

**EMBARGOED UNTIL AFTER DELIVERY**

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**SPEECH BY DR LAM PIN MIN, SENIOR MINISTER OF STATE,  
MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT & MINISTRY OF HEALTH, AT THE  
NATIONAL KINDNESS AWARDS – TRANSPORT GOLD 2017,  
TUESDAY, 31 OCTOBER 2017, CAPITOL THEATRE**

Dr William Wan, General Secretary, Singapore Kindness Movement,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. Good morning. I am very happy and honoured to join all of you today for the National Kindness Awards - Transport Gold 2017.

2. This year marks the 18th edition of the Awards, and we are gathered here today to recognise our transport service professionals for their exemplary efforts in making a difference in our public transport journeys.

**Continually Improving Singapore's Public Transport System**

3. Our public transport system plays an important role in the everyday lives of Singaporean commuters, both young and old. Over 8 million journeys are made daily on our buses, trains and taxis. Recognising the vital role of the public transport system, the Government has continually invested substantially to improve and expand the public transport network, along with its fleets of buses and trains.

4. To enhance connectivity and accessibility for Singaporeans, we will expand our rail network to 360 km by 2030. Eight in ten households will live within a ten-minute walk from a train station. We have moved one step closer to achieving this with the opening of the Tuas West Extension in June and the Downtown Line 3 last week. We can look forward to greater connectivity when upcoming lines like the Thomson-East Coast Line and Circle Line 6 are completed. By the end of this year, the Bus Service Enhancement Programme (BSEP) will also have added a total of 80 new services, with the Government contributing 1,000 buses. Over the next few years, we will pump in \$20 billion to build new public transport infrastructure, and another \$4 billion renewing, upgrading and expanding our existing rail operating assets.

5. Hardware upgrades are only one part of the equation. We also need to have the right people with the right skills and the right service mind-set. Skill-wise, the Singapore Rail Academy, which was launched in February this year, will develop programmes to improve expertise in the critical areas of rail operations and maintenance. It also works with the rail operators and institutes of higher learning to offer pre-employment programmes and continuing education and training.

6. Likewise, the Singapore Bus Academy provides centralised training and to uplift competency standards across the bus industry workforce. The Academy may have just celebrated its first anniversary this October, but it has already trained more than 1,000 budding bus professionals, complementing our efforts to enhance service standards and bus network capacity.

### **Customer Service Excellence is Equally Important**

7. Equally important is customer service excellence. Service excellence should not just be taught; but should also be exemplified. I am glad that 446 transport workers with excellent service attitudes are being recognised today, and even more heartened to see the number increase over the years.

8. Being in the service industry requires finesse and tenacity. These individuals exemplify such values by their willingness to go the extra mile. They serve as inspiration to their colleagues, encouraging them to do more and do better. We should continue to spread kindness and promote positivity by commending kind acts, no matter big or small.

9. By recognising the importance of kindness and the positive effect it can have, we can make Singapore into a more gracious and inclusive society.

### **Acts of Kindness on our Public Transport Network**

10. Allow me to share some of the inspirational stories I heard earlier, which stood out to me.

11. Transit Link's Customer Relations Officer **Kartina Bte Mohamed** is receiving a Transport Gold Award for the fourth consecutive year. She took the initiative to approve a customer's refund on the same day, instead of the standard processing time of 10 days. Kartina's empathy in understanding the hard time the customer had to go through in replacing his daughter's concession card is what sets her apart. Being a regular Transport Gold Award nominee, Kartina is very patient when dealing with her customers and consistently goes beyond her duties to address their concerns.

12. ComfortDelGro Cabby **Tan You Tse's** exceptional kindness towards a young, disabled passenger has created a long lasting friendship. Jay Ng, who suffers from poliomyelitis and is wheelchair bound, often has trouble finding transport. In 2015,

Jay's mother, Mrs Ng, chanced upon You Tse's taxi. She was so impressed with his service that she asked if he would drive her son to school again.

13. Two years later, the two have created an inspiring friendship, as You Tse drives Jay to and from school every day, even carrying him to the taxi. In a further act of empathy, You Tse waives the booking fare and surcharges.

14. Tower Transit Singapore, Bus Captain **Vijaya Kumaran A/L Thurai Rasah**, proves that even the smallest actions can brighten someone's day. Receiving a staggering 26 commendations, Bus Captain Kumar greets all who ride his bus and assists them with directions, regardless of whether they are his regular passengers. His embodiment of graciousness has gone a long way in ensuring care-free travel for commuters.

### **Conclusion**

15. All of you here today, including these three staff I just mentioned, are proof to Singaporeans that there are many acts of kindness in our everyday interactions. A small individual act can make a great impact on someone else's life. I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to the 446 award winners. Thank you for your contributions to the public transport industry, and may you continue to inspire those around you with your kindness, compassion and empathy.

16. Thank you.

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