



## MEDIA RELEASE

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**Embargoed till 12pm, 11 November 2015**

### **CASE and SSTA to jointly develop joint accreditation scheme for school bus service providers**

The Consumers Association of Singapore (CASE) and the Singapore School Transport Association (SSTA) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2015 to jointly develop a voluntary CaseTrust - SSTA joint accreditation scheme for school bus service providers. 18 SSTA members have pledged their support to join the accreditation scheme (*view Annex*). The scheme is expected to be launched within six months.

#### **Why CaseTrust?**

Firstly, CASE received an estimated 39 complaints from January 2010 to October 2015 on school bus services. Out of which, 10 complaints involved bus operators suddenly terminating their services or collecting deposits and not providing the promised transport service for the students, while six complaints were on bus operators increasing prices after the consumer had already signed the contract and the rest of the complaints involved unsatisfactory services, other price matters or general feedback.

Earlier this year, several school bus operators came under fire for shoddy services and disruptions to the school bus services. Many parents and students were left scrambling after being informed that their school bus services were being terminated at the last minute. Some consumers reported that they had already paid for several months of bus fees in advance and were unable to get back a refund.

To prevent a repeat of such incidents, the SSTA approached CASE in March to explore rolling out a joint accreditation scheme to improve the standards of the school bus transport industry.

The CaseTrust - SSTA joint accreditation scheme will set the standard for the school transport business. It will ensure that the bus operators protect consumers' interests by adopting fair business transactions and practices.

Under the accreditation scheme, accredited school bus service operators will be subjected to a stringent set of criteria that include:

- A \$100,000 insurance bond against closure, winding up and/or liquidation of the bus operator

- Five (5) working days cooling-off period from the date of the signed agreement
- Clearly articulated and documented policies on charges and refund
- A redress system with proper and clearly defined dispute handling mechanism for the business and consumers, including mediation by CASE Mediation Centre

“Accreditation by CASETrust will instil greater confidence among our members and the public. It will allow the Association to be run and managed in accordance with the appropriate policies, regulations, and industry standards,” said Mr Wong Ann Lin, Executive Council Chairman of SSTA. “This will also facilitate future expansion possibilities and allow SSTA to provide greater services and aid to the vast consumers. Moreover, accreditation will uplift the Association’s leadership and professional status of the Singapore school transport industry.”

“A business that displays the CaseTrust Logo signifies fairness and honesty in its dealings with consumers,” said Mr Lim Biow Chuan, President of CASE and Association Advisor to the SSTA. “We are confident that the new accreditation scheme for bus service providers will instil greater confidence among parents, school children and bus service operators on the professional standards of the Singapore school transport industry.”

CaseTrust is the accreditation arm of CASE and since its inception in 1999, CaseTrust has been working hand in hand with various industries to raise the standards in good business practices and promote fair trading. As of 31st October this year, there are 732 CaseTrust accredited businesses with more than 900 outlets in Singapore spanning a wide range of industries such as Retail, Spa & Wellness, Travel, Motoring, Employment Agencies, Renovation, Direct Selling, Jewellery and even E-Commerce.

Lim Biow Chuan  
President  
Consumers Association of Singapore

and

Wong Ann Lin  
Executive Council Chairman  
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**About the Consumers Association of Singapore:**

The Consumers Association of Singapore (CASE) is an independent, non-profit organisation that is committed towards protecting consumers' interest through information and education, and promoting an environment of fair and ethical trade practices. One of its key achievements is in advocating for the Consumer Protection (Fair Trading) Act (CPFTA) which came into effect on March 1, 2004.

**About the Singapore School Transport Association:**

The Singapore School Transport Association (SSTA) was officially approved by the Registry of Societies on 28th December 1958. Starting with a humble membership of 50, SSTA has grown to about 1,200 members to date, of which 800 members are self-employed one-man-operators (OMOs) while the balanced members are bus fleet owners of their respective transport companies. SSTA members owned a total combined fleet of over 3,000 buses of different marks, sizes and seating capacity. Primary activity of our members' buses is to ferry school children and workers. Some buses also carry passengers from LTA licensed routes under Scheme B, Premium Bus Services, Little India Express Services, Shuttle Bus Services, etc. From time to time, members' buses may also be activated to cater to ad-hoc chartered services.

## ANNEX

### List of SSTA members who have pledged support to join the CaseTrust-SSTA joint accreditation scheme:

S/N	COMPANY NAME
1	ANNWAY TRANSPORT SERVICE
2	AZ BUS PTE LTD
3	BEDOK TRANSPORT PTE LTD
4	BT & TAN TRANSPORT PTE LTD.
5	CHITSON TRANSPORT SERVICE COMPANY
6	HDT SINGAPORE HOLDING PTE LTD
7	HOCK SCHOOL BUS SERVICE
8	HUI LEONG BUS TRANSPORT
9	JED BUS TRANSPORT
10	LOH GIM CHONG TRANSPORT
11	PROMISEDLAND TRANSPORT SERVICE
12	REN QUAN TRANSPORT
13	RIC TAT TRANSPORT SERVICE
14	SAN HAI BUS TRANSPORT SERVICES
15	SKY TRANSPORT SERVICE PTE LTD
16	SKYISLAND TRANSPORT & TRADING
17	SSTA PTE LTD
18	STS TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT PTE LTD