

**OPENING REMARKS BY MR DESMOND LEE, MINISTER IN PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE
AND 2ND MINISTER FOR HOME AFFAIRS AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, AT BCA'S
BIG DAY OUT 2017 AT BEDOK TOWN SQUARE ON 23 JUN 2017, 1.30PM**

Colleagues,

Friends,

Partners,

Ladies and gentlemen,

1 Good afternoon. Last year, there was a board at Build it Green (BiG) Day Out 2016 at HDB Hub in Toa Payoh, where we all penned our wishes for a green city. I wrote the words "Green City, Green Life". This is something I strongly believe in. Greenery improves our quality of life and the lives of all Singaporeans. And by building green, we can spark a wider shift towards sustainable lifestyles. I think that this wish is coming true, thanks to everyone's support and commitment.

2 It has been more than ten years since we started this movement. Why is it important to "Build it Green"? We spend much of our lives in buildings. We live in high-rise flats, work in offices, learn in schools, and shop in malls. Studies have shown that greener buildings are better living environments, and enhance our health and well-being.

3 By making our buildings green, we also conserve resources and help to address climate change. The younger generation of Singaporeans, because of school and access to the Internet, begin to be more conscious of these aspects of living. A green building uses fewer materials to build. And it runs on less water and energy. Green buildings produce less heat-trapping gases and help mitigate the impact of climate change. As a small island city, we should be very mindful of climate change and the impact on us in a very real way.

4 We have many examples of good developers in Singapore making the effort to go green. And these are no longer limited to commercial and residential developments, but also to public buildings and community facilities.

5 In fact, many buildings here in Bedok Town have won awards because they incorporated green features. One example is the Bedok Hawker Centre – it is a Green Mark Gold hawker centre. And Heartbeat@Bedok, one of the largest integrated complexes in Singapore, is a Green Mark Platinum development. It is opening in phases from this year.

6 But a building is only as green as the people who use it, whether to live, work or play. Changing our mindset and behaviour is the main challenge. The developer can build the building with the right resources, build it green and save energy and water, but the users are the ones who determine whether the building is truly green as a lived space.

7 And so, it is important for us to start as young as we possibly can. Our schools have been working with BCA to show how everyday actions that we take can affect our environment. By doing so, we hope to encourage our children to form green living habits as early as possible.

8 In 2015, we launched a story book – *“The Adventures of Greco and Beco: the Glass House”*. This book was meant to teach our children about the importance of building green and living sustainably in a way that young children can understand and relate to in their daily lives. I hear that this book is frequently borrowed from our public libraries. This is a good sign.

9 Today, I am happy to launch the second instalment of the book, *“The Adventures of Greco and Beco: The School in the Glass City”*. This time, the story is set in a school. Our heroes, Greco and Beco, and their friends will share with young readers how small green actions today can literally change their future. We will also be producing and staging a musical based on this story for young children. BCA will bring the musical to all primary schools by the end of 2019, so that every student can watch the story come to life. I understand that we will have a preview later.

10 Last year, I also launched the enhanced Greenovate programme that allows young people to be a part of the green movement; not only to learn about the green movement, not only to let people tell us what being green and building green is, but to be involved and to participate. The programme gave 50 students from Republic Polytechnic a chance to work with industry experts at Johnson Controls on energy audits for various secondary schools. They worked with more than 90 secondary school students and used the results of the audits to recommend ways to green their schools. 8 participating schools have since started their green building journeys by applying for Green Mark certification. I think it is a very good sign. They have also begun implementing their students' own recommendations.

11 I am glad to announce that Republic Polytechnic and Johnson Controls have agreed to continue their partnership for another year. Clearly, our industry partners are doing their part in our green movement. We are thankful and hope that more companies will join us and partner BCA in our efforts. BCA is responsible for pushing for this, but it is the responsibility of all Singaporeans to live green and sustainably on this little island of ours.

12 This year's Greenovate programme will be even bigger and better. We are involving 10 secondary schools. This will help us reach a bigger group of future green leaders. At the same time, another batch of Republic Polytechnic students can hone their skills with Johnson Controls. This is important as we are ramping up our green workforce. We hope to groom 20,000 green collar workers by 2020. We are on track. Today, we already have a force of about 15,000 green collar workers.

13 Let me conclude by saying that each one of us, no matter how young, plays a significant role in greening our built environment. Individual actions may be small, but taken together, we can all be part of the solution to create a greener world – at least a greener city here in Singapore.

14 It gives me great pleasure now to open this carnival. Thank you and during the remaining school holidays, I hope more families and children come and join us. Thank you.

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