

SENIOR APPOINTMENT CHANGES AT THE COUNCIL FOR ESTATE AGENCIES

1. The Ministry of National Development (MND) announced today the following senior appointment changes at the Council for Estate Agencies (CEA):

- Mr Lim Chee Hwee (林志辉), will relinquish his current appointment as Executive Director (ED) of CEA and be appointed as Senior Director (Planning), Municipal Services Office (MSO), MND, on 1 March 2024;
- Mr Chan Khar Liang (陈家亮), currently Senior Director of the Infrastructure Division in MND, will be appointed as Executive Director (Designate) of CEA from 1 January 2024 to 29 February 2024, and as Executive Director of CEA from 1 March 2024.

2. As ED of CEA since 2019, Mr Lim Chee Hwee guided CEA to work closely with industry stakeholders to review the Real Estate Industry Transformation Map as well as digitalise the property transaction process. Under his leadership, the CEA-Industry workgroup was established to review and enhance the industry's Continuing Professional Development ecosystem under Project ADEPT (Advancing and Enhancing Professionalism and Training) contributing to the professionalisation of the industry.

3. Mr Lim also led CEA in strengthening CEA's role as the industry regulator, overseeing the comprehensive review and amendment of the Estate Agents Act. This has led to, among others, a new Letter of Censure disciplinary regime to effectively enforce against errant property agents and agencies for minor disciplinary breaches, and to impose higher maximum financial penalties on errant agents and agencies for serious disciplinary breaches. New regulations on prevention of money laundering and financing of terrorism were subsequently introduced. Mr Lim also launched the Transaction Records Initiative where CEA publishes the records of property agents' residential property transactions to help consumers make informed choices when engaging property agents.

4. Mr Chan Khar Liang started his career in the Public Service in 2001, and has served in several ministries. He had previously held the Director of the National Climate Change Secretariat in the Prime Minister's Office (2009 – 2011), where he coordinated inter-agency climate change work, including Singapore's strategies on climate mitigation and resilience. He was also the Director of the North East Asia Division in the Ministry of Trade and Industry (2013 – 2018), where he managed Singapore's relations with key economies in North East Asia. As the Senior Director of the Infrastructure Division in MND since 2018,

Mr Chan has worked with the Building and Construction Authority (BCA) to drive the transformation of the Built Environment sector, as well as with the National Parks Board (NParks) to advance Singapore's City in Nature objectives. Through his various postings, he has accumulated significant policy and operational experience.

5. Detailed write-ups of Mr Lim and Mr Chan are in the **Annex**.
6. We thank Mr Lim and Mr Chan for their continued contribution to the MND Family.

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About the Council for Estate Agencies

The Council for Estate Agencies (CEA) is a statutory board established in 2010 under the Estate Agents Act to regulate and promote the development of a professional and trusted real estate agency industry. The key responsibilities of CEA are to license property agencies and register property agents, promote the integrity and competence of property agencies and property agents, and equip consumers with the necessary knowledge to make informed decisions in property transactions involving property agents. For more information, please visit: www.cea.gov.sg

Annex

Mr Lim Chee Hwee



Mr Lim was appointed as Executive Director (ED) of the Council for Estate Agencies (CEA) on 24 April 2019.

2. As ED of CEA, Mr Lim played a key role in steering CEA to be more effective in regulating the real estate agency industry, and to enhance collaboration and partnership with the industry in its transformation and professional development.

3. To strengthen CEA's role as the industry regulator, Mr Lim led CEA to review and amend the decade-old Estate Agents Act which was passed by Parliament in 2020. Among others, CEA introduced a new Letter of Censure (LOC) disciplinary regime to take more effective and timely enforcement action against errant property agents for minor disciplinary breaches, where the LOC (with or without financial penalty of up to \$5,000) meted out will be published in the agents' profiles in CEA Public Register. CEA has also raised the maximum financial penalties against errant agents and agencies for serious disciplinary breaches, and rolled out new regulations on prevention of money laundering and financing of terrorism in 2021.

4. With his emphasis on collaboration and partnership with industry stakeholders, Mr Lim worked closely with the industry to review the Real Estate Industry Transformation Map since 2020. Some key initiatives spearheaded by Mr Lim include:

- a. The Digitalised Property Transactions Workgroup which drives initiatives by public and private sector agencies to streamline and digitalise the property transaction processes.

- b. The joint CEA-Industry workgroup on Project ADEPT (Advancing and Enhancing Professionalism and Training) to review and enhance the industry's Continuing Professional Development ecosystem so that property agents can raise their professionalism and provide quality service to their clients.
- c. The Alliance for Action (AfA) on Accurate Property Listings, led by the industry stakeholders with CEA's support, to design and develop a prototype to eliminate the longstanding problem of dummy, inaccurate, unauthorised and duplicate property advertisements by property agents. The aim is to enable a transparent and reliable property search experience for consumers.
- d. The CEA-Industry workgroup on Rating of Property Agents which jointly developed a Guide on Best Practices for Consumer Ratings of Property Agents with the purpose of introducing consistent standards for the ratings of property agents to build trust among users of rating platforms.

5. Mr Lim steered CEA in guiding and supporting the industry during the COVID-19 pandemic, from which the industry emerged more resilient with an acceleration of digitalisation and technology adoption for facilitating property transactions. Under his watch, CEA partnered the Infocomm Media Development Authority (IMDA) and Enterprise Singapore (ESG) to introduce pre-approved digital solutions with funding support for the industry under the SMEs Go Digital programme, and worked with SkillsFuture Singapore (SSG) to confer study awards to property agents for their upskilling through further education.

6. Mr Lim also drove CEA's digitalisation efforts in line with the Smart Nation Initiative. He oversaw the development of the Advanced CEA Estate Agencies System (ACEAS) and supervised its eventual rollout to the industry in 2021. ACEAS offers efficient end-to-end digital services for the registration and licensing of property agents and agencies respectively, which also helps raise CEA staff productivity.

7. On public outreach efforts, Mr Lim advocated for CEA to promote greater awareness and understanding by consumers of their responsibilities, and the roles of property agents in property transactions. He launched the Transaction Records Initiative in 2021 where CEA publishes the records of property agents' residential property transactions in the CEA Public Register to help consumers make more informed choices when deciding on property agents to facilitate their property transactions. He has also set up an anti-property scam taskforce in CEA, working closely with the Singapore Police Force (SPF) and the industry to educate consumers and protect them against rental scams.

Mr Chan Khar Liang



Mr Chan Khar Liang graduated from Stanford University with a Bachelor of Science and Master of Science in Electrical Engineering in 1999. He also holds a Master in Business Administration from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Sloan School of Management, which he obtained in 2012.

2. As Senior Director of the Infrastructure Division in MND, Mr Chan worked with the Building and Construction Authority (BCA) to drive the transformation of the Built Environment (BE) sector in Singapore. This included efforts to drive productivity and the adoption of technology as part of the BE Industry Transformation Map (BE ITM). He also drove regulatory review efforts in the BE sector through the Regulatory Review Panel, and climate change resilience efforts through the Resilience Working Group. Mr Chan also worked with the National Parks Board (NParks) to advance Singapore's City in Nature objectives, including efforts to integrate nature into our built environment, strengthen connectivity between green spaces, and on animal and wildlife related issues. From 2018-2019, Mr Chan also led the MND policy team to restructure the then-Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority (AVA) under MND, and split its functions between NParks and the new Singapore Food Agency (SFA) under the Ministry of Sustainability and the Environment (MSE). This involved restructuring various statutory boards across different ministries and right-siting cross-cutting functions.

3. More recently, Mr Chan was part of Singapore's fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, where he oversaw issues relating to the recovery of the BE sector, including the construction industry. He led his team in working across the Whole-of-Government to support the sector by introducing measures to alleviate manpower constraints, and to provide financial and legislative support for the industry. In recognition of his efforts, he was awarded the Public Administration Medal (Silver) (COVID-19).