



# 商界：预算案额外措施 助减轻未来一个月冲击

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政府实行更加严厉的阻断措施为企业带来痛楚，但商界代表认为这是有必要的防疫措举，而刚出炉的第三轮预算案将有助于减轻企业在下来一个月所面对的冲击。

新加坡工商联合总会昨天发表文告，对政府推出总值 51 亿元的同舟共济预算案表示欢迎。工商总会指出，政府采取更严厉的防疫措施，将对企业和员工带来显著的颠覆性，特别是那些无法继续营业和为雇员提供居家办公安排的企业。虽然这是有必要的，但这将让企业在经济上感受到更大痛楚，雇员也为工作倍感担忧。

不过，它认为这些额外措施有助针对企业在现金周转、营业成本和贷款方面的三大问题，提供及时、直接和显著的援助。

工商总会主席张松声说，现在是企业、雇员和商会商团共同竭尽所能防疫的时候。大家必须与政府合力渡过危机，而政府发出的信息是明确的，即企业必须保住工作，以保护雇员和维持他们的生计。

## 黄山忠吁企业做调整适应“断路器”措施

新加坡中华总商会会长黄山忠指出，在这个时期，加强雇佣补贴计划、在 4 月豁免外劳税、提高免租援助，以及通过政府贷款计划提供更大融资支援等措施，为企业提供非常及时的援助。

他说：“下来一个月对企业而言，虽然是痛苦且具颠覆性，但我呼吁企业做出调整和去适应，并遵守这些‘断路器’措施，以希望这些措施在一个月后得以放松或解除。”

黄山忠指出，总商会将继续通过网络平台帮助旗下会员和商联会，为他们解决关于融资、资金周转、人力、培训和技能发展方面的需要。

在制造业领域，一些必要服务行业接下来一个月还是可以继续经营，制造业者普遍担心接下来的业务受到影响，例如需求持续下降、为了保持安全距离而减少员工等相关挑战。

新加坡制造商总会会长符标熊说，这个同舟共济预算案中的援助因此有助于缓解他们对资金周转不灵的担忧，也欢迎政府在4月豁免所有行业的外劳税和提高薪金补贴的决定。

符标熊说：“我再次呼吁企业与雇员和政府齐心合作，在优先考虑就业保障和企业持续性的前提下，明智地接受和派发援助。”

KPMG 税务副主管珊甘纳让（Ajay Sanganeria）指出，政府通过加强版雇佣补贴计划扶助本地员工，又提供外劳税回扣帮助企业应付成本，这样双管齐下的做法是理想的，可在这段实行“断路器”措施期间为企业提供关键支持。

德勤（Deloitte）新加坡及东南亚交通、酒店及服务业务主管沃顿（James Walton）认为，过去两个预算案着重于协助航空、旅游及餐饮服务业，这次则明显地把焦点放在其余经济领域。例如，所有企业将在本月通过加强版雇佣补贴计划获得现金资助，比之前宣布的提早一个月，而且都能享有外劳税回扣。

SOLIDARITY BUDGET

# Another S\$5.1b to ease pressure on firms, households, and to save jobs

Measures – which include higher wage offsets, waiver of foreign worker levies in April and higher rental waivers – will see second draw on reserves

By Janice Heng  
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Singapore

A SUPPLEMENTARY S\$5.1 billion Solidarity Budget was announced by Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Heng Swee Keat in Parliament on Monday, to support households and businesses through the four-week circuit breaker period to combat the Covid-19 pandemic.

This includes higher wage offsets in April, greater eligibility for self-employed income relief, waiving foreign worker levies in April, higher rental waivers, and a S\$600 cash payout.

The additional support for businesses and workers will cost S\$4 billion, and the cash payout another S\$1.1 billion. A second draw on past reserves – amounting to S\$4 billion – has been proposed, and in-principle support obtained from the President.

This comes just 11 days after the supplementary Resilience Budget on March 26. Mr Heng noted that the global pandemic “has exploded” since then, with over a million people infected and half of the world in lockdown.

Singapore has progressively ratcheted up its own measures, including the circuit breaker measures from April 7 to May 4, involving the closure of most workplaces apart from essential services and other exceptions.

In a Facebook post, Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong said that the Solidarity Budget is “to help see Singaporeans through the circuit breaker period”, but warned that these measures “will be in vain, unless we all comply strictly with the measures”.

“The circuit breaker is essential, but we are acutely aware that it will be painful,” said Mr Heng. Restrictions in trading partners will also reduce demand for Singapore’s exports, with gross domestic product (GDP) growth expected to be hit. “But we must take these hard decisions, make the difficult adjustments, and do all that we can in the next few months, to protect the lives of our people,” he said.

Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCCI) president Roland Ng said the package gives “very timely help”, adding: “For the coming one month, although it will be painful and disruptive for busi-

nesses, I urge companies to adjust and adapt, and comply with these circuit breaker measures, with a view that we hope these measures can be eased or removed after one month.”

Singapore Business Federation chief executive officer Ho Meng Kit said this provides “immediate, direct and substantial help which our businesses need so as to survive the circuit-breaker period and save jobs”.

The Jobs Support Scheme introduced in the original Budget will be enhanced for one month, offsetting 75 per cent of gross monthly wages for the first S\$4,600 of wages for each local employee in April. This enhancement “makes it a lot less burdensome on employers to retain local workers”, said Ernst & Young Asean workforce advisory leader Samir Bedi.

Foreign worker levies due in April will be waived and employers will also get foreign worker levy rebates.

Industrial, office and agricultural tenants of government properties will get a 1 month rental waiver, up from half a month previously.

Continued on Page 2

More Solidarity Budget reports, Pages 2 and 3

### Solidarity Budget highlights



## S\$5.1 billion with S\$4 billion to be drawn from past reserves

**75 per cent wage offsets** for first S\$4,600 of wages for all local employees in April

**Waiver of foreign worker levies** due in April, and **rebates** of S\$750 for each work permit or S Pass holder

100,000 Singaporeans to automatically qualify for **Self-Employed Person Income**

**Relief Scheme** with eligibility changes

**Government’s risk share to rise** to 90 per cent for loans initiated from Apr 8, 2020 till Mar 31, 2021, for three loan programmes

**One-off S\$600 Solidarity Payment** in cash for all adult Singaporeans



SOLIDARITY BUDGET

## Another S\$5.1b to ease pressure on firms, households, and to save jobs

Measures - which include higher wage offsets, waiver of foreign worker levies in April and higher rental waivers - will see second draw on reserves

🕒 TUE, APR 07, 2020 - 5:50 AM

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A supplementary S\$5.1 billion Solidarity Budget was announced by Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Heng Swee Keat in Parliament on Monday, to support households and businesses through the four-week circuit breaker period to combat the Covid-19 pandemic. ST PHOTO: NG SOR LUAN

 Solidarity Budget highlights

Singapore

<https://www.businesstimes.com.sg/government-economy/singapore-budget-2020/another-s51b-to-ease-pressure-on-firms-households-and-to>

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Foreign worker levies due in April will be waived and employers will also get foreign worker levy rebates.

Industrial, office and agricultural tenants of government properties will get a 1 month rental waiver, up from half a month previously.

Eligibility changes will mean that about 100,000 self-employed persons will automatically benefit from the Self-Employed Person Income Relief Scheme, up from 88,000 before.

The government's risk share will rise to 90 per cent from 80 per cent previously, for loans initiated from April 8, 2020 till March 31, 2021, under three loan programmes

And all adult Singaporeans will get a one-off S\$600 Solidarity Payment in cash, comprising S\$300 brought forward from the earlier Care and Support payout, and an additional S\$300.

President Halimah Yacob had given in-principle support for the drawing of up to S\$17 billion from past reserves to partly fund the Resilience Budget. The government has proposed a further S\$4 billion draw on reserves for the Solidarity Budget and obtained her in-principle support for this too. The remaining S\$1.1 billion will be funded from the fiscal space of the current term of government.

In a Facebook post, President Halimah said that Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong and Mr Heng had discussed the severity and urgency of the situation with her last week. "I agreed with them that we need to provide additional support quickly and decisively," she said.

Including measures in the original Budget and the two supplementary budgets, the government's response to Covid-19 will total S\$59.9 billion, or about 12 per cent of GDP. The overall budget deficit for FY 2020 will be S\$44.3 billion or 8.9 per cent of GDP.

"We have the plans, and the financial resources to carry out these plans without burdening future generations with the bill," said Mr Heng.

"The key now is how we pull together, in solidarity, as a nation to implement these plans, and make adjustments as the situation continues to evolve."

The Straits Times Index rose throughout Monday, dipping near the end of Mr Heng's speech but recovering to end up 81.30 points or 3.4 per cent at 2,470.59 points, in line with improved sentiments in Asia.

Supplementary budget notwithstanding, OCBC Bank chief economist Selena Ling is sticking to her forecast for Singapore's GDP to contract 3 per cent in

2020, while noting downside risks from the circuit breaker and growing global recession headwinds.

In Monday's Parliamentary sitting, 29 Members of Parliament and office-holders spoke in the debate on the two supplementary budgets. The debate continues on Tuesday.