

27 June 2021

PRESS STATEMENT

PPVins - APPEAL FOR URGENT VACCINATION FOR SHOPPING FRONTLINERS

This is a joint statement by the following associations:

- Persatuan Pengurusan Kompleks Malaysia (PPK) – Malaysia Shopping Malls Association
- Malaysia Retailers Association (MRA)
- Malaysia Retail Chain Association (MRCA)
- Bumiputra Retailers Organisation (BRO)

We were very much elated that the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation (MOSTI) has agreed to the collaboration of shopping malls and retail operators for a public-private partnership via the PPVIN programme as a means to ramp up the vaccination program for our country to reach herd immunity faster.

Shopping malls and retail operators had enthusiastically volunteered to organize the PPVs at their premises and as per our records, 60-70 malls have registered and submitted their proposed plans under the Ministry of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs (MDTCA). This programme is specifically targeted to shopping frontliners and we understand that more than 100,000 employees have already registered their names with MDTCA by early June 2021. This response has indeed indicated that MOSTI has made the right and timely decision to precisely serve the current needs.

However, we have been informed recently by MDTCA that although 5 PPVs at various locations by malls and retail operators in the Klang Valley were short listed, recently reviewed and satisfactorily inspected for the pilot programme, the proposed commencement date in July 2021 is now delayed until August 2021.

In the light of many economic sectors which have currently commenced their vaccination programmes or will start very soon, we feel very aggrieved and deeply discriminated and have appealed for the URGENT vaccination for our shopping frontliners by early July 2021 due to the following pressing reasons:

➤ **Shopping Frontliners have close and frequent interaction with the public**

All staff of malls and retailers are most exposed frontliners as they have to serve shoppers who are all different transient customers. Our frontliners are much more exposed than, say, those who work in factories or offices where they are all working in the company of the same fellow workers. Therefore, these shopping frontliners have been closely and frequently interacting with the public on a daily basis and need to be vaccinated, not only to protect themselves, but also to serve and protect the shoppers at large without risk or fear and without danger to those they serve.

There are some 500,000 employed directly in the mall and retail industry and need only 1million doses at most. This is merely 10% of the 10 million doses expected to be received in July. We cannot afford to take the excuse that no vaccination is required immediately because we have not yet fully re-opened as the full vaccination process takes a minimum of 3 weeks.

With the National Recovery Plan (NRP) scheduled to progress to Phase 2 subject to the required terms and conditions, we have justified that the malls and retail sectors including standalone shops be allowed to open due to the extremely low incidence of merely 0.8% of infections, at least with more retail sectors to re-open soon ie fashion and fashion accessories, books and stationery, electrical, hair dressers etc. This is envisaged for July 2021 and **now** would be the most appropriate timing to get all frontliners vaccinated to be ready for the re-opening.

1 ➤ **Significant contribution to the economy**

The shopping mall industry has an estimated real estate value of RM145 billion as at December 2020. For the retail industry, it contributed to 34.6% of Malaysia's GDP of USD358.7 bil. in 2018 (source: Department of Statistics/Bank Negara Annual Report 2019/Retail Group Malaysia) which would total to USD124 bil. or RM497 bil.

It cannot be denied that the shopping mall and retail industry contributes significantly to our economy and foreign direct investments by new brands and retailers and we must make all efforts to preserve the performance of this sector. Our market size is relatively small and it is challenging to entice foreign brands to our country to add diversity for attracting tourists thus we need to make all efforts to retain those who already have presence in our country. Currently without tourist arrivals, this is even more critical considering that we can only rely on domestic consumption to pull through the current precarious period.

2 ➤ **Win-win solution for both the public and private sector**

With shopping malls and retail operators themselves volunteering to set up PPVs, the malls and retailers recognize the urgent need to get our shopping frontliners vaccinated urgently and are willing to deeply subsidise the logistic costs which would have been incurred at government-run PPVs, estimated at RM60 per pax for 2 doses (excluding the cost of vaccine and administration fee payable to Protect Health Corporation).

Assuming the PPVIN carries out vaccination for the 100,000 employees already registered, this would already save the government a portion of their expenses amounting to **RM6 mil.** With the estimated 500,000 direct employees currently engaged as shopping frontliners, this would save the government **RM30 mil.** which can be wisely spent to purchase more vaccines.

At the same time, the PPVINs would contribute positively towards the speed and volume of vaccinations so urgently needed today.

This would be a compelling reason by itself to approve the urgent commencement of our PPVIN without further delay for a win-win solution for both the public and private sectors. It has been proven overseas that the faster any country achieves herd immunity, the faster the country can begin their journey towards economic recovery. Malaysia cannot afford to be left behind as the entire economy has suffered immensely since 2020.

Apart from electricity discounts of 10% which will stop by September 2021, the shopping mall and retail industry has had very little incentives offered to date to assist us through the currently serious challenges and we are under a tremendous daily struggle, even to survive.

In the interest of national safety, the first HIDE list resulted in the order to immediately close listed malls and their retailers for 3 days; whether this was rightly or wrongly done, but we promptly and dutifully did so at great financial sacrifice due to loss of income, loss of perishable goods and unquantifiable negative perception to our names. **In the interest of national safety again, we have sought MOSTI and MDTCA for immediate help to allow us to help ourselves, and in doing so, move positively towards the recovery of the industry and the Malaysia economy. Our request for urgent vaccine allocation for our industry by early July 2021 is not enormous, but it will be the silver bullet to take us out of our distress.**

It is noted that the time of writing, an urgent appeal has been forwarded to YB Tuan Khairy Jamaluddin Abu Bakar, Minister of Science, Technology and Innovation for his critical and appropriate intervention to save our industry.

LIVES AND LIVELIHOODS MATTER

Thank you.