

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

2019 was certainly a year marked by exciting developments to strengthen our social service eco-system, and we at NCSS are proud to have continued our involvement in some of these longstanding efforts, while pushing frontiers to experiment with new ideas.

At this year's Social Service Summit, we responded to the sector's interest in innovation with a showcase featuring solutions from social service agencies, social enterprises, and technology partners. Alongside the adoption of technology, we also wanted to create future-ready mindsets that challenge traditional ways of thinking and doing, seek novel approaches, and learn from failure. The Sector Design Challenge was therefore launched to provide such a platform for aspiring minds to come together to solve social issues.

At the same time, we remained committed to supporting social service agencies in delivering quality services for better outcomes, while nurturing inspiring future leaders to continue the journey of adapting to changing needs. We partnered 29 NCSS members to start the Organisation Development Journey and brought together a community of bright and promising young individuals across the sector through our 40-Under-40 initiative.

It also gave me great pleasure to see our work in growing resources and developing capabilities that bear fruit at a national level this year. With the announcement of the Community Capability Trust, it will provide a sustained pool of funds for the social service sector

to build capability and capacity over the next decade.

However, our work does not stop here. As we round off 2019 with a world dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic and its ramifications, it is of paramount importance that we stay focused on ensuring social needs are met, keep ahead of the game, and respond swiftly to changes.

I was deeply moved by how quickly our sector acted to ensure the safety and health of our service users and professionals, all while striving to continue providing needed services. Within NCSS, members were provided with support to strengthen business continuity measures, carry out cleaning and disinfection of their premises and to obtain personal protective equipment. The Courage Fund raised more than \$8 million in mere weeks with the community's tremendous generosity.

As I write this message, our new Invictus Fund has just been announced so that public donations can be channelled to our social service agencies that deliver critical services to vulnerable groups in our community. What has been most heartening to me is how our members have come forward in camaraderie to connect one another with resources and have even offered manpower to help fellow members out. This is a touching lesson in the value of coming together, and I believe this experience will bring us closer and make us stronger.

Last but not least, I am pleased to welcome on board Ms Tan Li San as NCSS's new Chief Executive Officer in FY20. Li San joined us



in January 2020 as CEO Designate and has been instrumental in fronting our abovementioned Covid-19 efforts thus far. She will take over the reins from Gim Guan, who leaves NCSS after seven years of service. I am deeply grateful for all that Gim Guan has done for NCSS these past years and I wish him all the best for the future.

What an eventful year it has been! NCSS and her partners have come a long way together, and I hope that we will continue to build a more robust and impactful sector through our holistic, person-centred approach, so that service users can benefit from excellent services to improve their quality of life.

  
Anita Fam  
President

## CEOs' MESSAGE

In line with our desire to support our members in becoming more effective, NCSS continued to press forward with our efforts to be a bridge and enabler for our members.

Led by our President, Board and senior management, we sought to deepen our engagement with members and the sector through various platforms including Leadership Visits to social service agencies and meetings with members in small groups for more in-depth conversations.

With the COVID-19 crisis, we dropped in on some members to ensure that they were coping well, and – after Circuit Breaker measures kicked in – conducted a series of online chats with SSA leaders to understand their challenges faced, hear feedback on how our members might be better supported, and also invited members to share best practices on how they were using this opportunity to strengthen organisational practices. NCSS also coordinated the distribution of in-kind donations to members at a time when many items were in short supply. As we write this, we have distributed over 400,000 donated masks and more than 3,500 litres of hand sanitisers to social service agencies. In addition, we launched The Invictus Fund to support members that continue to provide critical services to vulnerable groups, yet face financial stress due to a drop in donations and other income.

Even as everything we are used to has been disrupted,

and NCSS and our members now pivot ourselves to work differently to continue meeting the needs of the community, the sector's vision to empower every person to live with dignity in a caring and inclusive society remains a key focus for us.

We are heartened that our continued efforts to engage stakeholders and the wider public through the Beyond the Label and See The True Me public education campaigns not only increased awareness about different needs, but encouraged everyone to be part of the solution in addressing the needs in our society, and in empowering service users.

We also kept up our work in sector innovation, capability building, and rallying the community through initiatives such as the Caregiver Public Forum; the Our Lives, Our Voices project; the Workplace Learning Programme and training for volunteer managers.

With digitalisation becoming a powerful driving force in improving processes, the digitisation of Flag Day applications and digital fundraising initiatives such as DonateNow! are examples of how our work can be simplified through technology, freeing up valuable resources for our members to focus on meeting the needs of service users more effectively. The Circuit Breaker measures introduced to deal with the COVID-19 situation have nudged many of our members towards technology adoption, from digitalising

office functions to enable their staff and volunteers to work remotely, to adopting cloud-based solutions so that their services and intervention can be delivered remotely, and they can continue to serve their end users. In the coming years, we intend to pursue this digitalisation journey, both within NCSS and with our members, to improve efficiency and achieve greater impact.

As we wrap up 2019, there are many exciting plans that NCSS has in store to strengthen the sector and support our members. Continuing to understand the needs of service users and the sector through research, developing new training courses to be delivered through blended learning, spearheading a vibrant and sustained giving culture in the community – these are but the tip of the iceberg of what we hope to work with members and partners on. With the changes in the sector's disability and research functions, we look forward to NCSS's refreshed roles as we chart new waters with our members for better service user outcomes in the years ahead.

  
Sim Gim Guan  
Chief Executive  
Officer

  
Tan Li San  
Chief Executive  
Officer (Designate)