



## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **CASE and HACOS collaborate to develop joint accreditation scheme for the Hair & Cosmetology industry**

The Consumers Association of Singapore (CASE) and the Hair & Cosmetology Association (Singapore) (HACOS) will be signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on the 25<sup>th</sup> of February 2016 to jointly develop a voluntary CaseTrust - HACOS joint accreditation scheme for the Hair & Cosmetology industry. 15 HACOS members have pledged their support to join the accreditation scheme (*see Annex*) and both associations envisage to officially launch the scheme within nine months of this MOU or earlier.

In August 2015, the sudden closure of the well-known hair salon chain, The Scissorhands and its affiliate, Shizahanzu, caused much unrest and commotion. CASE received around 200 complaints and feedback from consumers who had signed up for costly hair packages and had been left in the lurch with unused credit or unutilised sessions left in their packages. These consumers were advised to seek claims through the Small Claims Tribunals but were not successful when the director failed to turn up for the hearing. Several police reports were also lodged over the abrupt closure of the salon chain.

HACOS approached CASE on their own initiative to develop a joint accreditation scheme to assist its members in uplifting their professionalism and to improve the image of the hair & cosmetology industry; their members have also expressed a desire to adopt fair trading practices for the benefit of consumers. Some common problems in the hair industry are that of pressure selling and unprotected pre-payment collection, which would be addressed by the new accreditation scheme.

HACOS members seeking accreditation will be subjected to a stringent set of criteria that includes:

- **A five days cooling-off period** to allow consumers to seek a full refund if they do not wish to proceed with the service. The cooling-off period is not applicable for trial sessions whereby the service has been utilised.

- **Pre-payment protection** to safeguard monies paid upfront for packages. For example, accredited companies can opt for approved insurance coverage or adopt pre-paid cards to protect consumers' pre-payments.
- **Trained staff** who are committed to not selling packages during service.
- Appropriate **hygiene** guidelines for daily operations.
- **Skin allergy testing** before proceeding with services.
- A **redress system** with proper and clearly defined dispute resolution mechanisms for the business and consumers. This will include compulsory mediation through CASE Mediation Centre.

CASE strongly supports HACOS' efforts to promote fair and ethical conduct among its members. This MOU can be seen as an outward testimony of HACOS' commitment to work with CASE to ensure that consumers' prepayments are protected and give them peace of mind when patronising accredited hair salons.

Meanwhile, CASE would like to advise consumers to always consider packages offered by hair salons carefully and weigh the benefits and risks of making such pre-payment. Consumers should bear in mind that they may be unable to get back their monies if the salon ceases operations or goes into liquidation.

Lim Biow Chuan  
President  
Consumers Association of Singapore (CASE)

And

Simon Lee  
Founder  
Hair & Cosmetology Association (Singapore) (HACOS)

# ANNEX

## List of HACOS members that have pledged to join the CaseTrust-HACOS Joint Accreditation Scheme for the Hair & Cosmetology industry

S/N	Company Name
1	Actpoint Hair Salon
2	Fhoproject Pte Ltd
3	Gek Hoon Hairdressing Salon
4	Hair Involvement Salon
5	Hair Visulaity Pte Ltd
6	Jane Hair Salon
7	Jass Hair Salon
8	Jawed Habib Hair & Beauty Salon
9	Jeffrey Linus Make-Up
10	M&H Hairdressing & Beauty Salon
11	Masa Hairdressing Salon
12	Mode Hairstyling Salon
13	Sparkk's Hair Studio
14	Vinz Pte Ltd - Organic Hair Salon
15	X-Zen Hair Salon

*\*List is updated as of 24<sup>th</sup> February 2016.*