

ComfortDelGro's self-driving shuttle at NUS to start taking passengers

It is similar to the ones operating in Gardens by the Bay since 2015; vehicle supplied by EasyMile of France

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AN AUTONOMOUS shuttle service which transport giant ComfortDelGro has been testing at the National University of Singapore campus since May will start taking passengers on Tuesday.

The so-called NUSmart shuttle – an EZ10 minibus similar to the ones plying in Gardens by the Bay since 2015 – is supplied by France's EasyMile.

It will ply a 1.6km route between Heng Mui Keng Terrace and Business Link for one year to determine the commercial viability of such a service.

The electric shuttle will operate at 20-minute intervals on weekdays between 10.20am and 11.20am, and from 2.20pm to 3.20pm.

The service, which is free of charge, will not operate when it rains.

The Straits Times understands most autonomous vehicle sensors are currently impaired by poor weather conditions.

ComfortDelGro said the service hours will be extended progressively.

The shuttle can carry up to 12 people, and – like all autonomous buses here – will have a human operator on board to ensure safety.

French ambassador Marc Abensour launched the service on Monday.

ComfortDelGro chief executive Yang Ban Seng said the trial provides an opportunity to observe how passengers respond to an autonomous vehicle.

"The operational experience gained will also be invaluable as we prepare for a future where autonomous and artificial intelligence become an integral part of our daily commute," he said.



Besides the NUS trial, ComfortDelGro, through its subsidiary SBS Transit, is currently also taking part in two other similar trials on Sentosa and Jurong Island.

Meanwhile, Nanyang Technological University (NTU) and Swedish vehicle brand Volvo are expected to launch a full-size autonomous bus service at the NTU campus later this year. The Volvo electric bus has been

on trial since March.

Elsewhere, a consortium led by ST Kinetics, which is building the autonomous battery-powered buses, expects to roll out a similar passenger service as early as October 2020.

These buses will also need to have a driver on board, as they are Level 4 autonomous vehicles – short of the Level 5 which requires no human intervention.

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