

## COMRADE OF LABOUR (STAR)

### Ong Thiam Khoon

President

National Taxi Association (NTA)

*Nominated by the National Trades Union Congress. Supported by the National Taxi Association.*

Over the last five years, Ong Thiam Khoon – also known as Brother Raymond – has worn multiple hats within the union.

As the National Taxi Association (NTA) president, he advocates for protecting taxi drivers as a community, representing NTA in tripartite-level discussions. His significant contribution included the push for sustainable fares between private hire vehicles (PHV) and taxis.

While many feel that the taxi industry is a sunset industry, Brother Raymond has always given his perspectives on how to reverse and revitalise the taxi industry. At many Land Transport Authority (LTA) meetings, he has never shunned difficult conversations, giving his input to ensure the taxi community is represented in platform workers' discussions or tripartite workgroup meetings.

As Chairman of the Comfort Taxi branch, he has always been at the forefront of negotiations and discussions with management on the timely review of taxi fares to align with market competitiveness and economic pressures. This included seeking management's support to waive rental during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic when the taxi business was severely hit.

Brother Raymond has also been instrumental in discussions pertaining to fare revisions, mitigation of the 1 per cent increase of GST in 2023 and 2024, amendments to peak hour timings, and fuel rebates during the fuel price hikes. He has helped ensure that his fellow taxi drivers could continue to take home a reasonable income despite external factors such as rising costs and taxes.

In digital upskilling, he was instrumental in ensuring basic digital skills training was available for cabbies, such as the monthly training session conducted by HPB and SG Digital Office. He encouraged many senior taxi drivers who were less confident with digital platforms to undergo the training. He has also taught fellow drivers how to renew their vocational licenses online at the U FSE Digital Services Roadshow in June 2023.

On a personal level, Brother Raymond advises members on driving and para-counselling services. He would accompany members who needed to speak with management to resolve driving and benefit-related matters. Brother Raymond continuously sends road advisories and available relief fund programmes through various communication channels with drivers. He also ensures that fellow drivers are always safe and cautious on the roads.