



## MEDIA RELEASE

### **OVER 300,000 WORKERS GIVEN DIRECT ACCESS TO CUSTOMISED HEALTH AND WELLNESS PROGRAMMES AT THEIR WORKPLACES**

*The Tripartite Oversight Committee on Workplace Health 2014-2017 report recommends further collaboration with partners to build solutions for impactful and sustainable workplace safety and health*

**Singapore, 20 July 2017** – Over 300,000 employees have benefitted from customised and holistic health and safety programmes, directly accessible at their workplaces, during the Tripartite Oversight Committee on Workplace Health’s three-year term. With the term ending this year, the Tripartite Oversight Committee has released a report, Tripartite Oversight Committee on Workplace Health 2014–2017, to showcase its achievements as well as key learnings and recommendations for workplace safety and health promotion.

2 The Tripartite Oversight Committee was established in 2014 and comprised representatives from the public and private sectors to drive and implement workplace health and safety initiatives at the national level. Its three sub-committees looked at fostering partnerships to engineer efficiencies, developing targeted interventions for mature workers in unstructured work environments and implementing Total Workplace Safety and Health (WSH) to build a safer, healthier and more productive workforce. More information on the Tripartite Oversight Committee and its members can be found in [Annex 1](#).

#### **Key Achievements, Learnings and Recommendations**

3 During its tenure, the Tripartite Oversight Committee has achieved notable success in the roll out and adoption of customised workplace health and safety programmes. This includes:

- Implementing Total Workplace Safety and Health (Total WSH) programmes for some 110,000 workers across 120 companies;
- Impacting more than 32,000 mature workers in seven priority sectors<sup>1</sup> to improve their health conditions<sup>2</sup>; and
- Transforming more than 30 business clusters into Healthy Workplace Ecosystems for 178,000 workers to create positive behavioural changes<sup>3</sup> and health outcomes<sup>4</sup>.

More information on the Tripartite Oversight Committee’s achievements can be found in the report.

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<sup>1</sup> The seven sectors include F&B, healthcare, retail, transport & logistics, cleaning, security and education, which has a higher proportion of mature workers (workers aged 40 years old and above). These workers usually may not have a fixed working location and work multiple shifts.

<sup>2</sup> About half of the 3,000 participants with abnormal health screening results saw an improvement in at least one chronic condition post screening and one in four managing to achieve normal health status under the pilot intervention programme for taxi drivers and bus captains.

<sup>3</sup> Positive behavioural changes such as almost three in five programme participants reported an improvement in their active time, as two in five workers consumed healthier food options within the Ecosystem.

<sup>4</sup> Positive health outcomes such as one in three with abnormal health results at the beginning saw improvement in one or more biometric health indicators post screening.

4 “We are pleased to see over 300,000 workers benefitting from our industry-specific solutions and needs-based programmes during this first term of the Tripartite Oversight Committee. In particular, we have increased the awareness of safety and health, improved the overall health of hard-to-reach mature workers, and increased the adoption of healthier behaviours among workers in business clusters. There has also been greater buy-in from companies to incorporate health and safety programmes to increase staff engagement, productivity and retention,” said Dr Amy Khor, Senior Minister of State for Health and Co-Chairman of the Tripartite Oversight Committee. “With the rise in chronic diseases, such as diabetes, increasing obesity rates and the Health Promotion Board’s findings that the average Singaporean tends to put on weight after entering the workforce, due to sedentary lifestyles and unhealthy diets, it is imperative to reach out to the working population. Given the amount of time spent at work, the workplace is an ideal setting to positively impact Singaporeans’ health,” Dr Khor added.

5 In working with stakeholders like developers, businesses, unions and the community to implement safety and health programmes, the Tripartite Oversight Committee found that customisation is imperative to drive impactful outcomes for companies and workers. Instead of a one-size-fits-all model, programmes must be developed to fit within operational structures and schedules in workplaces to facilitate uptake amongst the workers. Win-win solutions are also important to help secure and retain partners in order to ensure the sustainability of the programmes.

6 Based on the key learnings, the Tripartite Oversight Committee recommends to continue working in close partnership with key stakeholders and to focus on:

- adopting a worker-centric approach to better customise programmes in order to benefit workers with different demographics and job natures
- streamlining processes and offerings to make it hassle-free for companies to implement and sustain safety and health programmes
- building a strong business case for workplace health and safety to encourage commitment and adoption from companies

#### **Workplace Safety and Health Policy Sub-Committee**

7 Under this sub-committee, the concept of Total WSH was launched to increase awareness and understanding of holistic safety and health. A key milestone was the revision of the Code of Practice on WSH Risk Management, which recognises personal health risk as a potential hazard which may contribute to work injury and ill health from work. To date, over 110,000 workers from 120 companies across various industries such as construction, manufacturing, healthcare, marine, logistics and transport, and retail sectors have benefitting from newly incorporated Total WSH policies and practices in their work environment.

8 “The Total WSH approach is a key foundation for a happy and productive workforce. By incorporating personal health risk factors into the risk assessment process, companies can better tackle overall workplace risks to advance workers’ health and well-being. We are glad that companies are increasingly seeing the importance of adopting a holistic approach towards safety and health, in this case, through Total WSH, to benefit their workers and businesses. We urge more companies to take proactive steps in addressing various risk factors at the workplace and implement suitable programmes to protect their employees’ safety, health and well-being,” said Mr Sam Tan, Minister of State for Manpower and Co-Chairperson of the Tripartite Oversight Committee.

9 To encourage companies to start and sustain their health initiatives, the Tripartite Oversight Committee proposes simplifying the processes and procedures for ease of implementation. The report also highlighted a need to demonstrate the tangible business benefits of Total WSH to encourage employers to adopt holistic safety and health programmes.

#### **Mature Workers Sub-Committee**

10 During the tenure of the Tripartite Oversight Committee’s Mature Workers sub-committee, the Health Promotion Board reached out to more than 32,000 mature workers from less structured workplaces with multiple shift patterns such as those in the transport and logistics, retail, cleaning, security, food and beverage, education and healthcare sectors. This has impacted the overall health of hard-to-reach mature workers. Under the pilot intervention programme for taxi drivers and bus captains for example, about half of the 3,000 participants with abnormal health screening results saw

an improvement in at least one chronic condition post screening and one in four managed to achieve normal health status.

#### **Business Cluster Sub-Committee**

11 Under Tripartite Oversight Committee's Business Cluster sub-committee, the development of Healthy Workplace Ecosystems has been key to creating a supportive environment for employees. Through the ecosystem approach, healthy living has been brought to the doorstep for over 178,000 workers in more than 30 business clusters. Positive behavioural changes and health outcomes were observed among workers in these business clusters. Almost one in three workers participated in one or more activities within their cluster, and almost three in five programme participants reported an improvement in their active time. Through health screening and coaching on-site, one in three workers with abnormal health results at the onset also saw improvements in one or more biometric health indicators<sup>5</sup> post screening.

12 The Tripartite Oversight Committee on Workplace Health 2014–2017 report is available for download at <https://hpb.gov.sg/workplace/useful-information-for-organisations/tripartite-oversight-committee-on-workplace-health>. The new Tripartite Oversight Committee on Workplace Safety and Health will be appointed for a three-year term from 2017 to 2020, with SMS Dr Amy Khor and MOS Sam Tan resuming their roles as co-chairpersons.

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#### **About Health Promotion Board**

The Health Promotion Board was established as a statutory board under the Ministry of Health, Singapore, in 2001 with the vision of building "A Nation of Healthy People". The Health Promotion Board aims to empower the people of Singapore to attain optimal health, increase the quality and years of healthy life and prevent illness, disability and premature death. As the key agency overseeing national health promotion and disease prevention programmes, HPB spearheads health education, promotion and prevention programmes as well as creates a health-supportive environment in Singapore. It develops and organises relevant health promotion and disease prevention programmes, reaching out to the healthy, the at-risk and the unhealthy at all stages of life – children, youths, adults and older Singapore residents. Its health promotion programmes include nutrition, mental health, physical activity, smoking control and communicable disease education. HPB also promotes healthy ageing, integrated health screening, and chronic disease education and management.

More information can be found at [www.hpb.gov.sg](http://www.hpb.gov.sg).

#### **About the WSH Council**

The Workplace Safety and Health (WSH) Council was formed on 1 April 2008. It comprises leaders from the major industry sectors (including construction, manufacturing, marine industries, petrochemicals and logistics), the Government, unions and professionals from the legal, insurance and academic fields.

The Council work closely with the Ministry of Manpower and other Government agencies, the industry, unions and professional associations to raise WSH standards in Singapore and realise the national WSH 2018 strategy.

The Council's main functions are to build capabilities to manage WSH, promote WSH, recognise companies with good WSH records and set acceptable WSH practices.

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<sup>5</sup> Biometric indicators include body mass index (BMI), blood pressure, cholesterol, and glucose levels.

## ANNEX 1

### About The Tripartite Oversight Committee on Workplace Health (2014 - 2017)

1. The Tripartite Oversight Committee on Workplace Health was established in April 2014 to drive and implement workplace health and safety initiatives at the national level.
2. The ultimate objective is to promote wellbeing through work by adopting a more holistic approach to focus on workers' health and wellness, and to increase the reach and penetration of workplace health promotion.
3. The committee consists of senior representatives from the Ministry of Health (MOH), Ministry of Manpower (MOM), Health Promotion Board (HPB), Workplace Safety and Health Council (WSHC), partners and relevant stakeholders.



4. Three sub-committees were formed to look into each prong under the strategic thrust framework. The strategic thrusts under the framework are:
  - a. Innovative partnerships with developers and businesses to engineer greater efficiencies in the delivery of workplace health and safety programmes
  - b. Targeted and customised interventions to reach mature workers who currently have limited access to health programmes
  - c. Holistic workplace health and safety through the Total Workplace Safety and Health (TWSH) approach

## ANNEX 2

### About Total Workplace Safety and Health

1. Traditionally, organisations tend to focus more on tackling workplace safety hazards as compared to workplace health issues. However, it is important to recognise that good workplace health is equally important as it affects workers' well-being and, in turn, their capacity to work. These issues of employee health, safety and well-being are interconnected. Hence, an integrated approach is needed to better protect workers' health and safety.
2. Total WSH was launched by the Workplace Safety and Health (WSH) Council and the Ministry of Manpower in 2014. Total WSH is about managing safety and health holistically. It involves companies taking a proactive, comprehensive and integrated assessment of all workplace risks—from employees' safety, health to well-being. By changing the way we work and how WSH risks are handled, we can prevent safety and health problems and allow our employees to have more meaningful and extended careers. At the same time, happier and healthier employees also mean lower healthcare costs, reduced absence due to sickness and higher productivity for companies.
3. In 2012, MOM commissioned a study on the holistic WSH management of 30 companies. Based on the profile of each company, intervention programmes relating to office ergonomics, weight management and smoking cessation were then implemented in the companies. Companies with comprehensive WSH programmes and employees are: 7.4 times satisfied with their job; 4.4 times take pride in their companies; and 1.7 times able to balance work and home life.
4. To help companies get started on their Total WSH journey, the WSH Council has developed a Total WSH starter kit. The kit includes:
  - a. a letter to CEO to introduce the concept of Total WSH and seek CEO's commitment to adopt Total WSH;
  - b. a Quickstart Guide, brochure and a video for implementers; and
  - c. a video, posters and stickers for workers.

## ANNEX 3

### Targeting Mature Workers in Different Sectors

1. Singapore's ageing population makes it imperative to look into the needs of the greying workforce.
2. More than 32,000 mature workers from less structured workplaces and multiple shift patterns across seven key sectors have benefitted from customised workplace safety and health programmes, which were brought to their doorstep.
3. The seven key sectors include transport and logistics, retail, cleaning, security, food and beverages, education and healthcare.
4. During the Tripartite Oversight Committee term, with rapid scale-up, HPB reached 100% of the public bus and MRT operators and 80% of taxi operators with operationally-ready workplace health programmes based on successful pilot models.
5. Of the 3,000 taxi drivers and bus captains who participated in the pilot workplace health intervention programme, 50% discovered for the first time during healthy screening that they had at least one chronic condition.
6. Other achievements include:
  - a. 50% saw at least one improvement in their health conditions (i.e. blood pressure, blood glucose and blood cholesterol) by post health screening.
  - b. One in four saw their health status improve from 'abnormal' to 'normal' in all aspects of their health.
  - c. 12% of those with moderate/ high BMI (BMI > 23) improved their BMI to the next better category. Of these, 36% have now achieved healthy BMI (BMI < 23).
7. In recent months, HPB has started new pilot health programmes with rail workers, healthcare ancillary workers and pre-school staff. Moving forward, HPB will continue to scale-up and sustain efforts in the more structured sectors to impact a larger number of workers while continuing its work with those in the less structured sectors such as retail, food and beverage, cleaning and security.
8. Overall, health promotion programmes will reach out to 120,000 mature workers, including the current 32,000 workers reached, (which is about 10% of the mature workforce today) by 2025.

## ANNEX 4

### Reaching Out to Workers in Business Clusters and SMEs

1. HPB work with developers and businesses to deliver accessible, customised and targeted programmes to meet workers' occupational and general health needs through the ecosystem approach where demand can be aggregated. Workers at co-located work sites and those employed by small and medium enterprises (SMEs) may also enjoy on-site health and safety services and programmes, healthier dining options and participate in roadshows/ workshops on healthy living.
2. This concept of a Healthy Workplace Ecosystem was first unveiled in October 2013 at Mapletree Business City.
3. To date, HPB has transformed more than 30 clusters into Healthy Workplace Ecosystems, reaching 178,000 workers.
4. Positive behavioural changes and health outcomes have been observed among workers in these business clusters:
  - a. Almost one in three workers participated in one or more activities under the programme within their cluster.
  - b. Almost three in five programme participants reported an improvement in their active time.
  - c. One in three workers with abnormal health results at the onset also saw improvements in one or more biometric health indicators<sup>6</sup> post screening.
  - d. Three in four with abnormal results also followed-up with a doctor to manage their condition.
5. HPB also launched an SME Workplace Health Package in September 2016 and 118 SMEs have since come on board the programme.
6. Piloted in September 2016, the SME Workplace Health Package gives SMEs access to a list of pre-approved programmes. As SMEs, unlike business clusters, are more spread out in configuration, the SME Workplace Health Package simplifies the process of organising health programmes by offering a menu of readily available programmes to choose from. This helps SMEs overcome any manpower and expertise constraints when organising health programmes. The package also maximises cost efficiency by aggregating demand across SMEs. For example, if there is insufficient demand to conduct in-house health programmes, SMEs may choose to send workers to attend public runs of these programmes. The scheme allows SMEs the flexibility to select programmes suited to their workers' needs and schedules.

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<sup>6</sup> Biometric indicators include body mass index (BMI), blood pressure, cholesterol, and glucose levels.

## **ANNEX 5**

### **Healthy Workplace Ecosystem at OUE**

#### **Background**

1. Introduced in October 2013, the Health Promotion Board's Healthy Workplace Ecosystem approach creates a supportive environment and allows for greater aggregation of demand of healthier options to give employees within the cluster access to a wider variety of health-related programmes. It is a key programme under the Tripartite Oversight Committee on Workplace Health to promote holistic health programmes in business clusters.

#### **Healthy Workplace Ecosystem at OUE Downtown and OUE Bayfront**

2. Since May 2016, OUE Limited and OUE Commercial REIT have partnered HPB to introduce the Healthy Workplace Ecosystem at OUE Downtown and OUE Bayfront. These office buildings have a reach of more than 6,500 employees from about 110 companies, mainly in the financial, consultancy and legal sectors.
3. Employees in this office cluster are primarily younger PMETs aged below 40 with varied interests in health activities and fitness levels. Catering to different interests, a wide range of mass aerobic exercises such as Piloxing, Zumba and running sessions, as well as high intensity workouts such as fitness interval training and obstacle courses, have been brought to the office workers.
4. The National Steps Challenge™ that leverages on technology to counter a sedentary lifestyle has also been brought to the office buildings to encourage the workers to weave in more steps into their daily activities and be more physically active.
5. Lunchtime workshops are available, raising awareness on topics such as weight management, chronic disease management and mental well-being, and employees also receive bite-sized information on health-related issues on a monthly basis through electronic direct mailers.
6. The health programmes are well received by employees with about one in three (35%) of the employees from over half of the tenant companies benefitting from these programmes over the past year. Monthly participation rate in health activities has increased by 75% in a year and participants have registered positive behavioural changes with three in five seeing an increase in active time. Among them, about 60% of the sedentary employees are now meeting the recommended 150-minute active time guideline.
7. Centred on the three pillars of 'Keep Well', 'Eat Well' and 'Look Well', the newly completed Downtown Gallery within OUE Downtown has also opened up new opportunities for employees to access healthier options. In addition to a cluster of boutique fitness gyms as well as retail concepts and initiatives focused on wellness, new F&B outlets at the Gallery have gradually moved in since May 2017, offering an extensive spread of food options. HPB will work closely with these new eateries to increase the pervasiveness of healthier meals in the OUE office cluster.