





A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIRMAN

of how the whole became greater than the sum of its parts. It is a story of how a company from the tiny island of Singapore worked hard at growing beyond its borders and managed to put its stamp across four time zones.

It is a story of grit and perseverance, of dedication and determination, of a group of people who came together to build a multinational, multicultural and multidisciplinary provider of land transportation services.

A story told today that will continue for years to come.

Indeed, those of us who have been with the Group since its inception in 2003 could not have imagined the Group would be where it is today. In our first year of operations, we posted revenues of S\$2.02 billion. What little revenue from our overseas operations came mainly from the United Kingdom and China. Today, we are one of the largest land transport companies in the world with operations in seven countries.

In 2017, our revenue was close to S\$4 billion.

But the road travelled thus far has not been smooth.

Just two days after we were officially formed in March 2003, we had to battle the outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). One of our drivers in Singapore had ferried a passenger with the disease. Overnight, demand for taxis plummeted. We had to reassure a panicked public and help drivers deal with

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the precipitous drop in earnings. After SARS, we had to deal with crises such as the global economic downturn and rising oil prices that, at one point, reached over US\$100 a barrel. The operating environments were also undergoing massive changes as governments reexamined their land transport policies.

Today, we face new game-changing challenges.

The entire land transport industry is undergoing major changes. There are new technologies which are changing the way business is being done, and quite possibly, the way people will be transported. A seismic shift has started.

In our regulated land transport business, the growth of new service providers like Uber Technologies, Inc. and Grab has affected us directly and adversely. But we are not one to sit idly by. In December 2017, we entered into an alliance with Uber. The deal is significant on many fronts. It will not only enable us to leap-frog into the private car hire business, but also gain us access to another booking platform.

The seismic change has also extended to the very core of our business — the vehicle. Electric and autonomous are two terms that we are intimately acquainted with. Electric Vehicles or EVs, are emerging in a big way and will disrupt the internal combustion engine as the heart of the driving mechanism.

Much has also been said of autonomous vehicles (AVs) in the past few years. Tests are being conducted in many countries although large scale implementation still looks to be a long way to go given that infrastructure, rules and regulations all need to be put in place.

Disruption is upon us. But we regard it as mere impetus for innovation — we have always been ready to embrace the leaps and technological

processes required to make ourselves stronger and better.

Over the years, we have devoted more of our resources to innovation — not just to improve our backend processes, but also to upgrade our frontend services. In the last five years alone, we have invested about S\$62 million on information technology projects — close to the S\$78 million we spent in the first 10 years.

It will be foolhardy to disregard the importance of innovation. For us, the future is already here — and this book outlines the many experiments that we are doing with new vehicles, new systems and new skills to position us for this eventual outcome.

We do all these knowing that we have a dedicated and committed team — one that has stayed true to our core values of being results oriented, committed, and working with integrity — that has provided the foundation for our success.

As a company with roots in the labour movement of Singapore, we have never forgotten that people — our workers, commuters and shareholders — provide the purpose in all that we do. It is this core that will allow us to surmount and ride the new waves of disruptions and innovation in the global land transport industry.

So, even though it seems that we have changed a lot in 15 years, our transformation has only just begun.