

# Cleaners deserve better pay and image

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LAST Friday's commentary, 'Our cleaners deserve our smiles and more', rightly highlighted the important role of cleaners in society.

Unfortunately, the community often views their work as demeaning. It is a thankless job and a tireless one. We often take our cleanliness for granted, without realising that this army of workers is responsible for our clean city.

The practice of awarding contracts to the lowest bidder has a negative impact on these workers. Their income has shrunk compared to that of workers in the security industry, which has seen a rise in wages and status. This will inevitably attract foreign workers who are only too keen to take over at the expense of their Singapore counterparts.

I am confident that the National Trades Union Congress, in consultation with the Ministry of Manpower and the Workforce Development Agency, can alleviate the plight of these workers. We could emulate the Japanese concept of training school children to sweep their classrooms and keep their school environment spick and span. This would create understanding and respect for those working in the cleaning industry. Over time, society will not view cleaning jobs as shameful.

We can give cleaners that smile and say hello, but giving them a better standard of living and a better life is more important.

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