

## **COUNCIL FOR ESTATE AGENCIES STARTS OPERATIONS ON 22 OCTOBER 2010**

The Council for Estate Agencies (CEA), a new statutory board established under the Estate Agents Act 2010<sup>1</sup>, will commence operations on 22 October 2010.

### **Council for Estate Agencies**

2 Mr Greg Seow, Chairman of AMP Capital Investors (Singapore), is appointed as President of the Council. The Executive Director of CEA is Mr Chionh Chye Khye. The list of other Council members and the functions and duties of the Council can be found at [Annex A](#).

### **New Regulatory Framework**

3 The new regulatory framework seeks to raise the professionalism of the real estate agency industry and to enable consumers to better safeguard their interests. Key elements of this framework include enhanced licensing conditions for estate agents, registration of salespersons, regulation on the conduct of estate agency work, mechanisms for discipline and dispute resolution, and public education.

---

<sup>1</sup> The Estate Agents Act 2010 sets out to license the estate agents and register their salespersons. A business doing estate agency work commonly referred to by the public as property or estate agency, is called “estate agent” in the Act. The individual doing estate agency work and commonly referred to by the public, as the property or estate agent is called the “salesperson” in the Act.

4 The immediate focus for CEA is to prepare the estate agents and salespersons to meet the higher standards of the enhanced licensing and new registration framework. CEA has been working closely and will continue to work with the industry associations to ensure a smooth transition to the new framework. The timeline for transition is summarised in Annex B.

5 To ensure high standards, there will be a code of conduct, ethics and practice which the Council will issue for estate agents and salespersons to follow. The CEA will investigate complaints and take firm action against errant estate agents and salespersons. From 2011 onwards, CEA can subject errant estate agents and salespersons to disciplinary action, with potential penalties such as warnings, fines, suspension or revocation. Court prosecution may also be undertaken for serious cases.

6 In addition, CEA will also be developing a public education campaign to educate consumers on their responsibilities, rights and expectations in a property transaction.

7 Mr Mah Bow Tan, Minister for National Development commented, "The establishment of the CEA is a major milestone to raise professionalism in the real estate agency industry and protect consumer interest. I encourage CEA to work closely with the industry and other stakeholders to achieve this. "

### **Application for Licence and Registration**

8 New and existing estate agents can apply to CEA for a new licence from 1 November 2010. Existing estate agents are also required to register their existing salespersons who have met the transitional conditions (see Annex C), prior to the formation of Council with the CEA by 30 November 2010. They are encouraged to submit their applications early to avoid any delay in registration and obtaining their licence.

## Contact Us

9 With effect from 22 October 2010, the public can visit CEA's website at [www.cea.gov.sg](http://www.cea.gov.sg) for more details including the new regulatory framework, to provide feedback or lodge complaints. The public can also contact the CEA at:

- (a) Email: [contact\\_us@cea.gov.sg](mailto:contact_us@cea.gov.sg);
- (b) Toll free Customer Service Line: 1800 643 2555; or
- (c) CEA's Office:  
490 Lorong 6 Toa Payoh,  
HDB Hub Biz 3, #05-10 (Lift Lobby 1),  
Singapore 310490  
(The operating hours are from 8.30 am to 5pm, Monday to Friday).

Issued by:

**MINISTRY OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

**21 October 2010**

## ANNEX A – COUNCIL FOR ESTATE AGENCIES

### (1) Council President and Members

<b>President:-</b>	Mr Greg Seow Chairman, AMP Capital Investors (Singapore)
<b>Members:-</b>	Associate Professor Yu Shi Ming Head of Department, Real Estate, National University of Singapore
	Mr Lawrence Ang Boon Kong Former Principal Senior State Counsel
	Er Dr Tan Guan Senior Principal, TYLin International Pte Ltd
	Mr Seah Seng Choon Executive Director, Consumers Association of Singapore
	Mr Ho Chee Pong Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Council for Private Education
	Mr Yap Chin Beng Deputy Chief Executive Officer (Estates & Corporate), Housing and Development Board
	Mr Marc Boey Kok Leong Group Director, Land Sales & Administration, Urban Redevelopment Authority
	Mr Chionh Chye Khye Executive Director, Council for Estate Agencies

## **(2) Functions and Duties of the Council**

- (a) Administer the licensing and registration regimes;
- (b) Regulate and control the practice of estate agents and salespersons;
- (c) Promote integrity and competence amongst estate agents and salespersons and to maintain or enhance their status;
- (d) Administer examinations and a professional development framework for the purposes of licensing and registration;
- (e) Develop codes of practice, ethics and conduct for estate agents and salespersons;
- (f) Conduct investigations and disciplinary proceedings in relation to offences and unsatisfactory conduct or misconduct in relation to estate agency work;
- (g) Develop measures to equip consumers with the necessary knowledge to conduct their property transactions with prudence and diligence; and
- (h) Perform such other functions and discharge such other duties as may be conferred on the Council by any written law.

**ANNEX B - KEY TIMELINES TO TRANSIT TO THE NEW REGULATORY FRAMEWORK**

Date	Event
22 October 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CEA is operational and new regime is implemented</li> <li>• Existing agents licensed under IRAS will be deemed as licensed by CEA till 31 December 2010</li> <li>• Existing salespersons have to pass an industry examination or have completed at least 3 property transactions over last 2 years to qualify for transitional arrangement</li> <li>• Existing agents to submit their list of salespersons who satisfy above conditions to CEA by 22 October 2010</li> </ul>
1 November 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CEA starts to accept applications for new licence to operate an estate agent</li> <li>• Existing agents can apply to CEA for a new licence and registration for their existing salespersons by 30 November 2010</li> <li>• New CEA examination courses to commence in November 2010</li> </ul>
31 December 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existing industry examinations to cease</li> <li>• Existing agents' licences will expire</li> </ul>
1 January 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All persons doing estate agency work must be registered as a salespersons before they can practise</li> <li>• New CEA's examination to commence in January 2011</li> </ul>
31 December 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existing salespersons who have not passed an industry examination must pass the CEA examination by this date</li> <li>• Those who do not will have to apply as a new salesperson and satisfy the full registration criteria</li> </ul>

Note: details of qualifications and requirements for licensing/registration are available in the CEA website – [www.cea.gov.sg](http://www.cea.gov.sg)

**ANNEX C - ARRANGEMENTS TO HELP EXISTING SALESPERSONS  
TRANSIT**

Existing salespersons who	Treatment
<p><u>Have already passed</u> an industry examination when new regime is implemented on 22 October 2010</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not required to take new CEA examination for salespersons</li> <li>• Not required to have at least 4 GCE 'O' Level passes or equivalent</li> </ul>
<p><u>Have not passed</u> an industry examination but have completed at least 3 property transactions over last 2 years prior to formation of CEA</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to pass either an industry examination, which will be available until December 2010, or the new CEA examination for salespersons before 31 December 2011</li> <li>• Can conduct estate agency work in the interim</li> <li>• Not required to have at least 4 GCE 'O' Level passes or equivalent</li> </ul>
When new regime is implemented on 22 October 2010	Treatment
<p>Without an industry examination pass and did not fulfill the minimum 3 property transactions over last 2 years</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Considered as a new salesperson</li> <li>• Required to meet full registration criteria</li> <li>• Required to take a course available from November 2010 before taking the new CEA examination</li> </ul>