# JOINT STATEMENT BY CHAIRMAN & GROUP CEO

### Introduction

2024 was a transformative year for SBS Transit, marked by growth and significant progress.

#### **Bus Operations**

We continued to operate eight bus packages out of the 14 under the Government Bus Contracting Model. Under this model, transport companies are contracted and paid to operate public bus services through a competitive tendering process. The Government retains fare revenues and owns all infrastructure and operating assets such as buses and depots.

Of the eight bus packages that we operate, two are tendered contracts while six are negotiated ones. We successfully retained the Seletar Bus Package for a second consecutive term, prevailing over four other bus operators in a competitive tender. This Package, with 29 bus routes, commenced in March 2025. The other tendered contract – the Bukit Merah Bus Package – was awarded to us for a second consecutive term in 2023. For the six negotiated contracts, we continue as the incumbent operator. In total, we operated 196 bus routes, from 30 bus interchanges and terminals, with a market share of 54.3% in 2024.

Meanwhile, the Land Transport Authority (LTA) has called for a tender of the Tampines Bus Package, which is one of our Bus Packages under negotiated contracts. As Singapore's biggest public bus operator with a proven track record of more than 50 years, we leverage economies of scale to drive innovation and elevate industry standards, and are committed to submitting a strong, competitive bid for the Package.

A new bus depot in Sengkang West was officially handed over to us by the LTA in October 2024. A multi-storey depot, it is outfitted to support the large-scale deployment of electric buses. This is aligned with the Singapore Green Plan where the entire public bus fleet is expected to run on cleaner energy by 2040. Uniquely, it is the first bus depot to feature staff accommodations to enable Bus Captains to get to work with ease and convenience.



**BOB TAN BENG HAI** CHAIRMAN

RIGHT JEFFREY SIM VEE MING GROUP CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER Recognising the ongoing challenges in manpower recruitment, we continued to intensify efforts to attract and retain Bus Captains. To make the profession more appealing, particularly to Singaporeans and Permanent Residents, we further enhanced the salary package, ensuring that it remains the most competitive in the industry. Additionally, sign-on bonuses doubled from the previous year to \$20,000. A referral scheme for members of the public was also introduced. In 2024, we succeeded in recruiting 565 new Bus Captains, about a quarter lower than the year before, due to an immensely challenging and tight labour market.

#### **Rail Operations**

Our rail ridership increased by 3.9% to 444.8 million passengers in 2024 compared to the previous year.

Our rail network increased by 1.6 km or about 1.9% to 84.6km with the opening of the Punggol Coast Station on the North East Line (NEL) extension. This gave us a market share of 31.3% of the railway's total track length.

Two other stations also commenced passenger service – Teck Lee Station on the Punggol West LRT loop in August, and Hume Station on the Downtown Line (DTL) in February 2025 – which marked the full opening of all stations across our rail network. We now operate 81 stations.

The authorities have announced a 4 km extension of the DTL, adding two new stations beyond Bukit Panjang. Scheduled for completion by 2035, this includes an interchange station with the North-South Line, enhancing rail connectivity in the northern region. Additionally, another extension is already under construction, comprising two new stations – Xilin and Sungei Bedok – beyond Expo Station. These stations, set to connect with the Thomson-East Coast Line, are expected to open in the second half of 2026.



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A major highlight during the year in review was the award of the contract for the Jurong Region Line (JRL) to Singapore One Rail, a joint partnership between SBS Transit and France's RATP Dev. A nine-year contract with an option to extend for another two years, it affirms LTA's vote of confidence in our capabilities, competence, and the value we bring. Our parent company, ComfortDelGro, is already working with RATP Dev to operate an MRT line in the Greater Paris region that will commence operation later in 2025. We certainly look forward to bringing the more than 140 years of combined railway experience to operate and manage the JRL come 2027. Our aim is to elevate the standard of the industry and serve commuters better.

With this win and the DTL extensions, our rail network will increase by 30.2 km to 114.8 km or 37.4% of Singapore's total rail network. Meanwhile, we eagerly await updates on the tender for the Cross Island Line.

The DTL continued to set the benchmark for rail reliability by clocking 8.13 million train-km in Mean Kilometre Between Failure (MKBF), a universally recognised measure of rail reliability. We are especially heartened as this is the fourth year running that it has maintained an exceptionally robust performance to be one of the world's most reliable MRT lines. Just as encouraging was the NEL's impressive performance of 4.10 million train-km, which almost doubled its record of 2.06 million trainkm of the previous year. This is its highest ever MKBF to-date, surpassing the national MRT network average. Concurrently, the Sengkang-Punggol LRT (SPLRT) clocked 549,000 trainkm, surpassing the nationwide LRT network's average.

#### **Prioritising Safety and Security**

In 2024, we recorded a double-digit improvement in our Workplace Injury Rate (WIR), which reflected our intensified commitment to prioritising safety. The bus business achieved a remarkable 43.6% reduction in the WIR, while the rail business saw a 34.4% decrease. We are extremely proud of our people for their remarkable efforts that underscored an unwavering dedication to safety. As the industry leader, we hosted the inaugural Bus and Rail Safety Symposium to foster knowledge sharing, best practices, and collaboration among land transport operators, industry experts, and stakeholders to enhance workplace safety.

We continued to employ technologies to create a safe work environment. This included a pilot of the Agil DriveSafe+, which is a 360-degree advanced collision warning system that employs artificial intelligence (AI) and video analytics. Tested on buses for the first time, it detects vehicles and vulnerable road users in the blind spots and serves as additional pairs of eyes for Bus Captains.

Another system that was rolled out was a track intrusion detection system known as VAnGuard. This helps to keep commuters safe through active surveillance and timely intervention across all our 29 LRT stations.

In security, an all-terrain, all-weather robot, powered by AI, was piloted at the Seletar Bus Depot. Known as MARS (Mobile Autonomous Robotic Surveillance), the robot can navigate stairs, sprint, and detect tampering of the depot's perimeter fence more accurately than its human counterparts. This allows officers to focus on higher-level tasks. The pilot results have been promising, paving the way for MARS to be deployed at additional depots.

#### **Building a More Sustainable Future**

In 2024, almost nine in 10 buses in our fleet of 3,329 buses met the Euro 5 or higher emission standards, which minimised environmental pollution. This included 110 cleaner energy buses, up from the 57 in 2023. To anticipate a smooth transition to the electric vehicles, we continued with our strategy to engage strategic partners to level up our expertise and knowledge. Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) have also been signed to equip us in various aspects of battery management such as recycling and optimising their capabilities.



As an inclusive employer, we took a bold step forward by providing internship and employment opportunities for students with disabilities enrolled in engineering courses.

In resource conservation, we implemented a slew of initiatives to reduce water consumption. One was in bus washing, which earned us recognition from the PUB in its Water Efficiency Award (Projects). At our NEL stations, we recycle water from the air-conditioning system and cut back on the use of water by some 15%.

To achieve energy savings, we implemented smart utility meters at several of our premises to provide real-time consumption data, facilitating efficient monitoring and management. Concurrently, our renewable energy output increased with the installation of additional photovoltaic systems at new locations.

In our bus operations, we installed a telematics system on our buses which helps our Bus Captains to develop more fuel-efficient driving habits. Additionally, in our rail operations, to reduce energy consumption, we are working to effectively transfer regenerative braking energy captured from arriving trains to power accelerating trains leaving our stations.

To reduce waste generation and engender a culture of reuse, we introduced Repair Kopitiam at the Tampines Bus Interchange and MRT Station. Funded by us, volunteer coaches guide members of the public in repairing or upcycling household items and clothes.

As an inclusive employer, we took a bold step forward by providing internship and employment opportunities for students with disabilities enrolled in engineering courses. The first among employers, we joined hands with SG Enable, ITE and SIM People Development Fund to redesign jobs in our workshops to open up opportunities under the Enabling Pathway Programme. Our engineering teams have been extremely supportive of the three ITE students who came onboard the programme, and we welcome more students as well as employers to join the programme.

Meanwhile, we have 36 employees with disabilities working in frontline and support roles. Our target is to hire 100 of them over the next three years.

With the shortage of private school bus drivers, we piloted a school-friendly public bus service to promote a safe and supportive public transport option for young students from a primary school. The trial service was a success and is continuing for a second year in 2025. Plans are afoot to expand the service to more schools.

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We also prioritised employee welfare by emphasising the importance of mental health while also addressing their physical well-being. In support of mental health, the ThoughtFull app was made available to employees 24/7 at no cost, providing tools, resources, and access to private therapy sessions with qualified professionals.

More details are available in our Sustainability Report.

#### **Partnerships**

Our partnership with Enterprise Singapore to set up the Mobility Innovation Centre known as MINNOVA, got off to a strong and promising start. Designed for local start-ups and enterprises to develop and test their ideas in solving realworld public transport challenges, it also offers possibilities and opportunities to market their new innovations globally. Some of the groundbreaking projects included an AI Virtual Assistant (AIVA) to address commuters' travel enquiries and a Sign Language Virtual Assistant (SiLViA), powered by generative AI technology, to assist hard-of-hearing commuters with travel enquiries. Both solutions are on trial at our public transport hubs to get feedback on user experience.

We participated in the Singapore International Transport Congress & Exhibition (SITCE) in partnership with LTA and UITP. Besides a mega showcase of the solutions and technologies that we employ in our bus and rail operations – to enhance reliability and safety, enhance customer experience, boost productivity and efficiency – some of our technical experts also shared experiences and best practices at the various forums and technical sessions. MoUs were also inked with several leading organisations such as USA's IBM, France's Alstom and Singapore's TNT Surveillance to formalise collaborations in asset management, safety, sustainability, and other key areas.

Separately, we also signed an MoU with Siemens Mobility that will lead to the establishment of South East Asia's first and only centre that will undertake the maintenance, repair, and overhaul of point machines. The localisation of these capabilities within SBS Transit will further solidify and elevate the industry's local maintenance competencies in providing world-class solutions for Singapore's rail network.

#### **Recognition and Awards**

In 2024, we won a string of awards:

- Singapore Corporate Governance Award (mid-cap), Singapore Corporate Sustainability Award (mid-cap), Shareholder Communications Excellence Award (midcap) and Most Transparent Company Award (Industrials) at the Investors' Choice Awards 2024 organised by the Securities Investors Association (Singapore);
- Best Investor Relations Silver Award (mid-cap) at the Singapore Corporate Awards;
- TOPSIS Outstanding Award 2024 at the National Safety and Security Watch Group Awards;
- Sengkang-Punggol LRT (Excellence Award), North East Line (Merit Award) and Serangoon-Eunos Bus Package (Merit Award) under the Operational and Workplace Safety category at the LTA-organised Public Transport Safety and Security Awards 2024;



In support of mental health, the ThoughtFull app was made available to employees 24/7 at no cost, providing tools, resources, and access to private therapy sessions with qualified professionals.

- Workplace Safety and Health (WSH) Performance Award, bizSAFE Partner Award, WSH Innovation Award, and WSH Awards for Supervisors at the Workplace, Safety and Health Awards 2024; and
- Charity Platinum Award at the Community Chest Awards 2024.

Some of our employees were individually lauded. They included:

- Our Group CEO, Mr Jeffrey Sim Impact Leader Excellence Award at the Sustainability Impact Awards 2024 presented by the Business Times and UOB;
- Our Chief Financial Officer, Ms Chew Kum Ee

   Best Chief Financial Officer (mid-cap) at the Singapore Corporate Awards;
- Two Bus Captains Safe Driver Excellence Award and Safe Driver Merit Award at the Singapore Road Safety Awards 2024 organised by the Singapore Road Safety Council;
- Four bus technicians in two teams Champion and Second Runner-up at the LTA-organised Singapore BusTech Grand Challenge 2024;
- 23 staff members Special Commendation Awards and Star Awards at the Public Transport Safety and Security Awards 2024;
- 229 staff members National Kindness Awards – Transport Gold 2024 organised by the Singapore Kindness Movement; and
- 1,789 staff members Excellent Service Award.

#### Directors

We now have 11 Directors on the Board, with a female director ratio of 27%.

### Appreciation

Our people are at the heart of our business, and as Chairman, I would like to express my deep appreciation to Management and staff for their dedication, hard work, and resilience. Every day, rain or shine, they report for work without fail to deliver safe, reliable, and pleasant public transport services to our passengers.

To our fellow Directors, thank you for your invaluable contribution, continued guidance, and unwavering support.

We also extend our appreciation to the National Transport Workers' Union for your continued partnership in fostering a strong and harmonious tripartite partnership to serve our public transport workers well.

A special word of thanks to the Ministry of Transport, LTA, Public Transport Council and other agencies for your understanding, support, and assistance.

To our passengers, your trust and support inspire us to keep improving. We remain committed to serving you better and in making your every journey safe, reliable and sustainable.

Last but not least, to our loyal Shareholders, thank you for your support.

BOB TAN BENG HAI CHAIRMAN

JEFFREY SIM VEE MING GROUP CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

March 2025