

SPEECH BY MS DENISE PHUA
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR JALAN BESAR GRC
ALBERT COURT TEMPORARY MARKET OPENING
27 JULY 2008

Minister Dr Lee Boon Yang, Minister, Ministry of Information, Communications and the Arts, and Member of Parliament, Jalan Besar GRC

Mr Woon Tai Hean, Chairman of Kg Glam CCC

Mr Michael Tan, Chairman of Albert Centre Hawkers' Committee

Mr Michael Lew, Jalan Besar Town Council and one of my key volunteers in estate upgrading in Kg Glam

Members of the Albert Centre Hawkers' Committee

Albert Centre Market and Food Centre Stall holders

Mr Lee Yuen Hee, CEO of National Environment Agency (NEA) and friends from Jalan Besar Town Council and other agencies

Grassroots Leaders, Residents and Friends

It gives me great joy to officially open the Albert Centre Temporary Market. Wet markets and food centers are a unique feature of Singapore life. The variety of food, drinks and fresh and dried food items in an authentic style appeal not just to Singaporeans but also foreigners and tourists. This is why it is Government's policy to preserve and upgrade markets and food centers.

Today marks a milestone toward creating an even better future for the residents, hawkers and visitors of the Waterloo and Rochor Centre vicinity. It is especially meaningful for Minister Dr Lee to be here because I visited the Albert Centre Market and Food Centre with him when I first joined politics. I remembered we both agreed that after the elections, we must do something about improving the environment as it was very hot and crowded.

For the next 16 months or so, the old Albert Centre built in 1978 will be upgraded. There will be better ventilation with new exhaust systems, new floor and wall tiles, tables and seats, toilets and better safety and electrical features. The total cost is estimated to be S\$4.7m and the upgrading cost is fully borne by Government.

I want to thank especially NEA, Mr Andrew Lau, Poh Poh and their team members; Mr Michael Tan, chairman of the Hawkers' Association and all his working committee members; Mr Michael Lew and other grassroot leaders eg Mr Kwang, Mr Chin from the Waterloo Residents' Committee. I witnessed their spending many evenings planning for the upgrade; and many more hours planning to move to this temporary market; and I am sure many more hours as we work towards the new Centre which will open in end 2009.

I have this to ask from everyone. I urge everyone to work as a team to make this temporary market and the building of the new upgraded center a successful. If there are any problems, highlight them; try our best not to just identify the problem but together help to lend a hand to be part of the solution.

Nice buildings are important but what is more important are the relationships and spirit behind the programme. Let us stay united, be cordial and work together for a better living environment for all in this neighbourhood.

Thank you and welcome again.