

MEDIA STATEMENT

COMMISSIONER OF CHARITIES PROHIBITS EUGENE LIOW CHIA HAU FROM CONDUCTING FUND-RAISING APPEALS FOR CHARITABLE PURPOSES

The Commissioner of Charities (“COC”) has issued an order under Section 37(1) of the Charities Act 1994 (refer to the Annex) to prohibit Eugene Liow Chia Hau (“Eugene”) from conducting any fund-raising appeal for charitable, benevolent or philanthropic purposes with effect from 10 June 2025.

2. The COC received feedback between July 2023 to January 2024 about the fund-raising appeals conducted by the now-defunct Direct Hope (“DH”) on behalf of a charity, Bilby Community Development Ltd (“BCDL”). DH had been engaged by BCDL as a commercial fund-raiser between May 2023 and January 2024. Following investigations by the Ministry of Social and Family Development as Sector Administrator for charities in the social and welfare sector (including BCDL), it was found that Eugene, the sole proprietor of DH and the key administrator of the fund-raising appeals, had breached multiple regulations under the Charities (Fund-raising Appeals for Local and Foreign Charitable Purposes) Regulations 2012.

3. Eugene had failed to put in place adequate control measures and safeguards to ensure proper accountability in relation to the collection of donations by DH, and to prevent them from loss or theft. He also did not maintain proper accounting records of the fund-raising appeals, or a list of the personal particulars of DH’s collectors.

4. In view of these serious lapses, the COC has decided to prohibit Eugene from conducting any further fund-raising appeals with effect from 10 June 2025.

Public Advisory

5. Members of the public are advised to exercise discernment when approached by individuals or organisations conducting fund-raising activities, and not to feel pressured to donate immediately. While most fund-raising appeals are genuine, it is important for the public to continue practicing safer giving to ensure their donations are used for genuine charitable purposes. This can be done by practicing three simple steps: **Ask, Check, Give**.

- a) First, members of the public should **ask** questions, such as (i) who the beneficiaries are, (ii) what the donations will be used for, and (iii) how much of the donations goes to the beneficiary or the charity.
- b) Second, **check** if the organisation or beneficiary is a registered/exempt charity or foreign fund-raising permit holder, or has disclosed details of their public fund-raising appeal via any of the following channels:
 - o Charity Portal (www.charities.gov.sg)

- Scan QR code on the official letter from the organisation (which will lead to disclosure details on Charity Portal)
 - SMS to 79777 in the following format *FR<space>Organisation Name*
 - Call Charities Unit hotline at 6337 6597
- c) Finally, **give** with a peace of mind once donors are assured that their donations are for a genuine cause.

6. Members of the public should not feel pressured to give if they have concerns or suspect that an appeal for donations is not legitimate. If there are any serious concerns regarding suspicious charitable fund-raising activities, the public can report the matter to the COC at mccy_charities@mccy.gov.sg. If fraud or scams are suspected, the public should file a Police report immediately.

Commissioner of Charities
Ministry of Social and Family Development
10 June 2025

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ANNEX - BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON CHARITIES ACT – SECTION 37(1)

Power of Commissioner to prohibit or restrict, or suspend, fund-raising appeal

Section 37. — (1) Despite any exemption or permit granted under section 36, the Commissioner may, at any time, by order in the Gazette —

- (a) prohibit or stop the conduct of any fund-raising appeal by any charity or person;
or
- (b) restrict the conduct of any fund-raising appeal by any charity or person by imposing conditions,

if the Commissioner is satisfied —

- (c) that any fund-raising appeal conducted by the charity or person has not been conducted in good faith for charitable, benevolent or philanthropic purposes;
- (d) that any of the persons who have conducted a fund-raising appeal, or any persons associated with any such appeal, are not fit and proper persons to administer, or to be associated with, a fund-raising appeal for charitable, benevolent or philanthropic purposes;
- (e) that any fund-raising appeal has been improperly administered;
- (f) that, in connection with any fund-raising appeal conducted, the provisions of this Act or the regulations or the conditions imposed by the Commissioner were not complied with by any person conducting or participating in the appeal; or
- (g) that, in the public interest, the fund-raising appeal should not be conducted.