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MediaCorp Press Ltd  
Caldecott Broadcast Centre,  
Annex Building, Level 1,  
Andrew Rd, Singapore 299339  
Tel 6356 4388 | Fax 6354 4217  
today@mediacorp.com.sg

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TV Building, 2nd Floor, Caldecott Broadcast Centre,  
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Tel 6251 7671 | Fax 6251 5352  
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## A degree of diploma-bashing

Letter from David Yue

I REFER to the report "Tests not done properly, so judge throws out man's conviction" (June 24).

In the report, Mr Lim Boon Keong's conviction was thrown out due to a technicality as it was ruled the urine test need to be conducted by an analyst. It was also noted that to be an analyst, "a good Bachelor of Science degree" is needed.

I strongly believe that there is a need to review this requirement, as the implication is that a diploma holder is not able to conduct such tests accurately, lacking the necessary competency in comparison to a degree holder. It also implies that a diploma holder can never rise to become an analyst as he or she does not have a "good" degree.

I feel the requirement that an analyst conduct the urine test for substance abuse cases is nothing short of discriminatory

**The requirement of a degree to conduct the urine test is discriminatory against diploma holders. Let whoever does the job do it on skills and merit.**

against diploma holders.

I hold both a diploma in biotechnology and a "good" degree in applied science. From my experience, polytechnic courses in Singapore are more practical in nature, requiring more hands-on work, while degree courses in the local universities are inclined towards the academic.

Besides, both diploma and degree-holders are likely to require training on how to handle such tests after they join the Health Sciences Authority. I doubt their training would be conducted differently.

I think such outdated notions need to be reviewed. Let whoever does the job do it on skills and merit.

## So why are Singapore roads still congested?

Letter from Kwan Jin Yao

I READ with interest the report, "A question of supply and demand" (June 26) by Loh Chee Kong, on the interview with Transport Minister Raymond Lim.

Transportation is an important issue for all Singaporeans; with our huge vehicle traffic and inherent geographical constraints, Singapore has one of the most congested roads around the world. Despite a plethora of measures rolled out by the Ministry of Transport and the Land Transport Authority, the continuing rush-hour congestion proves that more has to be done to evaluate existing measures and develop more effective action plans.

The Certificate of Entitlement (COE) system was introduced in 1990 to regulate and control car ownership and congestion on the roads, yet we seem to be facing the same problems today. Quoting the laws of supply and demand is irrelevant because the results have not been exactly favourable; furthermore, increasing vehicle speeds might not be a good gauge for the extent of congestion on our roads.

On a related note, how effective has the

## Quota based on deregistrations

Letter from Ngiam Siew Ying  
Acting Director (Land Transport Division)  
Ministry of Transport

WE REFER to the report in TODAY by Loh Chee Kong, "A question of supply and demand" (June 26).

The writer said that the new formula to determine COE quotas had resulted in a cut in COE supply by about 30 per cent. This is incorrect.

The new formula did not in itself result in a significant change in COE quotas. The COE quota is largely determined by the



number of vehicles deregistered. Under the old formula, the number of vehicles deregistered was projected based on historical trends. Any errors in projection were adjusted in subsequent quota cycles.

The new formula, on the other hand, uses the actual number of vehicles taken off the road during the preceding period. It does away with the need to project de-

registrations and make subsequent adjustments for projection errors. This provides a more responsive and transparent system.

Therefore, if there is a trend of more vehicles being deregistered, both the new and old methodologies would have given a higher COE quota. Likewise, if there are fewer vehicles being deregistered, the COE quota will fall under both methodologies.

Ultimately, what determines the replacement COEs is whether more or fewer vehicle owners deregister their vehicles. So the recent cut in the COE quota is a direct result of fewer vehicle deregistrations, and not because of the change in formula. Keeping to the old formula would not have resulted in there being more COEs.

Electronic Road Pricing (ERP) been? The fact that other countries and cities are selectively adopting similar measures is beside the point; what is more important is the effectiveness of its implementation locally.

While the Transport Minister approves of such a congestion management measure, the same jams and heavy traffic are evidenced every single day on expressways. Motorists are simply frustrated by the daily

routine of slow-moving traffic, and annoyed by the fact that our roads seem particularly susceptible to standstills whenever accidents occur.

After years of paying toll charges at gantry after gantry, Singaporeans have a right to know if their payments have genuinely improved road and driving conditions.

Mr Lim's decision to commute on public transport at peak hours would give him an

excellent picture of the degree of inconvenience and human traffic experienced by thousands of commuters a day, on trains and on buses.

Right now, the approach should not solely focus on encouraging Singaporeans to step out of their cars but by upping the pull factor and making our public transport more effective, efficient and obviously more comfortable.

时间 Date  
2010年6月30日至7月2日  
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**FOCUS ON THE FAMILY**  
BY DR BILL MAIER

**THE TRUE COST OF WORKING**  
Before you decide you cannot afford to stay home with your baby, make sure you have done the maths.

Many mothers assume that working part- or full-time is better for the family financially, yet they have never really sat down to consider the cost.

First, there is the cost of day care. In some places this can run up quite high. And some day care clinics make you pay even if you keep your child home for a day.

Then there are additional costs, like lunch money, and field trips.

Do not forget to factor in the extra clothes and jewellery you need, along with lunch money for yourself. Do you need a second car because of your job? That is another expense.

If most mothers took an honest evaluation of their expenses they would find that working outside the home actually costs them money.

Not to mention time away from their babies.

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