

# Expanding 'lemon law' will raise competitiveness

I FULLY support the call by the Consumers Association of Singapore (Case) for the "lemon law" to be enhanced ("Case wants 'lemon law' to include manufacturers"; Monday).

Making it mandatory for manufacturers and retailers to enter into agreements related to the repair, replacement and refund of defective goods would lead to greater commercial certainty for both retailers and manufacturers.

For retailers, this could also significantly lessen the time and effort needed to negotiate a satisfactory outcome with the manufacturer each time a product is found to be defective.

This, in turn, frees up valuable resources for retailers to focus on other priorities, such as

delivering quality service to their customers.

Manufacturers would also have more incentive to improve their quality control processes and checks, in order to limit their warranty obligations as far as possible. The end result is an overall increase in the quality and standards of consumer products made and sold in Singapore, giving a further boost to consumer confidence.

If the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI) decides to accept Case's proposal, one way to facilitate its implementation would be for MTI, Case, the Singapore Manufacturing Federation and the Singapore Retailers Association to work together to draft a fair and reasonable standard template

agreement that retailers and manufacturers can easily adopt as a starting point (but still retain the flexibility of having variations).

This would make it more convenient for retailers and manufacturers to comply with the new law, and reduce their compliance costs.

Further, the proposed changes would also bring the scope of the lemon law in line with that of our consumer product safety legislation, which covers manufacturers as well.

A potential limitation is that manufacturers based outside Singapore would not be affected by the proposed amendments to the lemon law.

This means that retailers who import products manufactured

overseas might be left without adequate remedies against foreign manufacturers if the imported goods turn out to be defective, even though consumers may still seek recourse against these retailers under the lemon law.

This may drive retailers to get their supplies from local manufacturers (which would be covered by the amended lemon law) or more credible and reputable foreign manufacturers that are willing to take responsibility for their products, and share the risk of defects with the retailers, even if this entails a thinner profit margin.

This would ultimately benefit consumers, who will have more quality products to choose from. **Marco Low Choon Zhu**

## Confidence in a future without Mr Lee

MANAGING editor Ignatius Low pondered over whether the national unity in grief over the death of former Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew was a flash in a pan, and I share his concern ("Unite with a new spirit" in post-LKY era"; Monday).

However, the positive inclination in me leads me to hazard a guess that what we have witnessed is unlikely to be transient.

I say this because Singaporeans know how and when to respond in matters of grave seriousness, such as those concerning livelihood and survival.

The severe acute respiratory syndrome (Sars) crisis and instances where Singaporeans were in unison with the Government.

Perhaps, there was an unspoken trust that the leadership would remain

honest, trustworthy and corruption free, with an abiding commitment to the people's welfare.

While Singaporeans have, at times, grumbled and criticised government policies and even how Mr Lee tackled certain issues, they innately know what is important to them.

The overwhelming turnout of people in the streets showed that they have not forgotten the struggles and accomplishments of Mr Lee and his comrades.

All this bodes well for the future of this finely crafted jewel that is our home.

What remains is the need to strive to keep this precious national cohesiveness alive.

The leaders in government and society at large, as well as the media, will have a significant role to play to ensure this flame of national oneness will not be extinguished. **Lim Siak Kwang**

## Reaping the benefits of bilingualism

MINISTER of State for Education Sim Ann said in Parliament last Thursday that bilingualism was the late Mr Lee Kuan Yew's most bold, radical and controversial policy, but it has paid off.

I was one of those beneficiaries who gained much from his forward-looking policy, as Mr Lee said that we ought to study English for economic survival, and our mother tongue to give us cultural ballast.

In 1957, I joined Raffles Institution (RI) as a student in Form II. The English headmaster often spoke of the Chinese language in a disdainful tone, and most students regarded Chinese as a pariah language.

Because I grew up with the Teochew dialect, the study of Chinese was a breeze. However I struggled with classical Chinese, as the O-level exams demanded a knowledge of the classics, and not the more modern, simplified Chinese. I passed Chinese by the skin of my teeth.

In the top class of RI, most students had seven to eight distinctions, but I had only five.

However, when I went for an interview with the Public Service Commission (PSC), its then chairman, Dr Phay Seng Whatt, was impressed with my pass in Chinese, and I was given a bursary to see me through my two years in pre-university.

My A-level results were just mediocre. As my father had six children, money was hard to come by. I applied for a government bursary and, again, the PSC was impressed with my pass in Chinese. I was given a bursary to see me through my science course at the then University of Singapore.

Today, I can read both English and Chinese newspapers and sing karaoke songs in two languages. As I look back, I can say that Mr Lee's bilingual policy was a step in the right direction. **Heng Cho Choon**

## FORUM ONLINE

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**1. MR FRANCIS CHENG:** Standardisation of cab fares cannot be piecemeal.

**2. MR CHUA TIONG GUAN:** Alcohol curbs - Consider gradual implementation.

**3. MADAM TOH PECK YIN:** Great leadership, simple lifestyle.

**4. MS ADA CHAN:** Help still needed for those fallen between the cracks.

**5. MR ERIC J. BROOKS:** Crack down harder on littering.

**6. MR HONG SIANG HUAT:** Increase paternity leave to promote gender equality.

## MYPOINT

### Don't penalise acts of kindness

THOSE who feed community cats and dogs are well aware that they have to clean up afterwards ("Set up hotline to curb feeding of strays" by Mr Lee Chiu San; March 19).

These people spend their own time, money and resources to feed the animals.

They also dig into their own pockets to pay for vet bills and medication for these animals.

Are we going to be a nation that punishes people for having empathy and compassion, or will we be one that instils love, care and respect for all - whether two- or four-legged?

**Shelby Doshi (Ms)**

### Sell CDs of National Day songs

EVERY year, I go to music retail shops and community centres to look for a CD of Singapore's National Day songs to purchase, but have found none.

This year, for SG50, could the authorities put CDs of National Day songs

up for sale?

Some of the earlier songs are very good, with nice tunes and meaningful lyrics.

A special commemorative CD would be a nice memento for National Day 2015. **Chia Quee Khee**

### Opposition leader's remarks distressing

AS A Singaporean who lived through the tumultuous times, I cannot help but feel distressed and disconcerted by opposition leader Low Thia Kiang's remarks at a special Parliament sitting in memory of Singapore's first Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew.

Mr Low noted that many Singaporeans were sacrificed in the process of development ("Low: S'pore's progress has come at a price"; last Friday).

This attempt to gain some political mileage by Mr Low compromised the sanctity of the occasion.

Such utterances are too general and vague to be taken seriously.

I can only conclude that they were meant to dilute Mr Lee's legacy. **Aw Yook Fah**

ADVERTORIAL

# Share your vision for our city of tomorrow

Fifty years from now, how will people here live, work and play?

As we celebrate Singapore turning 50, let's visualise what the country will be like when it turns 100. Think of yourself as an architect of the future. What is your blueprint for shaping Singapore's built environment?

Real estate is more than just bricks, glass and steel. Will our future neighbourhoods be space-age kampungs where people mingle in

skyparks suspended in mid-air and children have fun at zero-gravity vertical playgrounds? Or will we live in floating skyscrapers or underwater homes?

How can we embrace a green lifestyle and harness new technology for a sustainable future?

Share your vision and stand a chance to win attractive prizes in #BuildSG2065 — an ongoing

contest jointly held by The Straits Times and CapitaLand, one of Asia's largest real estate companies, to mark Singapore's 50th anniversary. Selected ideas will be showcased at the ST170 Singapore Exhibition to be held from July to September 2015.

Submit text or visuals under any one of the four topics: Go Green, Smart Spaces, Space-age Kampungs and Weatherproof World.

### Go Green

Alden Tan, 18, who submitted his entry under the Go Green category, envisions a futuristic cityscape where all buildings feature skyrise greenery, solar panels and smart spaces. The city will be powered by solar, hydro and even kinetic energy.

"Underground motion contact systems will store kinetic energy from the movement of people and vehicles, converting it into a usable energy source," he said.

Solar power is a chief form of energy in 18-year-old Melvin Wong's vivid description of a future where air-



Fun extendable garden.

conditioned glass corridors replace uncovered walkways under MRT tracks.

"The corridors will be lined with optical fibers to capture and transmit solar energy to power up lights at night, giving added security to pedestrians," he said.

Solar-powered mist and vegetation zones located at intervals along glass corridors provide aesthetic comfort. What exciting ideas do you have to transform present day Singapore into a resource-efficient and liveable environment in the future, conducive to nurturing people and building better lives?

Every week, five ideas submitted which draw the most "Likes" online will each win a prize. A selection of the 50 best entries received will go into a grand draw and stand a chance to win one of the top three prizes.

For contest details and to submit your entry, go to [buildsg2065.straitstimes.com](http://buildsg2065.straitstimes.com)

Join in the conversation with the hashtag #BuildSG2065.



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## Share Your IDEAS AND WIN

Write, draw, paint, produce a digital image or video of what you think Singapore will be like in 2065. Submit your ideas (visuals or text) online at [buildsg2065.straitstimes.com](http://buildsg2065.straitstimes.com) by 30 April 2015. Only original entries are eligible to win.

### GRAND DRAW PRIZES

#### First prize\*

- Five-night stay at any Ascott or Citadines serviced residence in London or Paris
- \$2,000 worth of CapitaVouchers

#### Second prize\*

- Five-night stay at any Ascott, Citadines or Somerset serviced residence in Asia Pacific
- \$1,500 worth of CapitaVouchers

#### Third prize\*

- Three-night stay at any Ascott, Citadines or Somerset serviced residence in Asia Pacific
- \$1,000 worth of CapitaVouchers



**How to participate**  
Find out how you can participate and submit your ideas (visuals or text) online at [buildsg2065.straitstimes.com](http://buildsg2065.straitstimes.com) by 30 April 2015.

\*Terms and conditions apply.