

## **ISSUE 4**

# **CARE FOR THE STRANDED**

While the volcanic ash cloud from Mt. Eyjafjallajökull in Iceland paralysed flight operations to and from Europe in April, key organisations including the Civil Aviation Authority of Singapore (CAAS), the Changi Airport Group (CAG), Singapore Airport Terminal Services, Changi International Airport Services, the airport police, Immigration Checkpoints Authority of Singapore (ICA), the airlines, as well as the Singapore Tourism Board (STB) came together to help the affected passengers.

With approximately 4500 passengers stranded in Singapore during this time, the organisations worked round the clock to help these passengers find accommodation, extend their visitor visas where necessary and arrange alternative flight routes where possible. At Changi Airport, sections of the transit area were set aside for the affected passengers to rest. 'Care packs' worth S\$200 each, were also handed out. These packs entitled one to complimentary meals, discounts and free tours of the city. The quick response time was met with much appreciation from passengers, including ambassadors who visited Changi during the crisis period.

As the European airspace cleared up, CAAS worked with the airlines and facilitated arrangements needed to mount additional flights to clear the backlog of passengers waiting to return home. While the "volcanic ash" crisis certainly kept the world's seventh busiest airport busy, the event has also shown how the aviation community came together to care for the stranded.