

MEDIA STATEMENT

Wednesday, 19 February 2020

PPIS responds to Budget 2020

1. The Singapore Muslim Women's Association (PPIS) welcomes the social measures introduced during the Budget 2020 speech that was delivered by our Finance Minister Mr Heng Swee Keat yesterday. We are in support of these measures that will help women, families and children in building a caring and inclusive home.
2. In addition to the new measures in this year's speech, PPIS applauds the Care and Support Package for **families** which not only defray high costs of living, but help them amidst the current COVID-19 outbreak. This will benefit more than 600 families that we have served through our Family Service Centres last year.

The fixed GST rate of 7% in 2021 will also provide them with sufficient lead time to adapt to the eventual hike in 2025. Even so, PPIS understands that there are support plans in place with the GST hike. This includes the new \$6 billion Assurance Package and the enhancement of the permanent GST Voucher scheme which will further offset costs for households with retirees and the lower-income group.

We also acknowledge the SkillsFuture Credit top-up of \$500 which will provide our families with the opportunity to continue upgrading themselves and look for better opportunities to improve their overall quality of life. PPIS encourages not only our employees, but families and especially women to take good advantage of this initiative. Last but not least, we believe that the various education benefits will help families with school-going children financially.

3. Having been in the **preschool** industry for over 30 years, PPIS welcomes the move to step up efforts in improving the affordability, accessibility, and quality of pre-school services in Singapore.

Earlier this year, the government announced several measures to make quality preschools more affordable and accessible for families. This includes raising the household monthly income ceiling for the Additional Subsidy and Kindergarten Fee Assistance Scheme (KiFAS) as well as providing higher preschool subsidies across all eligible income tiers.

With seven Child Development Centres islandwide with a total enrolment of more than 790 students, PPIS too strives to keep our fees affordable and make sure that each child receives the best possible start in life.

4. It is heartening to know that the government is enabling mid-career workers, many of whom may be **women** who have left the workforce due to caregiving responsibilities, to remain employable through the introduction of the SkillsFuture Mid-Career Support Package. A hiring incentive for employers to recruit, retain and retrain such workers will allow mid-career women to stay relevant to our workforce, which would ultimately ensure their continued financial security and independence.
5. In line with the Government's support of **lifelong learning among seniors**, PPIS is pleased to share that we have been collaborating with the National Silver Academy (NSA) to offer practical workshops for seniors aged 50 and above. We hope to reach out to more seniors and continue organising these workshops.
6. We look forward to receiving more information on how these measures can help women, families and children. In our mission to strengthen families, PPIS will ensure that they receive the necessary guidance and have access to the enhanced support introduced in Budget 2020.
7. Echoing the words of Minister Heng Swee Keat, PPIS would also like to take this opportunity to thank frontline workers for their hard work and ongoing efforts amidst the COVID-19 outbreak. The organisation believes that everyone has a part to play and PPIS strives to uphold our responsibility in keeping the community safe.