additional handrails for support.





### 3 SENIOR-FRIENDLY TRANSPORT

The Public Transport Council and the Land Transport Authority (LTA) have been introducing measures to make it more affordable and convenient for seniors to move around via public transport.

Senior Citizen Concession Cardholders enjoy concessionary fares with significant discounts off adult fares of up to 60%. Seniors can also purchase a Senior Citizen Monthly Concession Pass that allows them unlimited travel on basic bus services and trains for one month. Since July 2015, seniors can also choose to purchase an Off-Peak Pass for unlimited basic bus and train rides if they travel more during the off-peak hours. These schemes are customised to lower the cost of travelling on public transport for seniors.

**LTA will be implementing a comprehensive plan to make our transport system senior-friendly.** LTA conducted consultation sessions with seniors to hear about the challenges that they face in using the public transport system, and also to gather feedback on prototypes of senior-friendly features. These suggestions and feedback were important in helping the LTA formulate a suite of measures to ensure that seniors can get around Singapore in a convenient, safe and comfortable way.

#### Walking

LTA will:

- ▶ **Silver Zones:** Implement 35 Silver Zones<sup>7</sup> by 2020 to improve road safety in areas with more seniors.
- ▶ **Green Man Plus:** Double the number of such traffic lights from the current 500 to 1,000 by end-2018, to extend crossing times at traffic junctions for seniors and persons with disabilities.
- ▶ **Railings:** Install them at selected sheltered link-ways between MRT stations and health institutions or residential homes for seniors, to provide seniors with greater support and improve safety.
- ▶ **Overhead bridges:** Install lifts at another 41 pedestrian overhead bridges by 2018, in addition to the existing six. LTA will continue to retrofit lifts at more overhead bridges near hospitals and polyclinics. This will make it easier for seniors to cross roads where pedestrian crossings are not feasible.
- ▶ **Rest stops:** Build seats at 50-metre intervals along selected sheltered walkways, so that seniors can rest while walking to their destinations.

<sup>7</sup> Silver Zones consist of road safety features that slow down motorists and remind them to look out for pedestrians. There are also features to remind pedestrians to be vigilant when crossing the road. These features include lower speed limits, enlarged centre dividers with speed humps, and "LOOK" markings painted in bright yellow for increased visibility.



(Above) Silver Zone Gateway at with 40km/h speed limit and yellow rumble strips to alert motorists to slow down.



(Above) 'LOOK' markings painted at road side ramps to remind pedestrians to look out for traffic. A special pedestrian refuge is also installed in the middle of the road for pedestrians to cross the road safely in two stages. Tactile tiles enable visually-disabled persons to better navigate the roads safely.

#### Buses

LTA will:

- ▶ **Wheelchair-friendly buses:** Replace all buses with wheelchair-accessible ones by 2020.
- ▶ **Foldable seats on buses:** Introduce foldable seats in new buses to increase flexible seating capacity.
- ▶ **Bus sensors:** Install sensors on new buses to record driving patterns to ensure a safer journey for the seniors.
- ▶ **Direct buses:** Introduce more bus services to enhance connectivity within mature estates as well as between mature estates and hospitals, as many seniors have shared that buses are their preferred form of public transport.
- ▶ **Priority queue at bus interchanges:** Implement priority queues at all new bus interchanges and integrated transport hubs. Seniors and persons with disabilities will be able to sit at dedicated areas while waiting for buses.
- ▶ **Bus stops:** Increase the size of the words on bus information posters at bus stops island-wide where feasible, to make them easier to read. LTA will also replace existing bum-rests at bus and taxi shelters with proper seats that come with armrests, which will aid seniors in standing up from a sitting position.
- ▶ **No advertisements on bus fronts:** Require windows on the front third of the buses to be kept clear of advertisements, so that commuters can more easily identify their location and destination.





## MRT Stations

LTA will:

- ▶ **MRT doors:** Extend the stop time of trains at MRT stations by around two to six seconds during off-peak hours, so that seniors have more time to board trains.
- ▶ **Seats:** Provide more seats in new MRT stations for seniors to rest.
- ▶ **Lifts:** Provide lifts to platforms at all stations, to allow for barrier-free accessibility.
- ▶ **Signs:** In addition to the existing use of colour contrast, enlarge the size of the words on directional signage, so that it is easier for seniors to read and review how information on directions is organised and displayed. This will make it is easier for seniors to understand and navigate their way in MRT stations and bus interchanges.



## 4 SENIOR-FRIENDLY PARKS

The National Parks Board (NParks) will also upgrade our parks and park connectors to be more senior-friendly.

- ▶ **NParks will progressively enhance our network of parks to incorporate more senior-friendly amenities such as upgraded toilets and footpaths.** Metal drain covers next to footpaths will be progressively replaced to minimise the risk of seniors tripping and falling over. More shelters and senior-friendly exercise equipment will also be provided in the parks. In addition, lighting in existing parks will be improved in tandem with park redevelopments, including the development of Destination Parks – Jurong Lake Gardens, Admiralty Park and East Coast Park.



- ▶ **NParks is also piloting therapeutic pocket gardens in existing parks and health related facilities that can improve the physical and psychological well-being of users.** A therapeutic garden will feature design elements, based on the science of horticulture therapy, to support the care of seniors with dementia and post-stroke patients through the provision of both contemplative spaces and activity zones for facilitated planting programmes. NParks is seeking partners to promote such gardens in more communities around Singapore.





## 5 SENIOR-FRIENDLY DESIGN GUIDELINES

The Building and Construction Authority will introduce a **Universal Design Guide for Age-Friendly Public Places** to raise awareness on how age-friendly design can be incorporated into urban infrastructure and planning.

## 6 RESEARCH IN AGEING



Singapore will invest in ageing-related research in different disciplines, to transform the experience of ageing tomorrow.

▶ A new national **Geriatric Education and Research Institute (GERI)** will be housed at the Yishun Community Hospital to promote geriatric education and research in Singapore. It will guide, conduct and coordinate Singapore's research initiatives related to geriatric services and age-related healthcare issues. It will also take the lead in strengthening training content and curriculum so as to adequately equip healthcare workers with skills to better care for elderly patients. The institute is expected to be operational by 2016.

- ▶ The Duke-NUS Graduate Medical School will establish a **Centre for Ageing, Research and Education (CARE)** to further research some social aspects of ageing and will complement the largely clinical nature of work done at GERI. CARE will also seek to foster multi-disciplinary research on ageing that will be translated into solutions for local seniors.
- ▶ **The National Research Foundation will set aside up to \$200 million for a National Innovation Challenge on Active and Confident Ageing to catalyse research related to ageing.** The National Innovation Challenge on Ageing will cover the following three areas: lengthening "health span"; productive longevity; and enabling seniors to age-in-place.

## Seniors, sensors and sense-abilities



LIVING alone worries Madam Choy Sip Fan. The 77-year-old has multiple health conditions and, when she falls ill, there is no one to look after her.

"Who will know if I don't open the door?" she asked.

This is why she is grateful to GoodLife!, a Voluntary Welfare Organisation (VWO) that organises programmes and services for senior citizens. It has been working with Madam Choy for seven years. "It's good that they care for me and check on me," she said.

GoodLife!'s Centre Director Desmurn Lim said his organisation looks at how to help seniors like Madam Choy who have many health issues and live alone.

"Our main concern is how we support seniors like her while allowing them to live independently," he added.

In 2014, the VWO agreed to take part in a three-year pilot by the SMU-TCS iCity Lab to see how technology can help seniors age and live independently while helping community care volunteers and medical professionals better monitor and support them.

The SMU-TCS iCity Lab, a joint venture

between the Singapore Management University and Tata Consultancy Services, focuses on research and development of intelligent and inclusive city solutions.

One part of the trial, which started in July 2015, involves monitoring the amount of medicine the seniors take, using a sensor in a medication box. About 10 seniors under GoodLife!'s care, including Madam Choy, were each given a medication box with sensors attached to it.

Associate Professor Tan Hwee Pink explained how the sensor works: It keeps track of how many times the box is opened and closed by Madam Choy who takes five pills, two for her chronic conditions and three health supplements. The raw data is sent wirelessly to SMU's server where the research team plots the information into graphs for care coordinators to better understand Madam Choy's medication patterns.

"While we can't tell whether she has actually taken the right pill, we can tell with a certain level of confidence that she is consuming her medication at the appointed time. This is validated by the diary we asked her to keep of her daily activities including her pill-taking routine," added Associate Professor Tan, who is the Academic Director of the SMU-TCS iCity Lab and leads the SMU team.

The trial detected that four seniors needed help with their medicine. One of them was confused about the different dosages of his various medicine and ended up opening and closing the medication box many times. When they saw this pattern, GoodLife! took him to his doctor and he now is clearer about what medication to take at what time.

Said Mr Lim: "What the sensor and resulting data give us is the opportunity to have a conversation with seniors on why they are doing things in a certain way. From there, we can see how best to help them."





# TOWARDS A NATION FOR ALL AGES

**The Action Plan for Successful Ageing is a first step towards making Singapore a Nation for All Ages – an inclusive home for all Singaporeans and an icon for successful ageing in Asia.** This is a future which we have to create together. All Singaporeans, young or old, have a part to play. Let us come together and shape a future that we can all aspire to and be proud of.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Our heartfelt thanks go out to all our partners who have journeyed with us over the past year to draft this Action Plan. Their time, effort, energy and feedback have been invaluable in helping us chart a better future for our seniors.

We would also like to thank our partner agencies and ministries for working with us to put together this booklet.

Most of all, we want to say a big thank you to all the Singaporeans who have shared with us their thoughts and ideas on what they imagine Singapore to be like and how it could be transformed into a Nation for All Ages.

This booklet is for you.



## **PARTNERS**

- Alexandra Health System
- Centre for Seniors
- Chinese Development Assistance Council (CDAC)
- Council for Third Age (C3A)
- Eastern Health Alliance
- Islamic Religious Council of Singapore (MUIS)
- MOH Holdings Pte Ltd
- Montfort Care
- National Trades Union Congress (NTUC)
- National University of Singapore Senior Alumni
- National Volunteer and Philanthropy Centre
- NTUC Health Co-operative Limited
- REACH Singapore
- RSVP Singapore: The Organisation of Senior Volunteers
- Singapore Business Federation
- Singapore Hospice Council
- Singapore Indian Development Association (SINDA)
- Society for WINGS
- St Luke's Eldercare Centre
- Thye Hua Kwan Moral Charities
- Tan Tock Seng Hospital
- YAH!
- Yayasan Mendaki

## **AGENCIES/MINISTRIES**

- Agency for Integrated Care (AIC)
- Building and Construction Authority
- Central Provident Fund Board
- Early Childhood Development Agency
- Health Promotion Board
- Housing & Development Board
- Land Transport Authority
- Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth
- Ministry of Education
- Ministry of Finance
- Ministry of Manpower
- Ministry of National Development
- Ministry of Social and Family Development
- Ministry of Transport
- National Parks Board
- National Research Foundation
- People's Association
- Singapore Workforce Development Agency

## **PHOTOS**

- Agency for Integrated Care (AIC)
- Alexandra Health System
- Bedok Sunflower Residents' Committee
- ComfortDelGro Taxi Business
- Council for Third Age (C3A)
- Eastern Health Alliance
- Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay
- Frontier Family Medicine Clinic
- GoodLife!
- Health Promotion Board
- Housing & Development Board
- Jamiyah Nursing Home
- Jamiyah Singapore
- Kopitiam Investment Pte Ltd
- Land Transport Authority
- Lions Befrienders Service Association
- Marine Parade Town Council
- Methodist Girls' School
- Ministry of Transport
- MOH Holdings Pte Ltd
- National Parks Board
- NTUC Health SilverACE
- NTUC Health Silver Circle
- NTUC Health SilverCOVE
- NTUC's My First Skool
- RSVP Singapore: The Organisation of Senior Volunteers
- Singapore Amalgamated Services Co-operative Organisation (SASCO) Integrated Eldercare Centre
- Sheng Siong Group Ltd
- Singapore Indian Development Association (SINDA)
- Singapore Management University
- SMRT Corporation Ltd
- SMRT Taxis Pte Ltd
- The Straits Times® Singapore Press Holdings Limited
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- Tsao Foundation
- SIM University (UniSIM)
- YAH!



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