



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **State Courts: Future-ready for 2020 and beyond**

**8 March 2019**

The State Courts announced 13 new initiatives at their annual Workplan seminar today. This is the State Courts' final Workplan in the current building. The theme is *State Courts: 2020 and Beyond* which reflects the State Courts' goal to be a progressive and adaptive organisation that is future-ready. The theme takes into account the impending move to the new State Courts Towers in 2020, the challenges posed by the evolving demographic profile of court users and the opportunities provided by technological advancements to transform the delivery of legal services.

2 This year's initiatives focus on four main areas and they are:

- Delivering Excellent Court Services
- Enhancing Court Processes
- Engaging Stakeholders and Sharing Knowledge
- Transforming Capabilities

#### **Delivering Excellent Court Services**

3 Leveraging technology where possible, the organisation places equal emphasis on high tech and high touch in its quest to deliver excellent court services. The first area of focus looks into centralising counselling, psychological and support services, transforming court transcription services, providing convenient and user-friendly access to legal information and resources, and improving inmates' access to court documents and legal advice. The initiatives are:

- (i) Centre for Specialist Services – A one-stop multi-disciplinary centre that provides counselling and psychological services, and centralises the management of various support and assistance programmes for all court users.

- (ii) iCTS – Intelligent Court Transcription System – A real-time multi-party transcription system, with natural speech recognition, automatic text casing and punctuation insertion.
- (iii) Civil Online Toolkit – A convenient one-stop online resource on civil proceedings written in plain English and accessible from any device at any time, for unrepresented litigants.
- (iv) Enhancing Inmates’ Access to Justice: Access to Court Documents and Legal Advice – Enabling inmates to access their case documents in the Integrated Criminal Case Filing and Management System (ICMS) and facilitating timely access to legal advice, so that they can make informed decisions on whether to file an appeal.

### **Enhancing Court Processes**

4 The second area of focus is anchored on the problem-solving approach adopted by the State Courts in managing cases as they look at addressing issues upstream to enhance the rehabilitation process for youthful offenders, help parties resolve relational disputes without coming to court, and promote pre-action settlement of business-to-business (B2B) debt recovery claims. The initiatives are:

- (v) Early Engagement of Offenders Under 21 Years – a programme that commences the courts’ rehabilitative efforts towards youthful offenders soon after they are produced in court.
- (vi) Project Restore: Court-Initiated Use of Restorative Practice for Dispute Resolution – The delivery of alternative dispute resolution services outside of the courts to help parties to contain and prevent conflict escalation.
- (vii) Pre-Action Protocol for B2B Debt Recovery Claims – A framework to encourage amicable settlement of civil disputes and help businesses reach a resolution before commencement of proceedings.

### **Engaging Stakeholders and Sharing Knowledge**

5 To contribute towards a constructive and effective justice eco-system, the State Courts’ third area of focus will entail the organisation working with partners (legal and non-legal organisations) on access-to-justice initiatives. The initiatives are:

- (i) **CLICKS: Collaborative Law, Innovative Co-creation and Knowledge Sharing** – A co-working space in collaboration with the Singapore Academy of Law in the

new State Courts Towers to promote pro bono work and drive legal innovation and entrepreneurship.

- (ii) Publications – A Guide to Judge-Led Dispute Resolution: Principles and Practice of Non-Adversarial Justice, and The Law and Practice of Tribunals.
- (iii) Conference on The Future of Personal Injury Claims – A conference to bring together various stakeholders to consider how technology can be leveraged to improve personal injury claims outcomes.

### **Transforming Capabilities**

6 Undergirding the three areas outlined above, the State Courts will place emphasis on developing an overarching strategy to ensure that the courts are aligned with the Digital Government Blueprint in support of the Smart Nation effort, equip and increase the digital-skill level of their staff, and cultivate a transformational organisational culture. The three main initiatives are:

- (iv) Data Science Strategy – Mapping out overarching goals and strategic objectives and implementing plans to develop capabilities to analyse and use data.
- (v) Developing a Digital Workforce – A two-pronged strategy to equip staff with digital skills and knowledge, and to provide the resources to apply the skills.
- (vi) Transformation @ State Courts – An initiative to strengthen transformational mindsets and capabilities within the State Courts.

7 The first State Courts Workplan was held in 1992 with the objective of reviewing the work of the then Subordinate Courts to identify areas for improvement, and setting out the strategies and implementation plans to achieve court excellence. At the 28<sup>th</sup> Workplan today, the State Courts reaffirmed a continuing commitment to review and transform processes to meet the changing needs of court users and the operating environment in order to provide meaningful access to justice to all in 2020 and beyond.

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Enclosed:

- (i) Keynote Address by Justice See Kee Oon, Presiding Judge of the State Courts
- (ii) Annex A – Factsheet: State Courts Workplan 2019 Initiatives
- (iii) State Courts Workplan 2019 Infographic

For further information or clarification, please contact:

- (i) Ms Marilyn Tan, Assistant Director, Communications Directorate

Tel: 6435 5652 / 9722 6139

Email: [marilyn\\_tan@statecourts.gov.sg](mailto:marilyn_tan@statecourts.gov.sg)

- (ii) Mr Bryan Jacob, Executive, Communications Directorate

Tel: 6435 5088 / 9722 6139

Email: [bryan\\_jacob@statecourts.gov.sg](mailto:bryan_jacob@statecourts.gov.sg)