

# ADVANCING JUSTICE: EXPANDING THE POSSIBILITIES

STATE COURTS | ANNUAL REPORT 2017



# ONE JUDICIARY

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ANNUAL REPORT

2017



## SHARED VISION

Inspiring public trust and confidence through an effective and accessible justice system

## MISSION

Serving society with quality judgments, timely dispute resolution and excellent court services

## CORE VALUES

Fairness

Accessibility

Independence, Integrity, Impartiality

Responsiveness

STATE  
COURTS  
SINGAPORE

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# FOREWORD BY THE HONOURABLE THE CHIEF JUSTICE

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2017 was a significant year for the Courts as we took steps to respond to global trends in technology and globalisation. We made strides in embracing these developments and in strengthening partnerships with other stakeholders in the justice system, both locally and internationally, to improve our processes and enhance access to justice. This One Judiciary Annual Report showcases the work of the Supreme Court, the State Courts and the Family Justice Courts in this regard.

In April 2017, the State Courts launched the Employment Claims Tribunals to adjudicate employment disputes in a tribunal setting, thereby providing litigants with an affordable and expeditious way for resolving salary-related disputes. The Community Justice and Tribunals System, launched in July 2017, offers parties the convenience of filing and managing claims online. It also provides for electronic negotiation, which opens up the possibility that settlements may be reached without the matter even coming to court.

The Family Justice Courts similarly harnessed technology by developing the integrated Family Application Management System or *iFAMS* to streamline and simplify processes for all family violence and maintenance applications. With *iFAMS*, lawyers and court users can now access simplified user-friendly template application forms from convenient locations in the community.

Automation and artificial intelligence will continue to revolutionise the practice of law and the Judiciary needs to embrace this. The Courts of the Future Taskforce has identified key initiatives to develop new capabilities for online dispute resolution and virtual hearings. Such IT-enabled services will go a long way in enabling accessibility to legal services in a timely and convenient manner.

Besides improving court processes, the Judiciary has also taken meaningful steps to work with stakeholders to improve outcomes for court users. The Victim Assistance Scheme, the product of a collaboration between the

State Courts, Community Justice Centre, and the Singapore Police Force, provides victims of assault with reimbursement for medical expenses incurred as a result of the physical injuries sustained from the offence. At the same time, family-connect @ State Courts, a collaborative effort by the State Courts and the Singapore After-Care Association, offers family members of offenders who have been, or will be, sentenced to imprisonment with access to counselling as well as social, emotional and financial support.

On the international front, judicial networks and cooperation are continuously being strengthened. The judiciaries of Singapore and China have established an annual Singapore-China Legal and Judicial Roundtable, a historic first between China and an Asian country. The first Roundtable was held in Beijing in August 2017 and I am delighted to be hosting the second Roundtable in Singapore in 2018.

The Supreme Court also attended the inaugural Standing International Forum of Commercial Courts in London in May 2017 where courts from around the world gathered to share experiences and best practices on the judicial resolution of international commercial disputes.

On the family law front, the Family Justice Courts hosted the 2nd International Advisory Council meeting in August 2017. During this event, leading global thinkers in the field of family justice discussed developments in family law practice and jurisprudence, identified potential areas of research, and explored ideas and innovations to improve family practice.

Also on the subject of family law, to achieve more consistent and cost-effective outcomes, we have devised guidelines on child maintenance awards based on actuarial data. It is hoped that the publication of these guidelines in due course will reduce the acrimony and cost of child maintenance disputes.

Judicial training and development will remain important in ensuring that our Judges are able to discharge their judicial functions effectively. It was for this reason that the Singapore Judicial College was set up. Local judges and judicial officers now have about 40 training programmes to choose from.

I am confident that my colleagues on the Supreme Court Bench as well as the judicial officers and administrators from the State Courts and Family Justice Courts will continue to administer justice effectively and ensure access to justice for all.

I hope this Annual Report will offer you a glimpse into the work of the Judiciary over the course of the past year.



Sundaresh Menon  
Chief Justice  
Supreme Court of Singapore

# MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDING JUDGE

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2017 was another busy and constructive year for the State Courts. We continued our drive towards delivering fair, accessible, and customised justice. We strived to remain efficient and effective amidst an environment of constant change and disruption.

## ADVANCING ACCESS TO JUSTICE

In April, the Employment Claims Tribunals (ECT) were established. These tribunals hear salary-related disputes, and adopt simple, expeditious, and affordable processes. We organised a public talk on *What You Need to Know About Resolving Employment Disputes* in November to enhance the community's understanding of the ECT.

We launched the Community Justice and Tribunals System (CJTS) in July. Litigants can now file and manage their small claims online. Parties can also engage in e-negotiation to settle their disputes.

Two publications were also launched in February — the *Electronic Motor Accident Guide* and the third edition of the *Practitioners' Library – Assessment of Damages: Personal Injuries and Fatal Accidents*. These publications provide data for the outcome simulator. Targeted for 2019, this simulator will generate possible outcomes via algorithms based on parameters and data provided by users. Apprised of likely outcomes, parties will, hopefully, be able to engage in more meaningful settlement discussions and make more informed decisions.

We produced the *Guidebook for AIP (GAP)* with the Community Justice Centre (CJC) to help the Accused-in-Person (AIP) navigate the criminal justice system. The GAP fills a current lacuna, for the self-represented accused who does not qualify for legal aid and is unable to afford counsel. It covers a range of topics, from bail to the appeal process. In March, Phase 2A of the *Integrated Criminal Case Filing and Management System (ICMS)* was rolled out. This enables accused persons online access to their e-case files and allows them to make selected applications online, anytime.

## STAKEHOLDER COLLABORATION

We live in an inter-connected world, and must work together with our stakeholders to continually improve the justice system for those who come into contact with it. 2017 saw many such initiatives. Space constraints permit me to refer to only three. I stress, however, that we are grateful to all our partners in the criminal justice system for their strong support.

In April, the Victim Assistance Scheme – a collaboration with the CJC and the Singapore Police Force was initiated. With this scheme, victims who have suffered personal injuries but who may be left out-of-pocket due to an accused person's impecuniosity, can obtain reimbursement for medical expenses incurred in Singapore. These expenses must flow directly from personal injuries due to the offence. In October, the State Courts and the Singapore Academy of Law partnered to organise the second run of the Sentencing Conference. More than 300 judges, prosecutors, lawyers, and other criminal justice stakeholders attended this conference. Centred on the theme of *Review, Rehabilitation, and Reintegration*, the conference discussed amongst other topics:

- (a) community-based sentencing;
- (b) programmes to rehabilitate and re-integrate ex-offenders into society; and
- (c) the use of technology to further consistency in sentencing.

Family-connect @ State Courts, an initiative with the Singapore After-Care Association (SACA), was announced in November. The scheme is expected to commence in early 2018. SACA volunteers will attend to family members of accused persons or persons who have been sentenced. They will provide, amongst other forms of assistance, information on prison procedures and referrals for family members to SACA or other agencies for assistance.

## TOWARDS COURT EXCELLENCE

February saw the inaugural run of the *Executive Leadership Programme for Court and Tribunal Administrators*. This programme, a collaboration with the National University of Singapore's Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, aims to promote excellence in court leadership, governance, and management of court services, as well as to equip court and tribunal administrators with key interdisciplinary leadership skills. *The International Framework for Court Excellence - State Courts of Singapore Model* was also launched. This model is designed to help courts and tribunals optimise their performance through a continuous improvement process.

## CONCLUSION

The State Courts will continue to focus on serving the people to the best of our abilities with dedication, diligence, and full commitment to our core values of fairness, accessibility, independence, integrity, impartiality and responsiveness. We remain grateful to The Honourable the Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon for his unstinting support in our endeavours to advance justice and expand possibilities in the justice system.



See Kee Oon  
Presiding Judge of the  
State Courts

# ORGANISATION CHART



**Presiding Judge  
of the State Courts**



**Deputy Presiding Judge  
of the State Courts**



**Internal  
Audit**



**Civil Justice  
Division**

- Civil Trial Courts Group
- Civil Registry
- Bailiffs Section



**Community  
Justice &  
Tribunals  
Division**

- District Courts Cluster
- Tribunals Cluster
- Community Justice & Tribunals Division Registry



**Criminal  
Justice  
Division**

- Mentions & Specialised Courts Group
- Pre-Trial Conference Centre
- Commercial Crimes Group
- Crimes against Property Group
- Crimes against Persons Group
- Community Courts Group
- Crime Registry



**Centre for  
Dispute  
Resolution**

- Civil Dispute Resolution
- Community Dispute Resolution
- Criminal Dispute Resolution
- Centre for Dispute Resolution Registry



**Corporate  
Services  
Division**

- Central Registry Directorate
- Communications Directorate
- Court Services Directorate
- Financial Policy & Management Directorate
- Infrastructure Development & Procurement Directorate
- Learning & Knowledge Development Directorate
- People Development & Planning Directorate



**Strategic  
Planning &  
Technology  
Division**

- Strategic Planning Department
- Organisational Excellence & Performance Management Department
- Information Technology Department
- International Relations Section



**ADVANCING JUSTICE:  
EXPANDING THE  
POSSIBILITIES**

# WORKPLAN 2017 INITIATIVES

The State Courts Workplan 2017 was held on 17 March. The theme of the Workplan was *Advancing Justice: Expanding the Possibilities*. The Honourable the Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon announced 10 initiatives that the State Courts would be introducing to ensure access to meaningful and effective justice.



# Enabling and Empowering

## ICMS FOR ACCUSED PERSONS

The *Integrated Criminal Case Filing and Management System (ICMS)*, which was launched in February 2015, is a comprehensive end-to-end electronic system for the efficient management and accurate tracking of criminal cases. Since its launch, the *ICMS* has been used by both the prosecution and counsel to manage their ongoing criminal cases in the State Courts.

Expanding on the functionalities of the *ICMS* and refining and enhancing its capabilities, the State Courts launched Phase 2A in February 2017 to allow accused persons online access to their electronic case files. This provides accused persons with convenient and timely access to case information and to be updated on the status of their case.

Accused persons who are represented by counsel can also view their case files and applications which their counsel have filed on their behalf. In addition, accused persons who are unrepresented will be able to file applications and documents and request court records online at any time of the day, without making a trip to the State Courts.

As at December 2017, there were more than 2,800 logins by accused persons, with about 70 online applications for leaving jurisdiction, court records and the rescheduling of court events.



## VICTIM ASSISTANCE SCHEME

The Victim Assistance Scheme (VAS) launched in April 2017, is a fund that was set up to ease the distress of victims of criminal assault. The VAS is a collaboration with the Community Justice Centre (CJC) and the Singapore Police Force (SPF). It strives to reduce some of the financial burdens that may be faced by victims of criminal assault who have not been compensated by the offender. These victims can claim the medical fees they have incurred as a result of their physical injuries, where the offenders have been unable to compensate them.

The VAS is administered by the CJC, and the claims for medical fees are capped. The victim will be referred by the court to the CJC for the claim to be assessed. The qualifying criteria to be fulfilled is that the offender has already been convicted of an offence of assault and no prior compensation has been made, or is unlikely to be made, whether voluntarily or pursuant to a compensation order.

Since its launch, 10 referrals have been made by the court. The VAS has since been expanded to include more serious offences such as rioting, voluntarily causing grievous hurt, as well as rash act offences where personal injuries are sustained. This will allow more victims to benefit from this initiative.



## GUIDEBOOK FOR ACCUSED-IN-PERSON

In 2017, the State Courts together with the Community Justice Centre (CJC), produced the *Guidebook for Accused-in-Person (GAP)*.

A common refrain from a self-represented accused person is that the legal process is difficult to understand and navigate. He may invariably feel bewildered and overwhelmed by court proceedings. In order to ensure access to justice, the *GAP* provides guidance on the criminal justice system for the accused-in-person.

The *GAP* is written in plain language with essential facts and details arranged systematically according to each stage of the criminal proceedings in the State Courts. The information is presented in an easy-to-read question and answer style with user-friendly diagrams. The self-represented accused person can find helpful tips on how to prepare for a hearing and what he can expect to encounter during that hearing. This guide also covers practical matters such as court etiquette, sample forms, information on the *Integrated Criminal Case Filing and Management System (ICMS)* and useful links to welfare organisations.

Copies of the guidebook were made available at the CJC, the Singapore Prison Service, the State Courts, and on the State Courts' website.

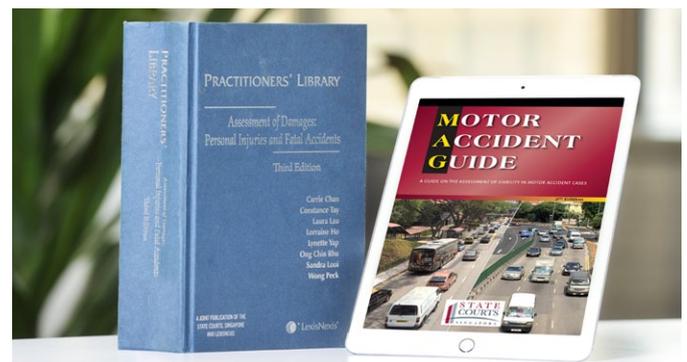


## UPDATED PUBLICATIONS ON PERSONAL INJURY AND FATAL OR MOTOR ACCIDENT CASES

The State Courts launched two publications on 22 February 2017. The publications are, the third edition of the *Practitioners' Library – Assessment of Damages: Personal Injuries and Fatal Accidents*, and the second edition of the *Motor Accident Guide*, published in an electronic form.

The *Practitioners' Library – Assessment of Damages: Personal Injuries and Fatal Accidents*, assesses the amount of damages that the court may award in cases involving personal injuries and death. The latest edition underlines the various types of losses and the amounts of damages awarded where injury or death had occurred. It also explores in detail the latest substantive developments in the relevant areas of the law and provides an updated collection of awards made by the Supreme Court and the State Courts. This helps judges maintain consistency across similar cases, and make appropriate awards.

The *Electronic Motor Accident Guide (eMAG)* provides lawyers and litigants with indicative factors that the courts may consider when adjudicating motor accident and personal injury claims. This allows them to evaluate their legal positions and the options available to them. The *eMAG* is the State Courts' first e-book where users can access and retrieve information conveniently and quickly as well as perform functions such as keyword searches, bookmarking and highlighting. It provides motorists with useful and easy-to-understand guidelines on what they could do if they are involved in a motor accident. The *eMAG* illustrates commonly encountered motor accidents and indicates the liability outcome of each type of accident and provides the base for negotiations among parties.



## EMPLOYMENT CLAIMS TRIBUNALS

The Employment Claims Tribunals (ECT) were launched on 1 April 2017 to strengthen Singapore's employment landscape by providing employees and employers with an accessible, affordable and effective forum to resolve salary-related disputes.

Established under the Employment Claims Act, the ECT hears both statutory and contractual salary-related claims from employees. The types of statutory salary-related claims include unpaid salary, overtime pay, salary in lieu of notice, employment assistance payments, and maternity benefits. In this respect, it has taken over the function of what was commonly known as Labour Court at the Ministry of Manpower.

In 2017, 598 out of 864 claims were concluded. Of which, approximately three out of four were concluded at the case management conference stage, without having to proceed for a full hearing of the dispute. Professionals, managers and executives (PMEs) who earn more than \$4,500 per month have also embraced the ECT. By 31 December 2017, PME had filed 176 claims. Over the year in 2017, to improve the services of the ECT and enhance access to justice, inter-agency collaborations were also established to provide interpretation help to foreign workers who do not speak the local languages.

Efforts were also made to schedule claims filed by different employees against the same employer, to be heard one after another or together, at the first case management conference. This ensured that the matter could be dealt with expeditiously. The ECT will continue to refine its processes to ensure that parties can have access to justice in as simple, expeditious and affordable a manner as possible.



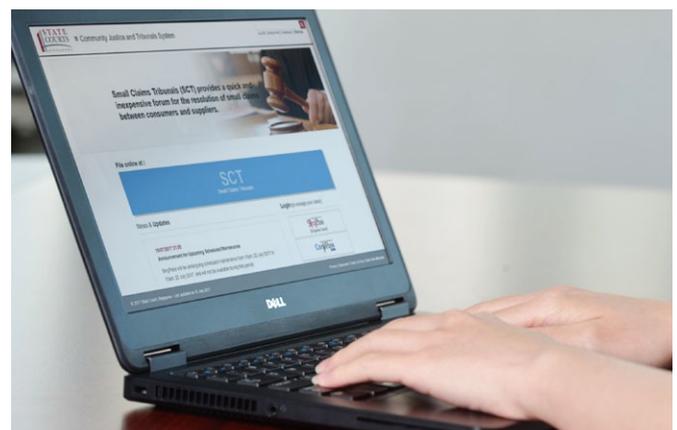
## COMMUNITY JUSTICE AND TRIBUNALS SYSTEM & SHORT MEDIATION AND HEARING

The first phase of the Community Justice and Tribunals System (CJTS) was launched on 10 July 2017, making the SCT claim process paperless. The online filing and case management system empowers parties by availing built-in capabilities such as filing a claim and e-negotiating for a settlement. Through the CJTS, parties can perform a pre-filing assessment for claim eligibility, submit their documents online, make payments online, and select their court date. They can also view documents submitted by the other party and monitor their case developments online.

A key feature of the CJTS is the e-negotiation platform. This allows parties to e-negotiate a settlement on a secure, confidential platform before they come to court. If an amicable settlement has been reached through e-negotiation, the parties may apply for a Tribunal Order directly through the CJTS without having to come to court.

The Short Mediation and Hearing (SMAH) initiative was also launched in 2017. This initiative fast tracks cases with no complex legal issues and dovetails with the overall effort to streamline the SCT process.

In 2017, there were 6,821 pre-filing assessments performed, and 58 claims e-negotiated and settled online through the CJTS. Under the SMAH initiative, close to one-third of the cases which proceeded for hearing had their first hearing scheduled within one working day of their last mediation. The next phases of the CJTS will see the addition of Community Disputes Resolution Tribunals and Employment Claims Tribunals services.



## ON-SITE PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES

The On-site Psychological Services is an initiative that sees a psychiatrist stationed at the State Courts one morning a week to offer one-to-one consultation to litigants of community disputes for their psychological issues.

The initiative was conceived as some litigants in harassment cases and neighbour dispute cases have been found to exhibit signs suggesting that they may be suffering from psychiatric-related conditions including addiction issues, which have a direct causal link to the commission of the offending acts.

With the On-site Psychological Services, early detection and treatment of underlying mental illnesses are made possible, so that the community disputes can be effectively resolved. Once the litigants have been diagnosed, the court counsellors are then better equipped to identify the community psycho-social interventions that are needed to assist them.

During the pilot which was conducted between July 2016 and March 2017, a senior resident from the Institute of Mental Health provided consultation. A secretariat consisting of court staff also assisted with the scheduling of cases, providing emotional support to litigants and assisting them with follow-up appointments at the hospitals as needed. The service was also extended to the Family Justice Courts for litigants who are undergoing divorce proceedings or personal protection order proceedings.

In 2017, 69 litigants from both the State Courts and Family Justice Courts had utilised the service, with 72 per cent of them being diagnosed with a mental illness and 80 per cent choosing to seek follow-up treatment after being diagnosed. Following the successful pilot, the initiative was implemented with funding from the Ministry of Health for the next two financial years.



## FAMILY-CONNECT @ STATE COURTS

The family-connect @ State Courts initiative launched on 24 November 2017, provides first-level information to the families of offenders who have just been sentenced to prison, and to connect them with available community resources.

Recognising that family members whose loved ones are sentenced to prison often face anxiety and financial difficulties especially if the offender is the sole breadwinner of the family and has elderly or young dependants, the State Courts collaborated with the Singapore After-Care Association (SACA) to jointly develop this initiative.

Under family-connect @ State Courts, staff and trained volunteers from SACA will provide families with basic information on prison procedures and other matters related to prison life and processes, help allay their fears and concerns, and arrange for prison visits. They will also provide referrals to social agencies for families who are in need of financial assistance and support for young and school-going children, and eldercare agencies for elderly dependants at home.

For families with multiple risk factors which have the potential to impact the children, SACA will provide more holistic case management so that the children may receive interventionist support to help them stay on course and not fall into inappropriate behaviours.

The pilot phase of family-connect @ State Courts will run from January 2018, where volunteers will be stationed in the State Courts at the i-connect at level one, every Monday and Wednesday between 10.00am and 2.00pm.



## STATE COURTS-NUS CLERKSHIP PROGRAMME

The State Courts-NUS Clerkship Programme is a collaboration between the State Courts and National University of Singapore (NUS) to provide law students with the opportunity to gain practical insight and exposure to criminal justice procedures and community justice issues from a judicial perspective. Under this programme, final year students from the NUS Law Faculty are attached to senior State Courts Judges, and attend weekly tutorials at the State Courts.

A 12-week pilot was launched on 10 August 2017. Three students were attached to the Deputy Presiding Judge, the Principal District Judge of the Community Justice and Tribunals Division (CJTD), and the Principal District Judge of the State Courts Centre for Dispute Resolution (SCCDR).

During the pilot, the students observed a range of court procedures under the Criminal Justice Division, CJTD and SCCDR, and attended one-to-one sessions with their supervising judges. The students were encouraged to reflect on their observations throughout the programme to deepen their understanding of the unique facets of law practice from the vantage of the judiciary. They also prepared research papers and drafted bench memos in the course of the programme.

Based on positive feedback from the pilot, the State Courts-NUS Clerkship Programme will be implemented in 2018 with plans for an increased intake of up to 10 students.



# Outreach and Engagement

## EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME FOR COURT AND TRIBUNAL ADMINISTRATORS

The inaugural run of the *Executive Leadership Programme for Court and Tribunal Administrators* held from 16 to 20 January 2017 attracted 30 judges, senior registrars and court administrators from various countries spanning Australia, Cameroon, Marshall Islands, Myanmar, Serbia, and the United Arab Emirates. Justice reform specialists from the World Bank, members of local government agencies, and judges and court administrators from the Singapore courts also attended the programme.

The programme was jointly organised by the State Courts and the National University of Singapore's Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy (LKY School) to provide deeper insights into a broad range of complex issues governing the management of courts and tribunals, and to equip court and tribunal administrators, and senior officers in quasi-judicial bodies in leadership positions with key interdisciplinary leadership skills critical to court and tribunal operations.

The five-day programme was conducted by distinguished academics from the LKY School, as well as senior management members of the State Courts. It provided participants with wide exposure to a variety of topics ranging from the *Changing Legal Landscape, Leadership and Strategic Planning, to Managing Court Resources and Measuring Court Performance*. It also included practical sessions such as discussions of contextualised evidence-based case studies and a learning journey to the Singapore Prison Service.

Following the successful inaugural run, the programme will see its second run take place in February 2018.



## IFCE: STATE COURTS OF SINGAPORE MODEL

The *International Framework for Court Excellence: State Courts of Singapore Model* was launched in January 2017. It builds on the base of the *International Framework for Court Excellence (IFCE)*, a self-assessment tool to help courts and tribunals optimise their performance through a continuous improvement process. The first *IFCE* was developed in 2010 by the International Consortium for Court Excellence, of which Singapore is a founding member.

Besides applying the *IFCE*, the State Courts actively promote the use of the *IFCE* to other foreign judiciaries. This has led to the conceptualisation and development of the *IFCE: State Courts of Singapore Model* with the incorporation of new concepts such as alternative dispute resolution, ethics, risk management and business continuity plans. The *IFCE: State Courts of Singapore Model* also incorporates concepts that the State Courts have consistently embraced as part of their policies and strategies. One example shown is the greater emphasis on the development of judicial officers and court administrators which have been termed "Court Workforce".

With aspects of the *IFCE* being adapted to suit the State Courts' organisational context, the fundamental concepts in the *IFCE* and the court values such as fairness, accessibility, independence, integrity, impartiality and responsiveness, continue to remain relevant. The original *IFCE* continues to resonate with judges and court and tribunal administrators as a conceptual framework against which court administration can be viewed in a holistic manner.



## A DAY IN COURT

The *A Day in Court* seminar for student leaders is held annually as part of the State Courts' outreach efforts to schools to enhance the community's understanding of their work and to foster good community spirit. Held on 1 June 2017, 60 participants comprising student leaders and teachers from 27 local schools attended the fourth run of the annual seminar where they gained an insight into the Singapore justice system.

Students were introduced to different kinds of community disputes handled by the State Courts and how they can be amicably resolved through mediation. They also learned about the types of criminal cases handled by the Community Court and the restorative justice model adopted by the courts for cases involving youth.

The full-day seminar included a tour of the State Courts, a fireside chat with State Courts Judges and two role-playing activities in the courtroom and in chambers. Students were given the opportunity to practise what they had learnt and develop their mediation skills through a simulated case involving neighbours in dispute.

The criminal courtroom role-play session was the highlight of the seminar for the participants. The event received positive feedback from participants who reflected that this experience gave them a better understanding of what happens in a court hearing and the role that each criminal justice stakeholder plays in court. The fifth run of *A Day in Court* will take place in June 2018 with a refreshed format.



## PUBLIC TALK ON RESOLVING EMPLOYMENT DISPUTES

The third run of the Public Talk entitled *What You Need to Know about Resolving Employment Disputes* was supported by the Ministry of Manpower and the Tripartite Alliance for Dispute Management (TADM), and held at the State Courts on 18 November 2017. The talk provided an introduction to employment disputes, explained how and where to file their claims, and how to enforce an Employment Claims Tribunals (ECT) Order.

The selection of the theme was in alignment with the new ECT and TADM which were established earlier in the year to provide avenues for resolving employment disputes.

Representatives from the State Courts' Community Justice and Tribunals Division and Civil Justice Division, and TADM, also shared their valuable insights through a panel discussion at the end of the talk. Over 130 members of the public comprising legal professionals, human resource practitioners, grassroots volunteers, and representatives from various industries attended the talk. The annual Public Talk is part of the State Courts' public outreach efforts to enhance the public's understanding of court processes and make information about the State Courts more accessible. Feedback received indicated that the event was well-received and the next Public Talk will be held in the second half of 2018 with a new theme.



## SENTENCING CONFERENCE 2017

The Sentencing Conference 2017 was jointly organised by the State Courts and the Singapore Academy of Law on 26 and 27 October. The theme for the conference was *Review, Rehabilitation and Reintegration* and explored issues beyond the punishment of the offender. More than 300 members of the judicial and legal community, together with law enforcement agencies and stakeholders involved in the criminal justice system attended the event.

The conference line-up included a keynote address by The Honourable the Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon and a special lecture by The Right Honourable Sir Geoffrey Vos, Chancellor of the High Court of England and Wales. Surrounding the theme of the Conference were six stimulating sessions presented by eminent speakers such as Justice Chan Seng

Onn, Professor Arie Freiberg and Mr Gregory Vijayendran, President of the Law Society. Participants were also engaged in a series of illuminating dialogues chaired by moderators from the Singapore Judiciary.

During the conference, it was also announced that the Sentencing Information and Research Repository will be enhanced, commencing with the inclusion of case summaries for selected categories of cases. The repository will also be made available to *LawNet Basic* subscribers in 2018.

Presiding Judge of the State Courts, Justice See Kee Onn concluded that an effective criminal justice system emphasises the certainty of enforcement and punishment yet ensures that there is hope for ex-offenders to start afresh.



# Enhancing our Facilities

## STATE COURTS TOWERS PROGRESS

The State Courts Towers are slated to be operational in 2020. It will comprise two towers, each standing at a height of 178 metres, and with a combined area of 113,000 square metres. They will be connected by a series of link bridges that enable the controlled circulation of court visitors and State Courts staff.

While the current State Courts building has served the organisation well, the existing structure faces challenges in supporting the long-term demands on the courts, as the State Courts' jurisdiction and caseload increase over the years, and new functions are introduced to better serve court users. The new Towers will house more than 60 courtrooms, over 50 hearing chambers, and supporting service functions.

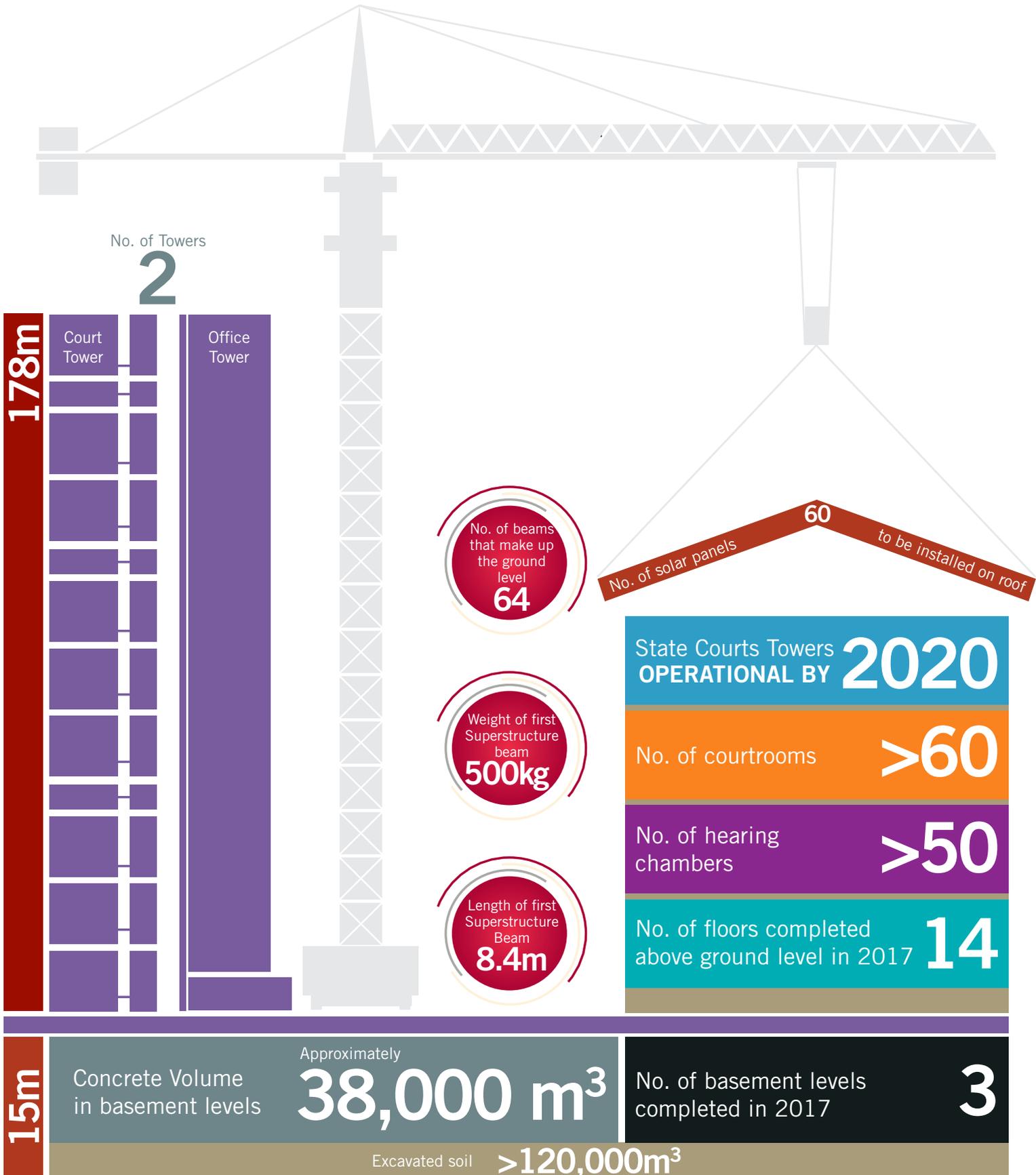
The year 2017 saw the completion of the basement works and the commencement of construction from ground level, marked

by the launch of the superstructure on 17 March. Officiated by The Honourable the Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon, the milestone event brought the State Courts one step closer to the completion of the new State Courts Towers. Since then, the superstructure has progressed steadily with the building closing in on level 14 in December. Earlier in the year, the walkway hoardings along Upper Cross Street leading to the State Courts were also dressed up with specially designed decals to educate the public about the various services offered by the State Courts.

When completed, the new State Courts Towers will be a distinctive and symbolic landmark in this part of the city. The topping up ceremony to signify the completion of the structural works is scheduled to take place in 2018.



# STATE COURTS TOWERS: FACTS & FIGURES



E DIVISION

CIVIL JUSTICE

7P

s: 292,800  
268,200  
ce Rate:

2%

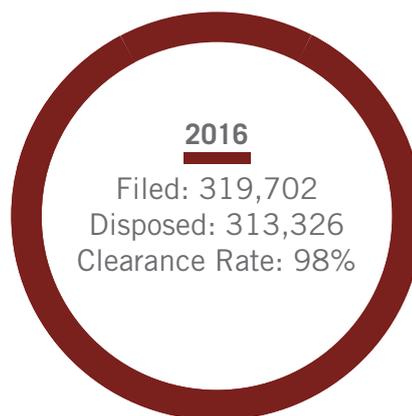
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STANIS  
COMING

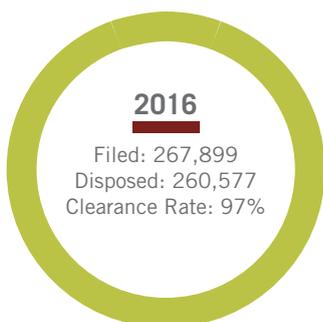
**INSPIRING  
PUBLIC TRUST AND  
CONFIDENCE**

# DASHBOARD

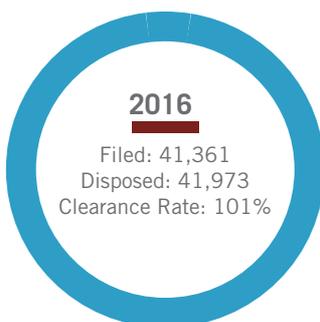
## STATISTICS OVERVIEW



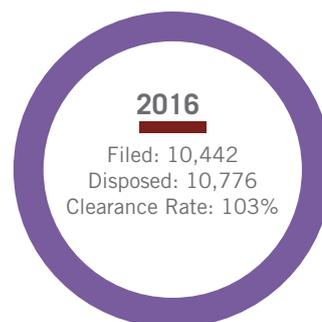
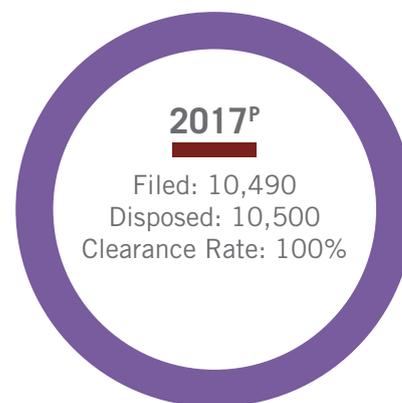
### CRIMINAL JUSTICE DIVISION



### CIVIL JUSTICE DIVISION



### COMMUNITY JUSTICE & TRIBUNALS DIVISION



Notes  
<sup>P</sup> Projected figures (rounded off to the nearest ten/hundred).  
<sup>1</sup> Clearance rate is the number of cases disposed as a percentage of the number of cases filed in the same year. The clearance rate can exceed 100% as those that are disposed of are not necessarily a subset of the filings in that year. Clearance rate percentages are rounded off to the nearest whole number.

# CASELOAD PROFILE

## CRIMINAL JUSTICE DIVISION



	2017 <sup>P</sup>	2016
<b>Criminal and Departmental/ Statutory Board</b>		
 Criminal Charges <sup>2</sup>	64,900	61,738
 Departmental/Statutory Board Charges and Summonses	162,100	137,666
 Traffic Charges and Summonses	59,900	62,401
<b>Others</b>		
 Coroner's Court Cases	4,100	4,129
 Magistrate's Complaints	1,800	1,965
<b>Total</b>	<b>292,800</b>	<b>267,899</b>

## CIVIL JUSTICE DIVISION



	2017 <sup>P</sup>	2016
<b>Originating Processes</b>		
 Writs of Summonses <sup>3</sup>	27,500	27,688
 Originating Summonses	720	627
<b>Interlocutory Applications</b>		
 Summonses <sup>3</sup>	8,600	8,114
 Summonses for Directions (Order 25/37) <sup>4</sup>	3,300	3,015
 Summary Judgment (Order O.14)	150	159
<b>Others</b>		
 Taxation	150	190
 Assessment of Damages	1,400	1,568
<b>Total</b>	<b>41,820</b>	<b>41,361</b>

### Notes

<sup>P</sup> Projected figures (rounded off to the nearest ten/hundred).

<sup>2</sup> Includes district arrest charges, magistrate's arrest charges and other types of charges.

<sup>3</sup> Includes district court and magistrate's court cases.

<sup>4</sup> Excludes summonses for directions (order 25/37).

## COMMUNITY JUSTICE AND TRIBUNALS DIVISION



	2017 <sup>P</sup>	2016
<b>Community Disputes Resolution Tribunals</b>		
Community Disputes Resolution Tribunals Claims	50	80
<b>Employment Claims Tribunals<sup>5</sup></b>		
Employment Claims Tribunals Claims	620	N.A.
<b>Protection from Harassment Act</b>		
Originating Summonses - Applications for Protection Order (PO)/ Non-Publication Order (NPO)	120	96
<b>Small Claims Tribunals</b>		
Small Claims Tribunals Claims	9,700	10,266
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,490</b>	<b>10,442</b>

## OTHER CASELOAD PROFILE

### CENTRE FOR DISPUTE RESOLUTION<sup>6</sup>



	2017 <sup>P</sup>	2016
<b>Criminal</b>		
Magistrate's Complaints	270	412
<b>Civil</b>		
Writs of Summons <sup>7</sup> , Originating Summonses	6,200	5,878
<b>Community</b>		
Originating Summonses - Applications for Protection Order (PO)/ Non-Publication Order (NPO), Community Disputes Resolution Tribunals Claims	33	34
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,503</b>	<b>6,324</b>

#### Notes

<sup>P</sup> Projected figures (rounded off to the nearest ten/hundred).

<sup>5</sup> The Employment Claims Tribunals commenced operations on 1 April 2017.

<sup>6</sup> Refers to fresh cases handled by the Centre for Dispute Resolution in the respective years.

<sup>7</sup> Includes district court and magistrate's court cases.

# SIGNIFICANT CASES : CRIMINAL JUSTICE DIVISION

## MONEY LAUNDERING AND CHEATING

### PP v Yeo Jiawei

Yeo Jiawei, a former wealth planner at the BSI Bank Limited (BSI), was charged with the alleged misappropriation of billions of dollars from the 1Malaysia Berhad (1MDB) state fund.

In July 2017, Yeo pleaded guilty to a charge for transferring proceeds of crime under section 47(1)(b) referenced with section 47(6)(a) of the Corruption, Drug Trafficking and Other Serious Crimes (Confiscation of Benefits Act) (CDSA). He also faced a charge for cheating his employer BSI under section 420 of the penal code, by inducing BSI to enter into multiple suspicious transactions that led to the eventual transfer of US\$1 billion from 1MDB to an account beneficially owned by Low Taek Jho. Eight other charges were taken into consideration during sentencing. He was sentenced to 30 months' imprisonment for the first charge of transferring proceeds of crime, and 24 months' imprisonment for the second charge of cheating.

## CORONER'S INQUIRY INTO THE DEMISE OF MUHAMMAD ADIL BIN MOHD SHAFIEE

On 14 May 2017, the deceased was spotted floating face-down in the swimming pool of Bukit Batok Civil Service Club. Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) was performed on him after he was recovered from the pool. He was then conveyed to the hospital where he suffered multiple episodes of cardiac arrest and was treated for cardiopulmonary collapse. He passed away on 24 May 2017. His cause of death was ascertained to be that of drowning.

During the Coroner's Inquiry, the court heard that the deceased had attended four swimming lessons earlier that year but did not undergo any swimming proficiency test. On 14 May 2017, he entered the pool alone at 4.44 pm where there was no lifeguard at that time. At about 4.48 pm, the deceased became motionless in the pool.

The Coroner found that the death was a tragic misadventure. This was the twelfth accidental drowning death of a child aged 12 and under since January 2014. In order to avoid similar occurrences in the future, the Coroner emphasised that children should never swim without adult supervision, even if they have been coached on swimming. He also noted the importance of placing enough lifeguards strategically around swimming pools.

## ILLICIT SALE OF CODEINE

### PP v Tan Gek Young

Tan Gek Young, a doctor, pleaded guilty to 15 charges under the Poisons Act and Medicines Act, for the unlicensed sale of cough syrup containing codeine, failing to keep proper records for the supply of cough syrup, and the supply of a medicinal product Dhasedyl, which was not listed on the general sale list. Tan sold an estimated quantity of 2,319 litres of cough syrup containing codeine. Another 40 similar charges were taken into consideration during sentencing. The prosecution highlighted that this case involved one of the highest quantities of codeine cough syrup in cases which have been prosecuted by the Health Sciences Authority. Tan was sentenced to an aggregate of 24 months' imprisonment and a fine of \$130,000.

## CORONER'S INQUIRY INTO THE DEMISE OF KONG BAN HUAT ALAN

Between April and September 2015, the Singapore General Hospital (SGH) reported an outbreak of the Hepatitis C virus in its Renal Ward. The deceased was among the infected patients. He was a cancer survivor who had undergone a kidney transplant, and was subjected to long-term immune suppression to prevent transplant rejection. He was admitted and warded in SGH on 12 June 2015 after he complained of shortness of breath and chest pains, and eventually passed away on 29 June 2015.

During the Coroner's Inquiry, the court heard that the deceased was diagnosed with sepsis during his stay in SGH and found to have contracted Hepatitis C. The medical evidence was that Hepatitis C was not a main cause of death, and fungal sepsis played a bigger role in precipitating the multiple organ failure.

The court found that there was no basis to suspect foul play, and the demise was a result of an unfortunate medical misadventure. Nevertheless, the Coroner also noted that SGH had since put in place certain measures such as improving its system of pathogen surveillance, discontinuing the practice of using multi-dose vials for injections, and conducting daily audits on safe injection practices to minimise the risk of such transmissions of infections in the future.

## SIGNIFICANT CASES: CIVIL DIVISION

### SECURITIES AND FUTURES ACT — CIVIL PENALTIES FOR UNAUTHORISED TRADING

#### Monetary Authority of Singapore v Wang Boon Heng and Foo Jee Chin

The Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS) sued the defendants, Wang Boon Heng and Foo Jee Chin for unauthorised trading under the Securities and Futures Act (SFA), seeking civil penalties against them. The defendants were a divorced couple, and Wang was an undischarged bankrupt.

The District Judge found that Wang had traded in shares for his own benefit using accounts opened in the name of either Foo or his driver (Tay). The two trading firms concerned neither knew nor consented to the fact that Wang entered these trades for his own benefit. Similarly, Foo allowed Wang to trade in her account without such consent. In this way, both defendants had intentionally deceived the firms, engaging in an act of business which operates as a fraud and accordingly, contravened section 201(b) of the SFA.

There was little case law on how the quantum of a civil penalty was to be arrived at. The District Judge applied a three-step approach suggested by some authors.

The starting point was the statutory minimum penalty of \$50,000. The court considered that there was no adverse market effect. The trades were not meant for loss avoidance, and that the defendants had no antecedents. However, the conduct was deliberate and hard to detect, and the defendants were unremorseful despite having caused a remisier a loss of some \$136,000 which he had to settle when the account was closed out. In particular, Wang had belatedly mounted an artful defence that his late brother had opened the accounts and performed the trades, despite the documentary trail and the testimonies of Tay and the remisiers showing otherwise. Accordingly, and taking into account that Foo's acquiescence was less culpable than Wang's active trading, penalties of \$75,000 and \$50,000 were imposed on Wang and Foo respectively. Finally, the District Judge was satisfied that the penalties were sufficiently deterrent and were not arbitrary.

MAS appealed the quantum of the penalties. The High Court, having considered submissions from an *amicus curiae*, noted that there was a dearth of case law on the issue of quantum, and proposed a more elaborate framework in place of that used by the District Judge. The High Court increased the penalties imposed on Wang and Foo to \$150,000 and \$75,000 respectively.

### NON-ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEFAMATION OF AN ENTITY'S PARENT COMPANY

#### Certis Cisco Security Pte Ltd v Ho Seng Mui

Certis Cisco Security sued the defendant, Ho Seng Mui for allegedly libellous statements she was reported to have made in a Chinese language newspaper article. Ho was a user of a safe deposit box facility provided by a wholly owned subsidiary of the plaintiff, a company that provided security services generally.

Among other things, the defendant was reported to have stated that most of her jewellery stored in her safe deposit box had gone missing and that she wanted to know whether other victims had a similar experience and recovered their lost items. She had also stated that she thought the safe deposit boxes were safe and did not expect this to happen, and that whether a person could recover his items after something has happened would be unknown.

Notably, all references to “保安公司” (security company) in the article had been changed to “保险公司” (insurance company) at the defendant's behest, save for one due to an editorial oversight. Further, an oblique reference had been made to news articles published the previous year concerning other reported losses and an open letter from the plaintiff addressing these claims.

The District Judge dismissed the claim, reasoning that principally, neither the article as a whole nor the offending words were capable in law of referring to the plaintiff. The article referred to an insurance company whereas the plaintiff was not one. In any event, the offending words were not defamatory. Contrary to the plaintiff's claim, they neither imputed the plaintiff with dishonesty or incompetence nor meant that the safe deposit box facilities were unsafe. The defendant could also rely on the defence of fair comment. The latter two statements were in the nature of comments, made without malice, and founded on her genuine belief that her items had been stolen from her safe deposit box. Finally, even if the defendant was liable, any damages ordered would have been nominal. Essentially, the plaintiff failed to show firstly, how many readers would have made any connection with it, secondly, how its goodwill would be lost by the libel of its subsidiary, and thirdly, how much damage was attributable to the offending article in light of the earlier letter and news articles which had also damaged its reputation.

### EXTRACTION OF JUDGMENT – A STEP OR PROCEEDING IN THE RULES OF COURT

#### Saravanan a/l Subramaniam and others v Chua Peng Ho and another

In 2016, a District Judge ruled that a “step or proceeding”, for the purposes of the deemed discontinuance provision under Order 21, rule 2(6), must meet two criteria being that it must appear in the court's records and also be mandated by law. Accordingly, the extraction of an interlocutory judgment qualified as a “step”, as a plaintiff cannot otherwise proceed to have damages assessed. The defendant's appeal was dismissed by the High Court without written grounds. On further appeal in 2017, the Court of Appeal, delivering its judgment *ex tempore*, commended the District Judge for, and expressed its full agreement with her “comprehensive and well-reasoned judgment”.

# SIGNIFICANT CASES: COMMUNITY JUSTICE AND TRIBUNALS DIVISION

## DISPUTE OVER GOVERNMENT APPLICATION FOR NON-PUBLICATION ORDER

MobileStats Technologies Pte Ltd (MobileStats) sued the Ministry of Defence (MINDEF) for patent infringement and MINDEF counterclaimed for the revocation of the patent. The suit was discontinued due to MobileStats' financial position and judgment was entered on the counterclaim. Thereafter, the director of MobileStats gave an interview to *The Online Citizen*, alleging that MINDEF had intended from the start to infringe the patent and was waiting for a "premeditated" way to revoke it, and had conducted a "war of attrition" to deplete MobileStats' resources. MINDEF responded by posting on its Facebook page that the allegations were "false and baseless". *The Online Citizen* reproduced MINDEF's response in full and provided a link to MINDEF's response in the webpage hosting the original article and video. The Attorney-General, representing MINDEF, applied for a Non-Publication Order (NPO) under section 15 of the Protection from Harassment Act (POHA) seeking a declaration that the allegations were false and they should not be published without a notification to state the same.

At first instance, the District Judge granted the order in terms on the basis that the Government had the legal right to make an application under section 15, the allegations were false, and it was just and equitable to grant the NPO. On appeal, the order made at first instance was reversed by the High Court for the reason that only natural persons may apply for an NPO. The High Court Judge further expressed the view that it would not, in any event, have been just and equitable to grant the order in the circumstances.

On further appeal, the Court of Appeal (by a majority) agreed with the High Court that the first important threshold legal issue; i.e. whether the Government is a "person" under section 15 of the POHA is to be answered within the context of the POHA itself. The Court of Appeal held that the government could not invoke section 15 and upheld an interpretation which limited that right to natural persons. In so doing, the Court of Appeal noted that the entire scheme and structure of the Act applies throughout only to individual (and human) victims of harassment as well as unlawful stalking.

As MINDEF did not succeed in crossing the threshold requirement, it was unnecessary for the Court of Appeal to decide on the other issues. However, as arguments were submitted on the application being just and equitable, the Court of Appeal outlined a non-exhaustive list of factors to be considered when deciding if it is just and equitable to grant a NPO. They include the nature and seriousness of the allegation, the purpose of the false statement, the degree of harm suffered, the degree of publication, whether the party has the means to publicise his own version, whether the publisher made genuine effort to point out that the veracity of the statement is disputed, and ordinary instances of daily living that may reasonably be tolerated. On the facts, the Court of Appeal found that it would not have been just and equitable to grant a NPO as the statements were published only on *The Online Citizen* and that the publisher had made efforts to provide a balanced view of the facts.

## DISPUTE OVER HARASSMENT BY FORMER EMPLOYER

The appellant was formerly employed as a coach by the respondent who ran a sports coaching company. The respondent had put up a web post with various allegations about the appellant on his business website after the appellant had left the company in 2009. The appellant sought a Protection Order (section 12) under the Protection from Harassment Act (POHA) in relation to the web post as well as to prohibit the respondent from physically approaching the appellant.

At the first instance, the District Judge did not grant the Protection Order. At the onset, he held that the appellant could apply for a Protection Order even though the web post was put up before the POHA came into force as it was an ongoing publication. In the round, it was found that the choice of words by the respondent was harsh, but the respondent had reasons for giving his viewpoints in the web post, had provided links in the web post for the readers to draw their own conclusions, and the web post had not stopped the appellant from working as an athletics coach and growing his coaching business since 2009. The appellant did not challenge the District Judge's decision in relation to the alleged physical harassment, but appealed against the decision with regard to the web post.

The High Court held that in deciding whether to grant a Protection Order, a two-stage test is to be adopted. At the first stage, the nature of the offending words or behaviour is to be examined to determine whether there was a contravention. Having determined which, the judge at the second stage, is to then consider whether any defences can be applied, whether the harassing conduct is nonetheless reasonable conduct in the circumstances, and whether it is just and equitable to grant the Protection Order.

In this case, the High Court noted that this was not a straightforward case as the statements in the web post were not all true or all pure fabrication. However, the web post as a whole was abusive and the respondent was out to "name and shame" the appellant. The nature and context of the respondent's actions could not be regarded as reasonable even though there was some truth in what was alleged. The relevant factors to be considered when granting an order under section 15 of the POHA are equally applicable to section 12. The High Court thus found that it was just and equitable to provide the remedy sought by the appellant, and ordered the respondent to take down the web post.

# SIGNIFICANT CASES: CENTRE FOR DISPUTE RESOLUTION

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## MEDIATION OF CROSS DEFAMATION SUITS

This mediation concerned cross-defamation suits involving a local celebrity and a public relations and marketing consultant. The dispute chiefly stemmed from the manner in which the consultant had marketed and promoted the sale of a book written and illustrated by the celebrity. This subsequently escalated into an exchange of comments via social media that both deemed to be defamatory. After the judge-led mediation, the parties reached an amicable settlement and even published a joint conciliatory statement. The parties emphatically stated that they had resolved “all disputes and misunderstandings” through mediation and were looking forward to more collaborations with each other. This case demonstrated how the experienced judge-mediator skilfully identified the interest of the parties, culminating in the media featuring the disputants walking amicably out of the courthouse.

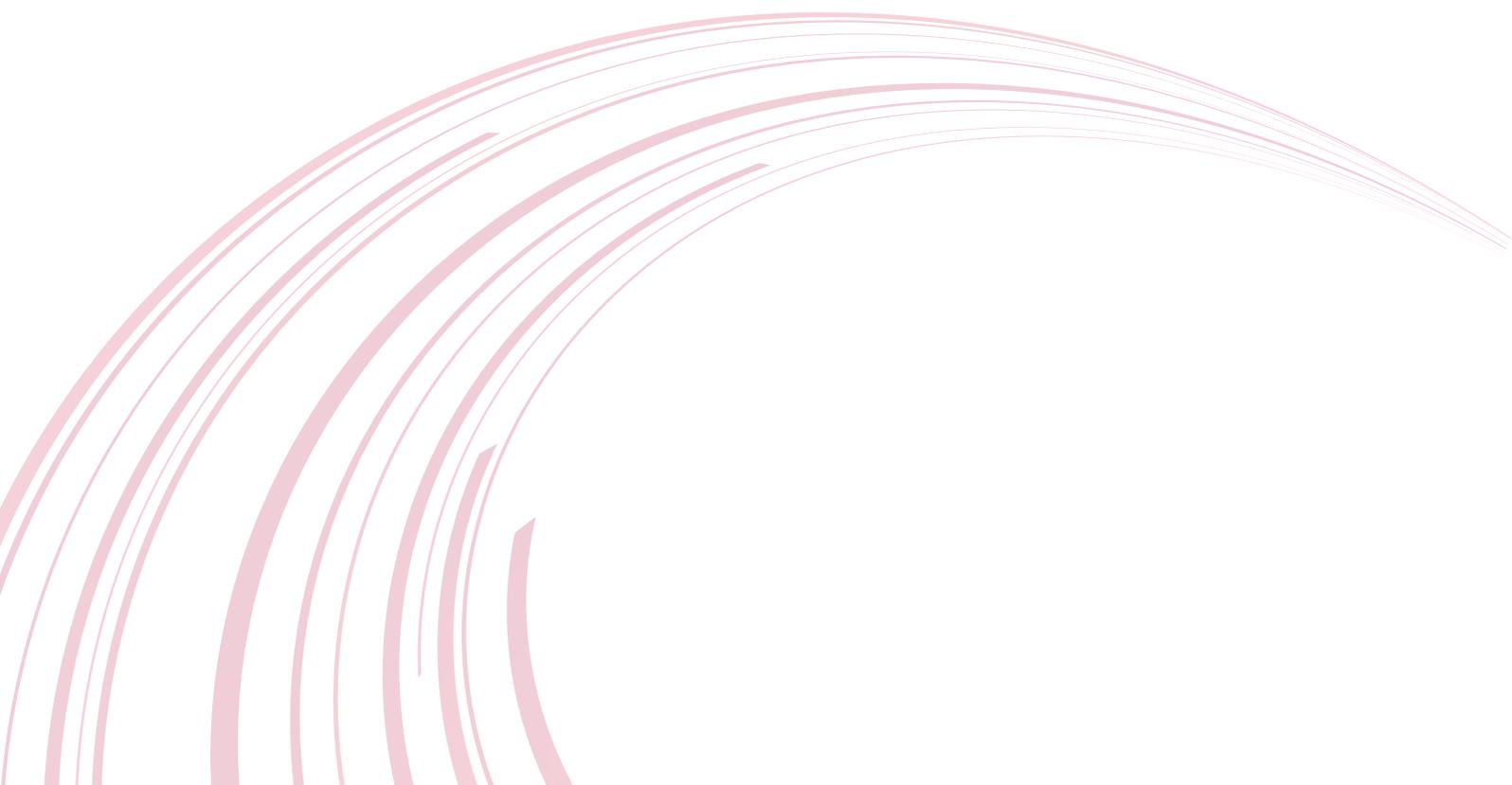
## MEDIATION OF MAGISTRATE'S COMPLAINT

In the mediation of a criminal mischief matter, the complainant car driver alleged that the respondent motorcyclist had deliberately damaged the wing mirror of the complainant's car. During the mediation, it transpired that the respondent had recently sustained spinal injuries in a traumatic traffic accident and was on long term medical leave. Thus the respondent was more agitated and acted defensively when the complainant's car drove towards the motorcycle the respondent was riding. The complainant decided to withdraw the complaint without seeking any monetary compensation. Both parties apologised to each other for their inconsiderate road behaviour and the matter was resolved with mutual handshakes exchanged at the end of the mediation session.

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## CO-MEDIATION OF COMMUNITY JUSTICE DISPUTE

This Protection from Harassment Act (POHA) case involving an aged parent and adult child engaged in a familial dispute was successfully co-mediated by two judge-mediators. The relationship between the parent and child had been estranged for a long time. The parent had sought to re-establish ties with the child, who was not responsive. The child applied for a court order to prohibit the parent from any form of contact. During the mediation, the judge-mediators effectively emphasised the preservation of family ties, enabling the family to arrive at a holistic resolution that met the needs of both parties. Consequently, the child withdrew the application for a court order under the POHA against the parent, and even agreed to provide for the parent.



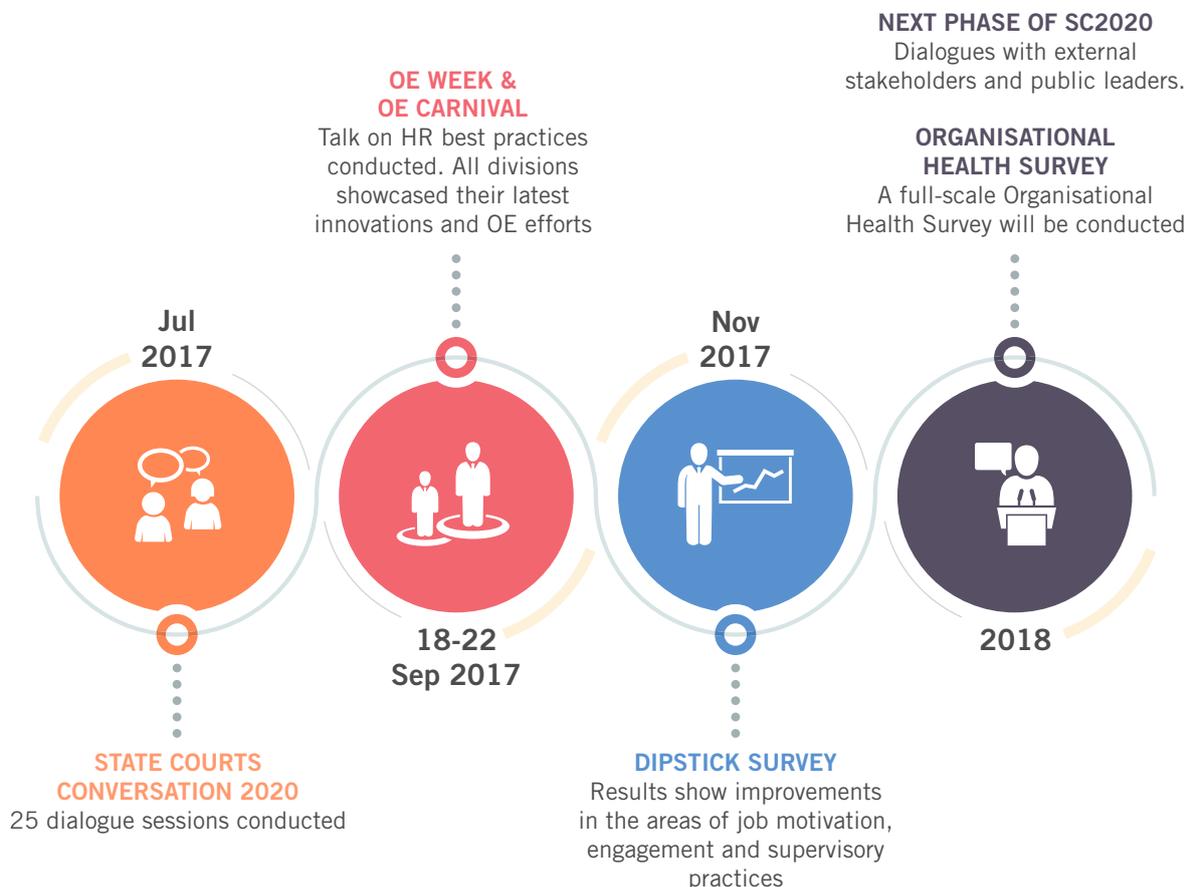
# ORGANISATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Organisational Excellence (OE) is an important aspect of the State Courts' culture, which provides the foundation to fulfilling its mission. It represents the organisation's ongoing efforts to improve its standards and processes, as well as motivate employees and energise them with a spirit of continuous improvement. In 2017, several key initiatives under the umbrella of OE were carried out.

In July 2017, the State Courts Conversation 2020 (SC2020) initiative was launched to solicit views from staff on the current state of and future hopes for the organisation. There were 25 dialogue sessions held to review the mission, vision and values, corporate strategies, processes and branding of the State Courts. The feedback gathered will go towards formulating better strategies for the State Courts to function more effectively moving forward.

The OE Week, an annual series of events to celebrate and encourage the drive for innovation and excellence, was held between 18 and 22 September. Events included a talk on best human resource practices by the Defence Science and Technology Agency, winner of the People Excellence Award 2016, and the OE Carnival, which saw all divisions and directorates showcasing their latest innovations and OE efforts. The preliminary findings of the SC2020 internal dialogues were also shared with all staff.

To gauge various aspects of staff engagement and organisational health, a dipstick survey on Organisational Health was conducted in November 2017. The survey results indicated encouraging improvements from the 2013 and 2015 results in the areas of job motivation, engagement and supervisory practices. In 2018, the OE efforts will focus on the next phase of SC2020, which involves dialogues with external stakeholders and public leaders. A full-scale Organisational Health Survey will also be conducted.



## SERVICE EXCELLENCE

The State Courts adopt a service-centric approach that is committed to addressing the needs of their court users. The Service Excellence Section, set up in 2010, drives the organisation's efforts to build a service-oriented culture. Its functions include ensuring that the organisation consistently complies with the service standards, identifying areas of service delivery in which the organisation has performed well

or has room for improvement, and providing training to court administrators in the frontline service functions.

The service standards adopted by the State Courts are in adherence to the Court Charter which sets out the organisation's commitment to the delivery of timely and quality justice.

### COURT CHARTER

According to the State Courts' Court Charter, at least 80 per cent of all public enquiries received via email are to be responded to within seven working days.



In 2017, 97.2 per cent of all email enquiries were responded to within seven working days.



In 2016, 96 per cent of all email enquiries were responded to within seven working days.

### IMPROVING INFORMATION ACCESS

In their quest to enhance the service experience of court users, the State Courts implemented two key initiatives in 2017 that contributed towards improving information access.

#### Interactive Voice Response System

In May, an *Interactive Voice Response (IVR)* System was implemented on the State Courts' public hotlines to provide on-demand basic information to callers. With the system, callers have ready access to operating and filing hours, and self-help service options to obtain court-related information. They are also given the option to leave a call-back request so that they do not have to stay on hold.

#### Ask Jamie

In June, the virtual assistant, *Ask Jamie* was implemented on the State Courts website as part of a whole-of-government initiative. This has provided an interactive and instantaneous online platform to address queries from the public.

These initiatives have enabled greater ease in court users' ability to obtain information. The State Courts officers were also able to devote more time and attention to better assist callers with more complex or case-specific queries for an overall better user experience. As part of the continuous effort towards service excellence, the State Courts will implement more response features in the *IVR* System and continue to build the response capabilities of *Ask Jamie* in 2018.



# RESULTS OF STATE COURTS SURVEYS

The State Courts regularly conduct a number of key surveys targeted at external parties. The latest State Courts surveys; the *Public Perception Survey (PPS)* and the *Stakeholders and Strategic Partners Survey (SSPS)*, show a high level of public trust and confidence in the organisation, and a high degree of

overall satisfaction from its stakeholders and partners. Such feedback is vital to guide the courts in planning, developing and enhancing their communication and engagement strategies with their stakeholders.

## STATE COURTS PUBLIC PERCEPTION SURVEY 2016/2017



Conducted every 3 years



Sample Size of 1,004



Singapore Citizens and Permanent Residents aged above 17



Felt that State Courts have contributed positively to the development of Singapore



Felt that State Courts have an effective justice system



Felt that State Courts administered justice fairly



Felt that State Courts have met their expectations



Have a positive impression of State Courts

## STATE COURTS STAKEHOLDER AND STRATEGIC PARTNERS SURVEY 2016/2017



Conducted every 2 years



Sample Size of 96



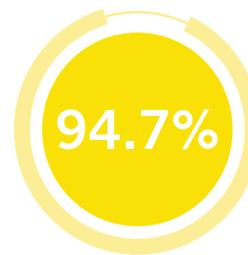
Volunteer mediators, personnel from public and private organisations



Felt that State Courts foster an open and trusting relationship



Felt that State Courts make a positive impact



Felt that State Courts are receptive to views and recommendations



Felt that State Courts are professional



Felt that State Courts are knowledgeable in their area of work



Expressed overall satisfaction with the collaborative efforts of State Courts

# LOCAL AWARDS AND INTERNATIONAL PROFILE

## LOCAL AWARDS

### National Day Awards

The National Day Awards recognise various forms of merit and service to Singapore. In 2017, State Courts officers received awards in various categories.



#### NATIONAL DAY AWARDS

##### PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION MEDAL (SILVER)

District Judge Marvin Bay

##### EFFICIENCY MEDAL

Mr James Chuah  
Ms Mariah Binte Amri  
Ms Suhaily Bte Ismail

### State Courts Awards

The State Courts Awards recognise the commitment and outstanding contributions of staff members to the organisation. In 2017, State Courts officers received awards in categories that include the *Manager of the Year*, the *New Manager of the Year*, the *Court Administrator of the Year*, and *Team of the Year*.



#### STATE COURTS AWARDS

##### MANAGER OF THE YEAR AWARD

Ms Maureen Tee

##### NEW MANAGER OF THE YEAR AWARD

Ms Daphne Quek  
Ms Lam Pei Ying

##### COURT ADMINISTRATOR OF THE YEAR AWARD

Ms Kalai Selvi Rajendran  
Ms Puvana Ramasamy  
Ms Nachamai Subramanian  
Ms G Tamilselvi (Commendation Award)

##### TEAM OF THE YEAR AWARD

Automated Collection System Team  
Corporate Social Responsibility Committee  
Electronic Motor Accident Guide Team

### Excellence in Public Service Awards

The PS21 Service Awards recognise outstanding service and organisational excellence in the public service. In 2017, State Courts officers received the PS21 Star Service Award, and the PS21 Star Manager Award. They also received the PS21 Star Service Team Award for their joint collaborative corporate social responsibility initiative, *Judiciary Cares* together with the Supreme Court and the Family Justice Courts.



#### PUBLIC SERVICE AWARDS

##### PS21 STAR SERVICE AWARD

Ms Alycia Lau  
Mr Dean Yeo  
Ms Huang Caiwei  
Mr Mohamad Raffie Bin Suruin  
Ms Tan Hui Ying  
Ms Yui Weng Fong

##### PS21 STAR MANAGER AWARD

Mr Pandiyan Vellasami

##### PS21 STAR SERVICE TEAM AWARD

Judiciary Cares Committee

**INTERNATIONAL PROFILE**

The Singapore judiciary and legal system continues to be recognised internationally as being among the best in the world. In 2017, Singapore scored well in surveys conducted

by reputable international organisations. The results of these surveys attest to the high quality of justice dispensed by the Singapore Judiciary.

**WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM –  
GLOBAL COMPETITIVENESS REPORT 2017-2018**

**1st**  
Efficiency of Legal Framework in Settling Disputes

**3rd**  
Property Rights

**4th**  
Intellectual Property Protection

**16th**  
Efficiency of Legal Framework in Challenging Regulations

**19th**  
Judicial Independence

**INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR  
MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT –  
WORLD COMPETITIVENESS YEARBOOK 2017**

**2nd**  
Legal and Regulatory Framework

**11th**  
Justice

**HERITAGE FOUNDATION –  
2017 INDEX OF  
ECONOMIC FREEDOM**

**1st**  
Property Rights

**THE WORLD BANK – DOING BUSINESS 2018**

**2nd**  
Enforcing Contracts

**FRASER INSTITUTE – ECONOMIC FREEDOM  
OF THE WORLD: 2017 ANNUAL REPORT**

**8th**  
Legal System and Property Rights

(Note :  
Result is for Year 2015)

**3rd**  
Judicial Effectiveness

**THE WORLD BANK – WORLDWIDE  
GOVERNANCE INDICATORS 2017**

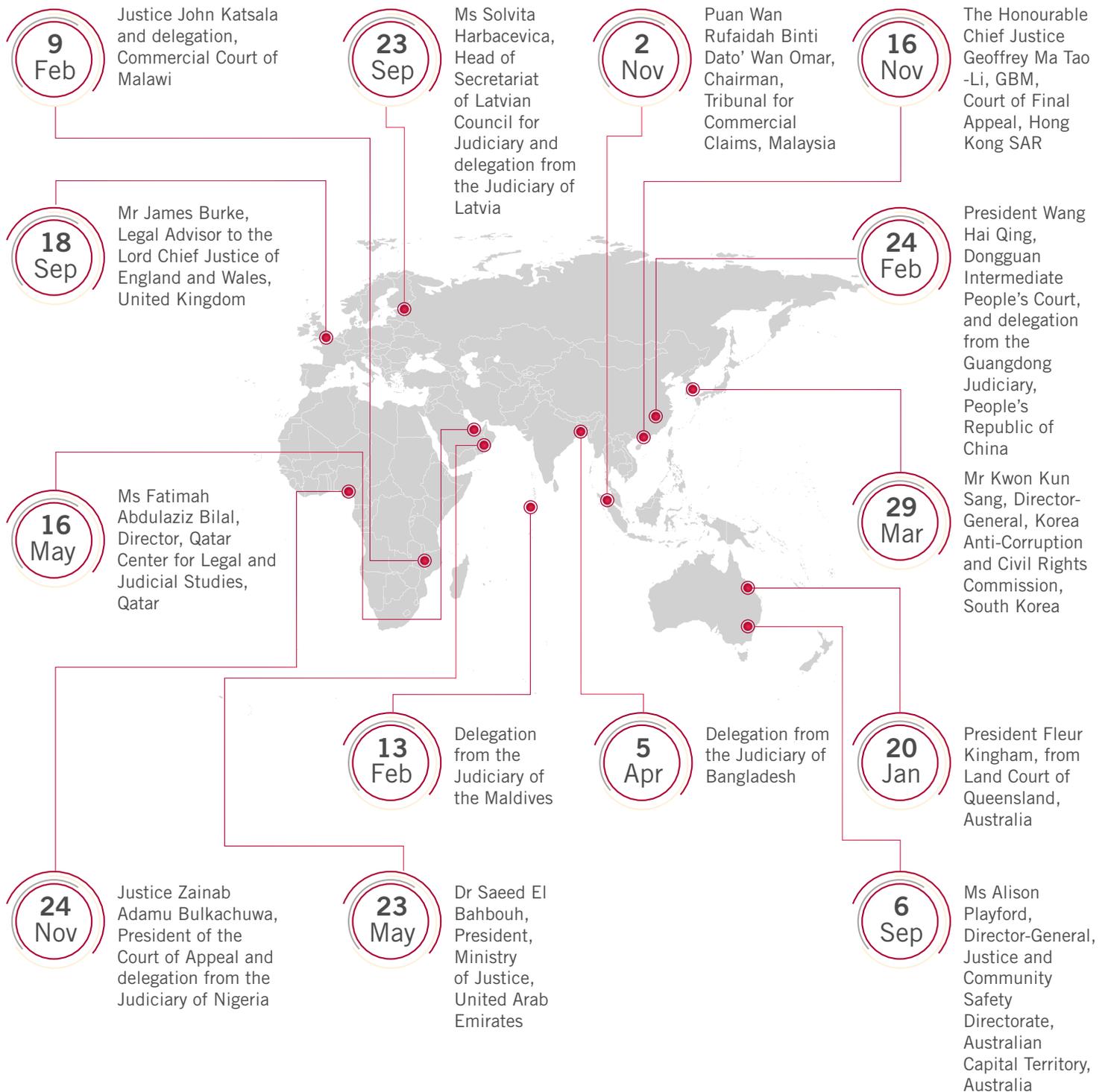
**9th**  
Rule of Law

(Note :  
Result is for Year 2016)

**4th**  
Government Integrity

## VISITS BY DISTINGUISHED GUESTS

The State Courts regularly host delegations from foreign courts, judicial-related institutions, and other government agencies to exchange knowledge and expertise. Through these interactions, the State Courts' network with judiciaries and organisations from other countries is widened and strengthened.





**OUR PEOPLE**



## NURTURING OUR PEOPLE

At the State Courts, the people are the heartbeat of the organisation, comprising judicial officers and court administrators. While there is an increasing focus on the use of technology to advance justice, the courts recognise that their people are their most valuable asset and great emphasis is thus placed on engaging and nurturing them in a holistic manner.

The State Courts adopt an open and consultative approach with constant engagement of all levels of staff, encouraging their active involvement in matters that affect them and the organisation. One such exercise that took place in 2017 was the review of the organisation's vision and mission statements, and core values where the views of all staff were sought on what they hoped for the organisation as it moves forward. In addition to such engagement sessions with staff, *Fireside Chats* and *Ask the Minister* sessions were also held to provide staff with opportunities to interact with public sector leaders and Ministers to gain new perspectives.

The organisation also promotes continuous improvement with learning and development opportunities to enable them to grow both on the professional and personal fronts. In 2017, judicial officers attended the *The Herrmann Brain Dominance Instrument (HBDI) Approach: Think about Decision Making* workshop which sought to help them better understand their thinking preferences, to improve their decision-making, problem-solving and communication skills.

For court administrators, the 3 "U"s for U: *Upgrade, Upskill, and Upscale* programme was introduced with the aim of

inspiring officers at all levels to embrace lifelong learning. In the same vein, the *SkillsFuture Sponsorship Scheme* was implemented in 2017, to provide financial assistance and to proactively encourage good officers to upgrade their skills.

To enrich their career experience, staff members are able to request postings within the organisation to further their professional development. The State Courts also provide their staff with exposure to other areas of work through cross-divisional committee or project work, where those with leadership potential are given leadership appointments to enable them to expand their capabilities. Several judicial officers and court administrators were placed on specialist and leadership training programmes including — the *Judicial Mentoring Programme* which involves being mentored by the Supreme Court Bench, the *Judicial Leadership Programme*, the *Executive Leadership Programme for Court and Tribunal Administrators*, and the *Leadership Mentoring Programme for Court Administrators*, for their professional development.

In advocating the holistic development of their staff, the State Courts place importance not only on the professional well-being of their officers, but also their physical and emotional well-being through health screenings, the *State Courts Steps Challenge*, the *Ethics Day Seminar*, learning journeys, cultural festive events, team sports and cohesion events. In 2017, the *Eat-With-Your-Family* day was also extended from once a year to once every quarter and a flexible lunch time scheme was also implemented.



# STAFF ENGAGEMENT: STATE COURTS CONVERSATION 2020

Engaging their staff in open discourse is a constant feature in the State Courts' modus operandi. The State Courts Conversation 2020 (SC2020) was launched in July 2017 to elicit the views of staff on how they would like to see the organisation function come 2020. A multi-year project, the SC2020 seeks to review the vision, mission and core values of the organisation, as well as the corporate strategies, processes and branding, to better prepare the State Courts for the future.

The project completed its first phase covering staff engagement in 2017. Between 12 June and 12 September, a series of 25 dialogue sessions were conducted, and attended by 97.5% of the staff. These sessions which were facilitated by senior officers from the leadership team, invited the staff to contribute their aspirations and to co-create the State Courts of tomorrow.

The discussion topics challenged staff to make changes to the current systems, processes, corporate strategies and culture that would help the courts to remain relevant to the society in and beyond the next decade.

The sessions were well received by the staff. It was perceived as a sincere and consultative effort by the senior management team to involve and engage all staff in the change management process. The input collated over the 25 sessions would be analysed, and these ground-up perspectives will be incorporated into the overall change management strategy. In addition to the dialogue sessions, the State Courts will continue to perform environmental scanning, employ business analytics and design thinking to formulate strategies to take the organisation into 2020 and beyond.

The next phase of SC2020 will see the engagement of various external stakeholders through dialogue sessions, to better understand their concerns and expectations of the State Courts. These sessions will include senior leaders from the public and private sectors which will enable the project's efforts to be better focused and to achieve meaningful collaborations with the key stakeholders.



# OUR PEOPLE: 2017

## TRAINING HOURS

100.29 hours  
(Average number of training hours per officer)

## HEALTH AND WELLNESS

128 Officers who attended health screenings

59,708,856 steps collectively achieved under the State Courts Steps Challenge between 30 October and 24 November



## FIRESIDE CHATS

2 Fireside Chats  
49 Officers who participated in Fireside Chats

## LUNCHTIME TALKS

36 Lunchtime Talks in 2017  
459 Officers who attended Lunchtime Talks in 2017



## ASK THE MINISTER SESSION

1 Ask the Minister Session  
34 Officers who participated in the Ask the Minister Session

## LEARNING JOURNEYS

4 Learning Journeys in 2017  
89 Officers who attended Learning Journeys in 2017



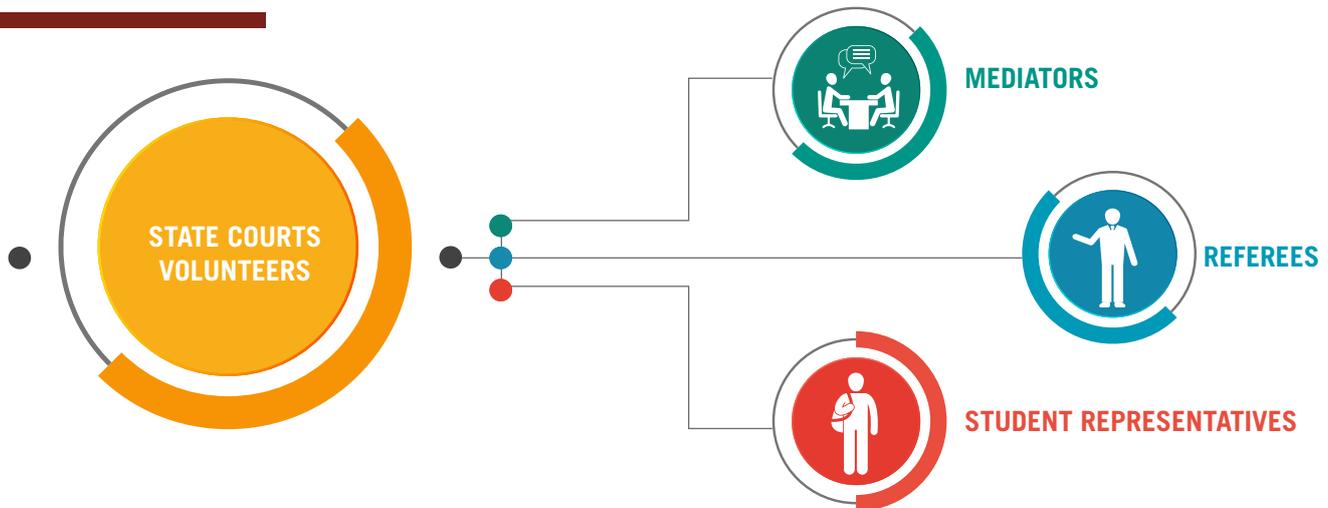
## ENGAGEMENT SESSIONS WITH STAFF

387 Officers who attended State Courts Conversation 2020 dialogue sessions (97.5% of total staff)



**OUR VOLUNTEERS**

## WORKING HAND-IN-HAND



Court volunteers are an important pillar in the work of the State Courts, as they assist in ensuring the delivery of justice. In 2017, the strong spirit of volunteerism towards the State Courts showed continued vigour. About 200 individuals offered their personal commitment to enhancing access to justice by serving in the State Courts Centre for Dispute Resolution (SCCDR) and the Community Justice and Tribunals Division (CJTD) as Mediators, Referees and Student Representatives.

At the SCCDR, there were 85 Volunteer Mediators who dedicated their time and expertise mediating 1,703 cases. At the CJTD's Small Claims Tribunals, 77 Volunteer Mediators also gave of their personal capacities, mediating some 1,510 cases, contributing significantly to the alternative dispute resolution work of the State Courts. In addition, there were 17 Volunteer Referees who assisted the courts in hearing and adjudicating Small Claims Tribunals cases.

To ensure that the Volunteer Mediators remain up-to-date with current mediation skills, the State Courts organised training sessions on *Drafting Settlement Agreements* and *Handling*

*Impasse*. These sessions also provided sharing opportunities where Volunteer Mediators discussed issues and challenges encountered in mediation, so as to harness the power of collective expertise.

Under the Student Representatives Programme, a collaboration between the State Courts and the National University of Singapore (NUS) Pro Bono Office, students from the NUS Law Faculty also volunteered their time with the CJTD, with each clocking at least 20 hours of pro bono work in the year. During their attachments, they helped to guide litigants-in-person to navigate and adhere to court processes in harassment cases, community disputes, small claims and employment claims cases, as well as assist in the completion of court forms.

To honour their volunteers for their contributions, the State Courts together with the Supreme Court and the Family Justice Courts held the annual Volunteers Appreciation Dinner on 14 September where outstanding volunteers were recognised for their contributions to the courts, and received awards from The Honorable the Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon.

### OUTSTANDING COURT VOLUNTEER AWARDS 2017

**Mr Krishna s/o Veerappen**  
Open Category

**Mr Steven Lam**  
Advocate & Solicitor Category

**Mr Shaun Lim**  
Student Category



**GIVING BACK  
TO SOCIETY**

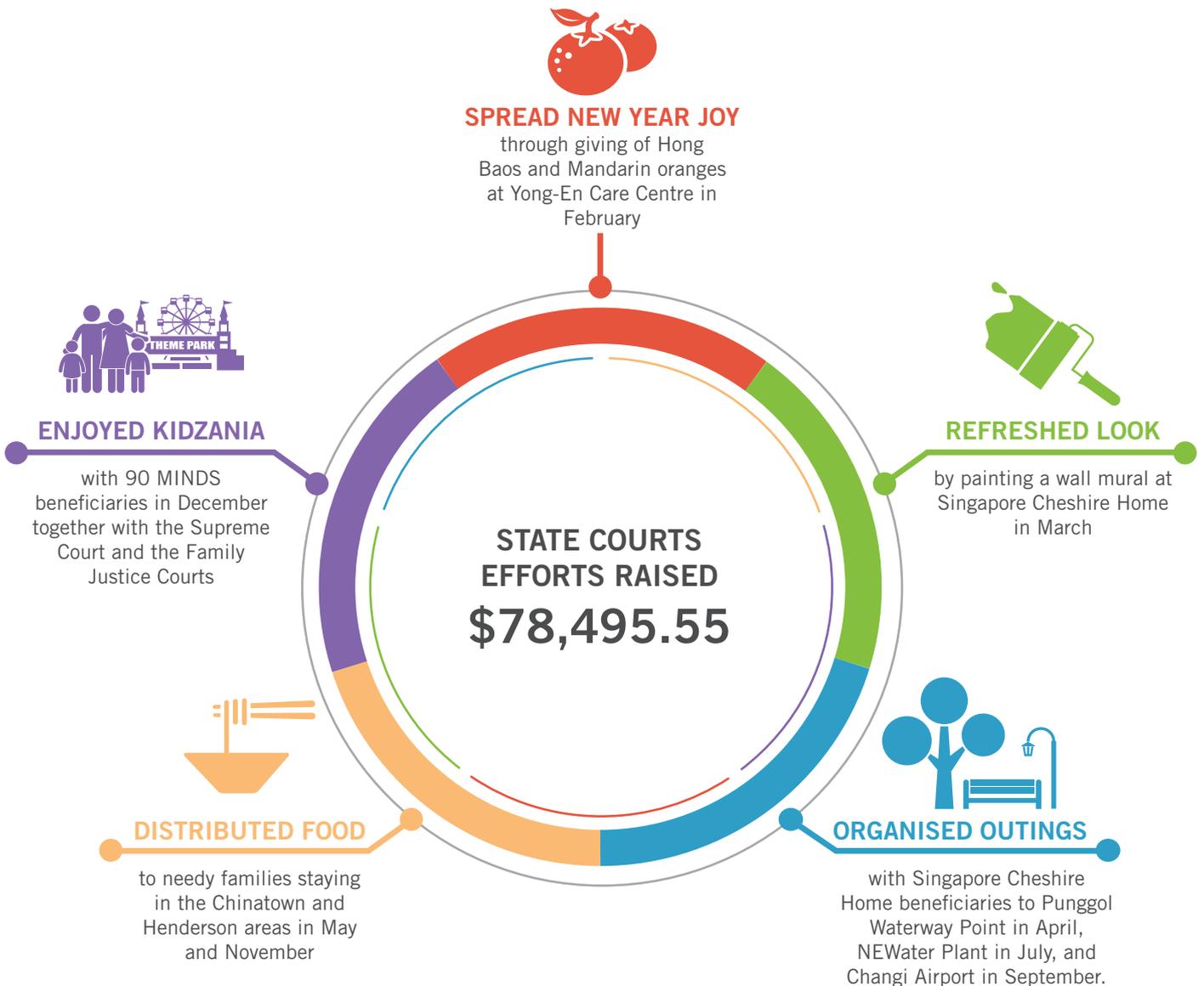
# GIVING BACK TO SOCIETY

In addition to their mission to serve society with quality judgments, timely dispute resolution and excellent court services, the State Courts actively embrace corporate social responsibility (CSR), contributing to a better society in another aspect. The CSR efforts are helmed by a committee and many of the activities, are self-initiated by staff members. Judges and staff actively participate in these activities, to care for and help the less privileged members of society. The CSR activities also raise community awareness and a volunteerism spirit amongst the staff, creating a new work culture and engagement between colleagues across the different court divisions.

In February, staff members spread Lunar New Year joy at the Yong-En Care Centre, by presenting its Dementia Day Care clients with Hong Baos and Mandarin oranges. In March, a wall mural was painted by staff to brighten up the environment at the Singapore Cheshire Home (SCH), which is the State Courts' adopted charity. Social outings were also organised for the SCH residents to Punggol Waterway Point in April, NEWater Plant in July, and Changi Airport in September. In May and November,

volunteers worked with Yong-En Care Centre and Beyond Social Services respectively to purchase and distribute food packs to needy families staying in the Chinatown and Henderson areas. The year of CSR activities ended with the annual *Judiciary Cares* event. Together with the Supreme Court and the Family Justice Courts, 90 Movement for the Intellectually Disabled of Singapore (MINDS) beneficiaries enjoyed a fun day out at the role-playing theme park, *Kidzania* in December.

The CSR activities are driven by the enthusiasm of the staff, taking the true cause to heart by raising funds from within the organisation by organising internal fund-raising events such as the annual National Day Charity Bazaar and Concert held in August. The two events raised a total amount of \$78,495.55, with \$20,000 donated to the SCH, and the remaining money collected was set aside for other CSR initiatives. The year 2017 also saw the implementation of SHARE auto-inclusion which is a regular contribution to charity through one's monthly salary, for new staff members.





## **WITH SPECIAL THANKS TO:**

District Judge Janet Wang

District Judge Sarah Tan

District Judge Diana Ho

Magistrate Chua Wei Yuan



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