



Featuring at the inaugural Sustainability Impact Awards, jointly organised by UOB and The Business Times, are from left: Mr Jonathan Yap, chief executive, CapitaLand Development; Mr Justin Taylor, chief executive, Kaer; Mr Jeffery Tan, chief executive, Mindset Care; Mr Yuen Kuan Moon, Group CEO, Singtel; Ms Avelyn Lee, director, The Social Kitchen; Ms Esther An, chief sustainability officer, City Developments Limited; Mr Clarence Chua, founder, The Sundowner Nature Experience Centre; Mr Preston Wong, co-founder and CEO, treatsure; Mr Benjamin Chua, founder and chief executive, Speco Singapore; Mr Guillaume Darmayan, head of regional business development, Engie South East Asia. PHOTO: THE BUSINESS TIMES

Saving bees, saving food: Winners of sustainability impact awards

Singtel, The Social Kitchen both win Impact Enterprise of the Year at inaugural awards

Lynda Hong
Senior Environment
Correspondent
and Sophia-Ines Klein

Call him the bee whisperer.

Despite having been stung by bees repeatedly, Mr Clarence Chua has not stopped championing for the insects to thrive in Singapore's ecosystem.

"It has been proven beyond doubt that 80 per cent of food products depend on bees in agricultural countries. In Singapore, plant growth can help mitigate the urban heat effect," said the founder of The Sundowner Nature Experience Centre, which organises educational sessions such as an interactive encounter with bees, ants and earthworms.

Mr Chua, 39, began rescuing bees three years ago when he was starting the experience centre. He found a hive in a metal shed that he had moved to the rooftop of a building along East Coast Road.

Instead of hiring a pest controller to get rid of the bees, he tried to move the hive out of the shed armed with "rudimentary devices" including a jacket, gloves and a mask – all know-how gleaned from YouTube videos – and a towel over his face.

He has been stung multiple times in his quest to learn how to rescue and relocate beehives.

Mr Chua has worked with pest controllers and town councils to rescue about 200 beehives, temporarily housing them in three locations – on the rooftop of his shophouse in Siglap, in a gazebo at a house garden in Bukit Timah, and in a landscape nursery in the Thomson Road area. At these locations, the bees can choose to fly away or stay.

So far, he has helped to save about 150,000 bees.

"The important thing is that they are not killed. If they fly away, they get a second chance to survive somewhere else," he said.

For his efforts, Mr Chua received the Individual Excellence Award on Thursday at the inaugural Sustainability Impact Awards, jointly organised by UOB and The Business Times.

The awards celebrate the people and businesses who have made a positive impact on "the environment and societal well-being" through their sustainability initiatives.

Mr Preston Wong, chief executive officer and co-founder of treatsure, received the Impact Leader of the Year award, for engaging people on minimising food waste.



Mr Clarence Chua, founder of The Sundowner Nature Experience Centre, has worked with pest controllers and town councils to rescue about 200 beehives, and save around 150,000 bees. PHOTO: COURTESY OF CLARENCE CHUA

A mobile app, treatsure is a platform that connects hotels and grocers with consumers who can purchase surplus buffet food and products nearing their expiry date at lower prices.

"The idea is not just to help consumers get a good deal out of their food, but also to help businesses optimise and reduce their wastage levels using technology," said Mr Wong, 34.

He said treatsure has 80,000 lo-

cal users and has saved an estimated 50 tonnes of food from going to waste since the app's release in 2017. The platform operates on a revenue-sharing model with partner hotels and grocers, including Grand Hyatt Singapore, Fairmont Singapore and F&N Foods.

Mr Wong said he plans to expand treatsure in the Asia-Pacific.

In the enterprise category of the awards, eight organisations were recognised – four small and medi-

um-sized enterprises (SMEs) and four large companies.

Singtel received the Impact Enterprise of the Year award for large enterprises, for its efforts to uplift the community through digitalisation, innovation, capacity-building and philanthropy programmes.

The Social Kitchen, a food and beverage social enterprise, bagged the same award for SMEs, for supporting the community through meal donations and empowering underprivileged and marginalised individuals through training and employment opportunities.

For the Impact Enterprise Excellence Award, the SME recipients were Kaer, which offers a sustainable building cooling system; Mindset Care, a charity supporting the local mental health community; and Speco Singapore, a hygiene solutions provider.

The winners of the same award in the large enterprise category were real estate companies CapitaLand Group and City Developments Limited, and utilities company Engie South East Asia.

The winners of the inaugural awards are role models and benchmarks for other individuals and businesses "to adopt more sustainable practices and develop sustainability as a competitive advantage", said Minister for Sustainability and the Environment Grace Fu, who delivered the keynote speech at the awards ceremony held at The Fullerton Hotel.

She added that "our low-carbon transition must be an inclusive

one".

"It is essential that SMEs, too, embrace sustainability in their business strategies. As MNCs and large enterprises decarbonise their supply chains, they should bring along their SME suppliers and customers and help them make the change."

Further emphasising the importance of partnerships and collaborations in sustainability efforts, Ms Fu called for large companies to support SMEs by providing solutions and advice on emissions tracking.

Scope 3 emissions are managed by reviewing the entire value chain of a company, said Ms Fu. These indirect emissions are not from the burning of fossil fuel or electricity consumed by a company, but could come from its suppliers.

"Some MNCs are conducting courses for their suppliers to raise the capability of the entire value chain. Companies can also tap the expertise of research centres such as the Centre for Governance and Sustainability, the knowledge partner for the Sustainability Impact Awards, to learn about best practices and emerging sustainability trends," she added.

Everyone has to play a part, said Mr Wong.

"I think there is room for the individual to (act), both in a corporate setting and outside his or her role," he said.

lyndahong@sph.com.sg
ksophia@sph.com.sg