

## Singapore Democratic Party

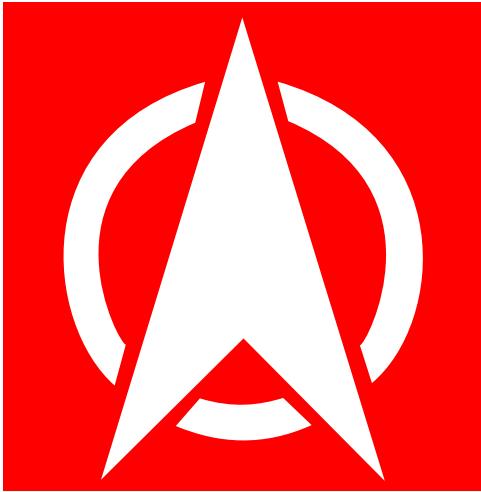
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### **SDP launches 10-point plan to lower cost of living**

16 March 2019

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*Singapore Democrats*

As one of the most, if not the most, expensive cities in the world, the rising cost of living in Singapore is a central concern for the people.

This was the SDP's focus in this afternoon's launch of our policy A Better Life For All: Lowering the Cost of Living In Singapore.

Despite PM Lee Hsien Loong's to "work with you to solve problems like the cost of living" during the GE in 2015, the PAP and government increased, or intends to increase, prices on a slew of items including water, carpark, sugar, electricity, GST, etc.

This resulted in the government collecting nearly \$20 billion in budget surpluses over the last three

years.

What is particularly difficult to accept is that DPM Tharman Shanmugaratnam had declared in his Budget 2015 speech that all the increased spending were sufficiently funded until 2020.

To temper this rising cost of living, we proposed 10 measures:

- 1. Cut ministerial pay to fund assistance schemes for the poor*

Ministerial salaries be reduced with the savings channelled to fund a scheme to provide financial support for the poorest of our poor. If the salaries are reduced according to our formula proposed in our policy paper Ethical salaries for a public-centred government, the PM's salary would be reduced from the current \$2.2 million a year to about \$0.67 million a year.



The total savings from the pay reduction of the entire cabinet is conservatively estimated to be about \$10 million to \$12 million a year. This amount would go towards providing seed funding for the elderly and poor.

PM Lee said in the 2015 GE: "Let us be prepared to buckle, work even sacrifice." Our ministers must lead by example, not mere exhortations. Otherwise, they will lose even more of their fast-diminishing moral authority, and it would be difficult to govern effectively without the people's respect and trust.

- 2. Raise income tax rate for the top 1 percent*

In 2007, Singapore's highest personal income tax rate was cut from 28 percent to 20 percent. The SDP proposes that the tax bracket for the top 1 percent earners be brought back up to 28 percent. Experts estimate that raising the top marginal income tax rate by 1 percentage point could result in the government's tax revenue increasing by approximately \$300 million. The additional revenue will go a long way to provide further financial relief for low-income families.

- 3. Ensure revenue neutral budgets*

Rather than register huge surpluses every year, the government should collect in taxes only the amount that it needs. If it says, as DPM Tharman did in 2015, that the government has all its spending needs taken care of for the rest of the decade, then it should not raise taxes, fees and other charges during this period.

- 4. Scrap GST for essential items, raise GST for luxury goods*

Basic food items as well as other basic necessities such as medical treatment and school supplies should not be subject to the GST. This is to protect poorer households from regressive taxation. To offset the reduction in revenue, the GST rate for luxury items should be increased to 10 percent or more. Presently, a poor family



buying medicine or school textbooks is taxed at the same rate as a wealthy one buying a branded handbag worth thousands of dollars.

## 5. *Legislate minimum wage*

Legislation of minimum wage ensures that low-income workers are not exploited and that economic growth occurs in a fair and sustainable manner. Minimum wage will also help to reduce income inequality as well as reduce the demand for foreign workers.

## 6. *Reinstate estate duty*

The SDP proposes that the estate duty tax which was abolished in 2008 be brought back. Even PAP MPs are now calling for wealth and inheritance taxes to be reinstated.

## 7. *Reduce healthcare costs*

The commercialisation of medical care in Singapore as well as levying the GST on health-related expenses adds to the financial burden of the people. This issue is discussed in greater detail in our healthcare policy titled National healthcare plan: Caring for all Singaporeans. Briefly, the SDP plan proposes replacing the Medisave, MediShield, and Medifund schemes with a single-payer system to reduce the burden of health care expenditure on our people. A main feature of our policy is the provision of universal care which ensures that the elderly poor and those without income are not left behind.

## 8. *Lower HDB prices*

HDB flats have become unaffordable for Singaporeans. The use of our CPF savings meant for retirement to fund HDB flats means that retirees will be left with little to live on in their twilight years. To ensure that there are adequate retirement savings, the SDP puts forward our proposal of the Non-Open Market (NOM) flats. This category of flats is sold at cost (minus land cost) and will not be allowed to be sold on the open market. The exclusion of the cost of land will effectively halve flat prices, thus allowing home-owners to save their CPF for retirement. For a detailed presentation of this idea, please read our policy paper Housing a nation: Sound policies for a secure future.

## 9. *Return CPF savings*

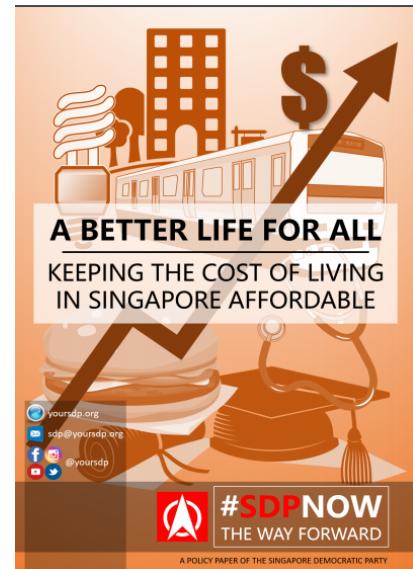
Withholding retirees' savings through the Retirement Sum Scheme makes it immensely difficult for the elderly to survive. This scheme must be abolished and the funds returned to Singaporeans at the age of 55. An "opt-in" clause could be introduced for members who wish to have their CPF funds retained and returned in instalments.

## 10. *Stop profligate public spending*

The government must be held to strict account how it spends the people's taxes. Lavish and unnecessary expenditure such as \$880,000 rubbish centres and \$1,500 bus-stop seats must cease. To do this, an effective opposition presence in Parliament, one that will meaningfully and competently examine records and question the ministers, is essential.

Our alternative ideas are guided by our belief that it is the people who should take the lead in driving the economy (as opposed to the current state-run affair through Temasek-owned companies) and who should have the predominant voice in how their wages are taxed and CPF savings used.

Under the present autocratic system, however, the people have little say in how their lives are run.



Decisions on financial matters, especially regarding taxes, fees and CPF savings, are dictated by the elite few in the PAP.

With this alternative policy on the cost of living, the SDP aims to change such a political arrangement and return the power to the people and, in the process, make living in this country more affordable and less stressful – in other words, a better life for all.

You can read the full policy [A Better Life For All: Keeping The Cost Of Living In Singapore Affordable here.](#)

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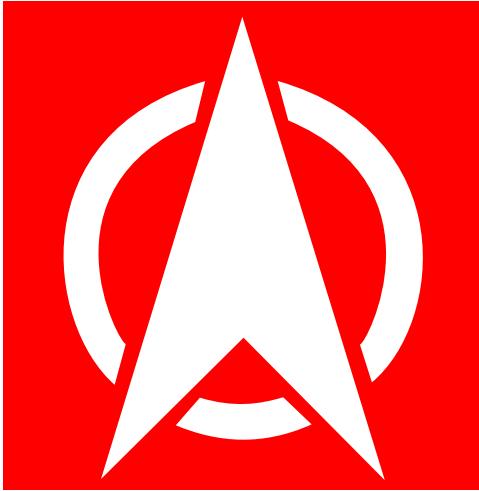
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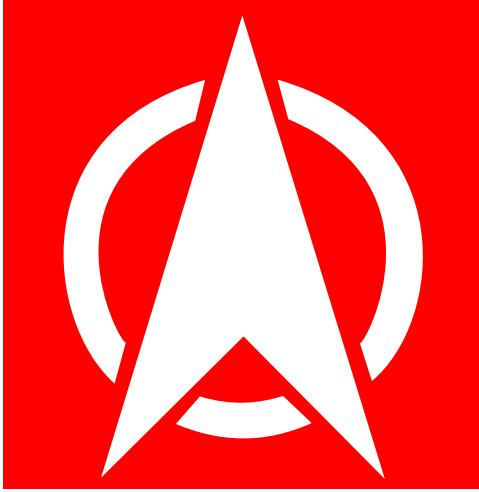
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## **Policy: Economy**

6 August 2015

### **The Problem**

Singapore's economy has registered dramatic growth in the last half century. This expansion has, however, come at a cost. It has been driven by the PAP which pays scant regard to democracy and the rights of Singaporeans. Because of this, problems have been emerging.

Income inequality, a dispirited workforce, the absence of an entrepreneurial class, our reputation as a tax haven, and the unhappiness of the local populace with the influx of foreign labour have raised questions about the sustainability of the country's current economic model.



### **SDP's Solution**



The SDP has drawn up an alternative economic programme to chart a different course for our economy. Our programme emphasises fairness and promotes equality and equal opportunity for all. It is one that is people-centric and has as its prime objective the well-being and happiness of Singaporeans. It is also an alternative that is both realistic and sustainable.

Our vision is to create an economic system that benefits all Singaporeans, one that makes our society more egalitarian by tapping on the people's innovative best. We seek to level up society. We need a system that works for the people, not vice versa.

At a glance, this is the SDP's plan:

#### *1. Redefine economic progress*

We propose an alternative indicator of economic progress. The PAP relies on GDP growth as a measure of society's wellness. The problem is that GDP is a misleading indicator that does not take into account the cost (social, environmental and financial) of production. With an alternative index, such as the Genuine Progress Indicator (GPI), that comprehensively measures the cost and benefit of economic growth, we can better gauge the efficacy of our policies. Under our programme, the quality of life and overall happiness of our citizens will be the guiding factor for economic growth.

#### *2. Reduce income inequality*

As Singapore's GDP growth rate rises, so has income inequality and poverty in the country. To ensure that workers are not exploited, we propose the legislation of a national minimum wage. Retrenchment insurance will also be introduced to provide retrenched workers with support while they look for re-employment.

#### *3. Encourage entrepreneurship*

Our workers' productivity has been falling to dismal levels. To address this problem, we will work to ensure that our society is free and open so that innovation can thrive. Workers must be intrinsically motivated; only this will ensure that they excel in whatever they do and add value to the goods and services they produce. We also aim to cut down on importing cheap foreign labour and ensure that employers employ Singaporeans first. Only when local talent cannot be found should foreigners be employed.

#### *4. Eliminate GLCs, increase SMEs*

We aim to encourage enterprise by divesting inefficient government-linked companies (GLCs), which are competing with and slowing down the growth of our small and medium enterprises (SMEs), of their untouchable status. One effective way to help local SMEs grow is to reduce land costs and rentals. We will also work towards weaning our economy off its addiction to multinational corporations (MNCs).

#### *5. Remake the GIC/Temasek model*

Singapore's reserves are, effectively, kept with the government through two conglomerates: the Government of Singapore Investment Corporation (GIC) and Temasek Holdings (TH). These entities are currently being run in a less than transparent manner. The SDP believes that our country's reserves should work for the people, not the other way around. TH should be eliminated and the GIC's operations must be made transparent and its accounts made public. The GIC must be restructured to function independently of the ruling party – no member of parliament or their relatives should hold governing positions in the company.

## 6. Increase social spending

We recommend allocating more resources to help the most vulnerable segments of our society. We believe that social welfare assistance for the poorest of our poor must increase in order to reduce poverty. The SDP does not advocate deficit spending on a continual basis, but we are convinced that the national budget for social programmes and health care must be increased in order to support the needy and elderly.

## 7. Abolish the CPF Minimum Sum Scheme

Retirees depend on their CPF savings to meet living expenses. Withholding their savings through the Minimum Sum Scheme is not only impractical but also immoral. The scheme must be abolished and the money returned to members when they turn 55 as originally promised.

## 8. Empower workers

Beyond a certain level, no amount of coercion can bring about higher-quality output and productivity. We must empower our workers and upgrade their minds and attitudes by returning them their freedom; it is when they feel a sense of belonging to society that they will be motivated to contribute more than what is asked of them.



Singapore needs a new economic model that will take us into a new era of sustainable growth – one that will allow us to compete on the international stage instead of consigning our workers to a cycle of working harder and longer for less and less; one that uplifts our people instead of dumbing them down; and one whose priority is the well-being of all Singaporeans, not just the rich.

We must work towards an enlightened economic system.

Read the full paper [A New Economic Vision: Towards Innovation, Equal Opportunity and Compassion](#) [here](#).

Read also:

- [This is how our CPF and GIC should be managed](#)
- [Here's how we can boost productivity and foster innovation](#)
- [This is how SDP will set up minimum wage](#)
- [SDP's plan: Ban ministers, MPs and relatives from GIC](#)



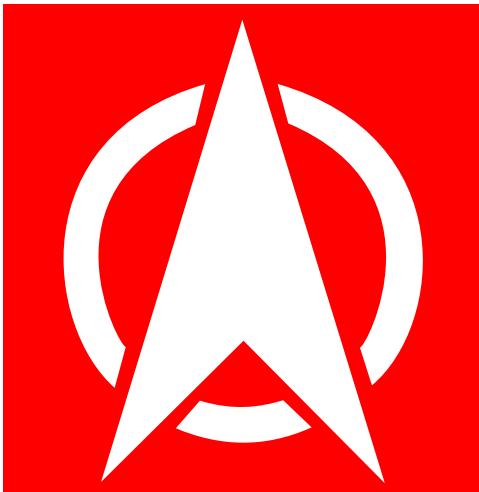
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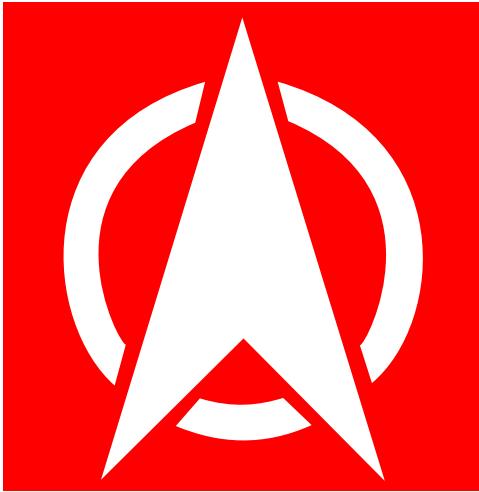
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## **SDP: Our education system in dire need of reform; shows how to do it**

13 July 2019

*Singapore Democrats*

Our education system is outmoded and does not prepare our students for the future. It is in dire need of reform.

This case was made by the SDP at the launch of its education policy *Educating for Creativity and Equality: An Agenda For Transformation*. SDP Chairman Paul Tambyah and Mr Ben Pwee, who joined the SDP earlier this year, presented the party's case.

Mr Pwee highlighted the system's dependence on exams and rote-learning. In this day and age, such an approach does not prepare our students for a world that emphasizes creativity and innovation.

Mr Pwee also pointed out that the current system contributed to the growing inequality in Singapore. Because of the intense syllabi, teachers are under pressure to complete the list of

required topics regardless of whether the students understand the material or not.

Parents then seek private tuition, a billion-dollar industry, to help their children cope. Richer families can afford such expensive tutoring, leaving poorer families at a disadvantage. This exacerbates the growing divide in socio-economic class in our society.

To remedy these problems, Prof Tambyah listed a series of proposals to revamp the education system.



Among some of them are to foster students' independent and critical thinking. Dependence on memorisation is a thing of the past as information is readily available at one's fingertips. "We must teach our students how to think, not what to think," Prof Tambyah said.

The SDP also proposes to abolish the PSLE, and this should be complemented by broadening the curricula and reducing the workload. He added: "Such an approach will enrich our students' educational experience and prepare them for a future that will require them to be well-rounded, intelligent individuals."

He also said that class-size should be reduced to no more than 20 students per teacher. This will enhance teacher-pupil interaction.

On using education to reduce inequality, Prof Tambyah pointed out that school- and class-ranking be scrapped. Schools will not segregate pupils according to their examination results.

"This is because education is not about competition with one's classmates but learning through collaboration and teamwork with one's peers," he noted. Competition for top-ranked schools is unhealthy and has inflicted serious psychological damage, according to mental health professionals, on our children.

The SDP believes that education must be the process where an individual learns to discover oneself and, in doing so, endeavour to improve the human condition. For the sake of our nation's future, it is important that we teach our children that reading and learning can be enjoyable and intrinsically rewarding.

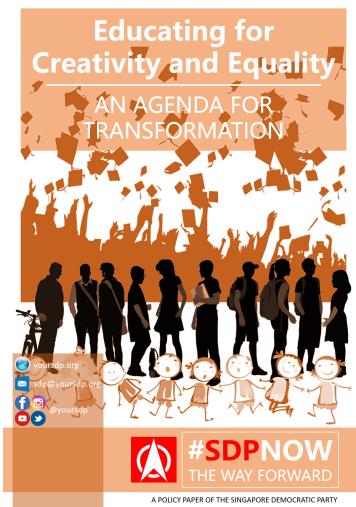
We must let our children be children. They should be encouraged to read, play, discover themselves and for themselves, and develop a love for books.

The goal should be to lead our students to learn, not push them to study. The former will open up their naturally enquiring minds; the latter will kill curiosity.

If we are able to achieve this goal, we will reap the benefits of not just a talented workforce but also, and more importantly, a thinking and caring people.

*The full SDP's education policy paper, Educating for Creativity and Equality: An Agenda For Transformation can be found [here](#).*

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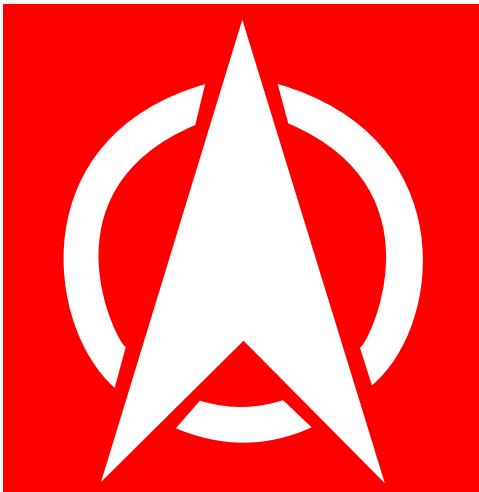
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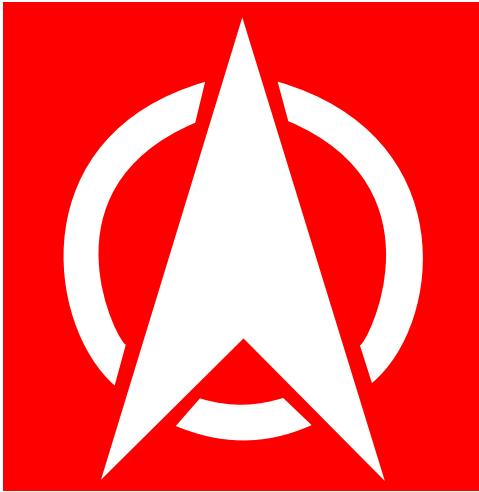
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### **SDP's alternative healthcare plan will lessen financial burden on S'poreans**

11 May 2019

This post is at least a year old. Some of the links in this post may no longer work correctly.

*Singapore Democrats*

Do away with the 3Ms (Medisave, Medishield and Medifund) and introduce a single-payer insurance scheme for Singapore's healthcare system.

This was the main proposal by the SDP which launched its healthcare plan at its office this afternoon.

Presented by its Chairman Professor Paul Tambyah and CEC member Khung Wai Yeen, the SDP said that the 3M system did not meet the healthcare needs of Singaporeans.

Mr Khung pointed out that Medisave is funded by taking a significant chunk from the people's CPF funds, further eroding savings needed for retirement. At last count, reserves in Medisave stood at

\$88 billion.

Medishield Life is also lacking in that the deductible is as high as \$3,000 which makes it hard for less well-off patients. The scheme also under-insures Singaporeans which is why we have to maintain a large Medisave account of about \$50,000 per person.

The fact that numerous packages need to be introduced on an adhoc basis like the Merdeka and Pinoneer packages is evidence of the problems with the current 3M system.



Prof Tambyah said that the SDP Plan would do away with the 3Ms and the funds in Medisave would be returned to the people's CPF accounts.

These complex schemes would be replaced with the National Health Investment Fund, or NHIF, to which everyone Singaporean contributes an average of \$50 a month (depending on income levels) through their CPF. This amount is lower than the current Medishield Life premiums.

The rest of the healthcare budget under the NHIF would be paid for through taxes collected by the government. The NHIF would cover every Singaporean for basic healthcare including accidents and pregnancy.

"This payment from a single source rather than multiple sources from the 3Ms eliminates the present complicated subsidy system," Prof Tambyah explained.

And how would payments be made under the NHIF?

A patient pays only 10 percent of the hospital bill and the amount is capped at \$2,000 per year. The remainder will be paid by the NHIF.

Prof Tambyah said that patients will co-pay hospital bills to "emphasise personal responsibility and reduce abuse by providers."

The SDP Plan differs from the PAP's system in one crucial aspect. The latter runs hospitals as profit-making ventures which consistently collect surpluses far in excess of the money spent taking care of patients.

"Healthcare is treated like a commodity where people avoid important primary healthcare services because of the costs and end up spending a lot of money treating complications that could have been prevented," Prof Tambyah said. "As a medical professional, I feel that this is not right. We should ensure that there is equal treatment for all, care based on clinical need and not on ability to pay."

Details of its policy are spelt out in its paper *SDP's National Healthcare Plan: Caring For All*. The paper points out that under the current system, the financial burden is unfairly placed on the people through out-of-pocket payment, Medisave use or Medishield Life premiums.

The SDP is confident that the groundbreaking nature of our Plan will take the nation in the right direction. Its truly universal healthcare approach puts the people's well-being at the fore and centre of our policy.

The aim is to bring about a healthier, happier populace working hand-in-hand with a

compassionate and responsible government to ensure that no one who is in need should ever be denied medical treatment, that the greatness of our society is vouchsafed only by the care we give to the least among us.

*The full paper can be read [here](#).*

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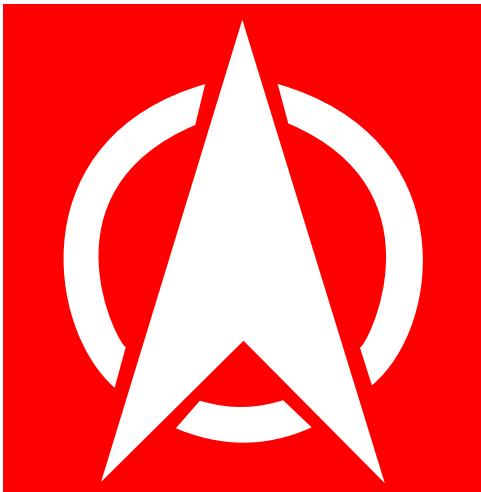
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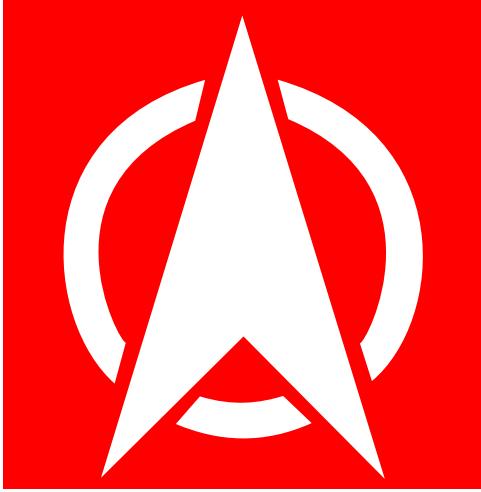
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### **SDP proposes Non-Open Market flats to address HDB's 99-year lease crisis**

6 April 2019

This post is at least a year old. Some of the links in this post may no longer work correctly.

*Singapore Democrats*

Non-Open Market, or NOM, flats that do not include land costs in their price should be introduced into the public housing system in Singapore.

This idea was raised at the SDP's launch of its housing policy *Housing A Nation: Holistic Policies For Affordable Homes*. Party Vice-Chairman, Mr John Tan, and Treasurer Mr Bryan Lim presented the landmark policy paper this afternoon.

Such a scheme would resolve the problem over the depreciating value of HDB flats due to the 99-year lease of the land.

## National Development Minister

Lawrence Wong caused a stir in 2017 when he said that “As the leases run down, especially towards the tail-end, the flat prices will come down correspondingly.”

Singaporeans have expressed much concern over the matter as many hope to sell their flats at a profit that they can use for retirement.

“But depreciating values, especially of ageing flats, mean that owners cannot depend on their flats as a nest-egg,” Mr John Tan said during the launch. “The problem is compounded by the fact many Singaporeans have depleted their CPF savings to pay for their flats.”

The NOM scheme will price new HDB flats to include administrative, material, labour costs only but without land “cost” that is currently the practice.

As a result, prices of flats will be substantially lower, ranging from \$70,000 for 2-room flats to \$240,000 for 5-room flats or even less.

“As the name implies, however, flats bought under this scheme will not be allowed to be re-sold in the open market,” co-presenter Mr Bryan Lim said.



Owners wishing to dispose of their NOM flats will have to sell them back to the HDB, he added.

Singaporeans who purchase these flats can expect to take 9 to 15 years to pay off their housing loans (based on an interest rate of 3 percent) using no more than 20 percent of their gross income.

This further reduces the financial burden of home-buyers many of whom currently service their loans on a 30-year basis.

The lowered housing expenditure will free up capital for homeowners to save for their retirement.

The rationale for NOM flats, Mr Lim pointed out, is that the government should not profit from Singaporeans when it comes to public housing and Singaporeans should not use it as a means of investment for capital gain.

Public housing is a social good and should be used to meet the housing needs of the population, not profit-making for the government or citizens.

## Current homeowners

Existing HDB owners can continue to sell their flats in the open market (OM). Of course, they are subjected to the vagaries of the prevailing market.

However, those who wish to take advantage of the NOM scheme can convert the status of their existing flats.

In such a case, the government will return the difference between the original price of their flats (as purchased from the HDB) and price of an equivalent NOM flat subject to a cap. This money will be credited back to the owner's CPF account or used to pay any outstanding housing loan that one may have taken.

The converted flats will then be subjected to rules governing NOM flats.

The NOM scheme essentially gives Singaporeans an added option of buying a home at a greatly reduced price. First-time HDB buyers can choose to buy an OM or NOM flat.

## Ensuring a stable housing market

The NOM system will be introduced in a gradual manner to prevent a shock to the existing system and a sudden market correction.

This will provide stability to the OM prices while making NOM flats affordable for those who want it. The market correction of prices will take place in a gradual and measured way that will not cause financial distress to current homeowners.

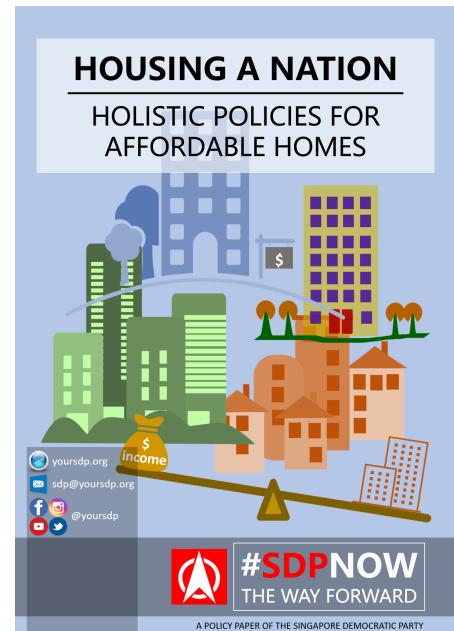
Other policy initiatives presented by the SDP include:

1. Implementing the Young Families Priority Scheme (YFPS), a targeted priority scheme that grants balloting priority for first-timer families with children or couples who are expectant for Balance Flats or new Built-To-Order Flats in non-mature estates.
2. Increasing the inclusiveness of public housing by enabling single-parent families with children as well as singles to purchase and own their flats. The SDP plan will also increase the range of lower-income Singaporeans for housing rental.
3. Enhancing the Lease Buy-Back Scheme to more effectively assist needy senior citizens to have a secure retirement.
4. Barring Permanent Residents and non-citizens from buying or renting NOM flats.

Collectively, these SDP policies can contribute towards resolving some of the major problems affecting public housing in Singapore today and ensuring that our public housing system is compassionate and inclusive.

To read the full policy paper *Housing A Nation: Holistic Policies For Affordable Homes*, [click here](#).

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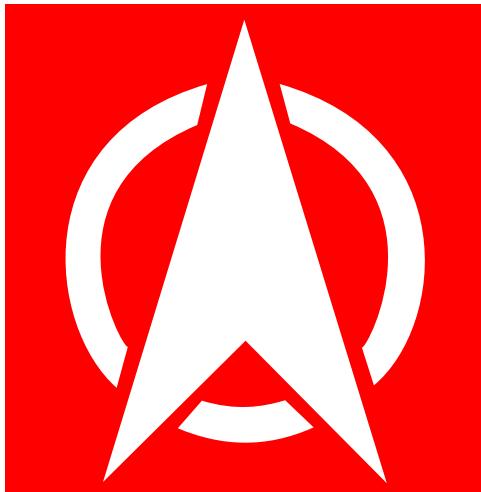
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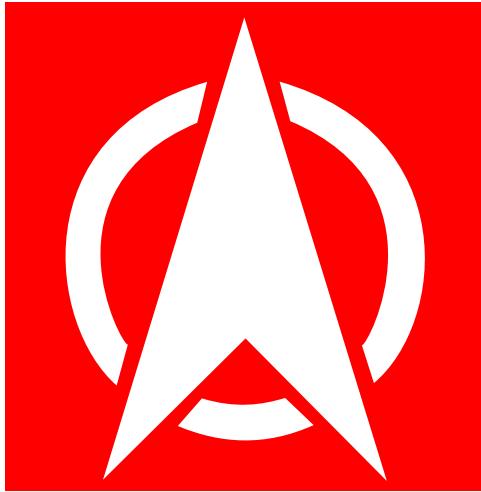
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## Policy: Malay community

6 August 2015



### The Problem

Singapore's socio-politico-economic system places unnecessary obstacles in the way of the Malay community and thwarts its progress in society. As a result, Singapore is not only not developing its full potential but also losing an integral part of our national identity.

On the economic front, for example, the Malay community lags behind our other ethnic communities and the wide income disparities seen nationwide affects Malays more than our other ethnic groups. The education system also puts Malays at a disadvantage.

These issues have resulted in great unhappiness within Singapore's Malay community. Left unaddressed, this unhappiness will grow, cause friction in society and divide Singaporeans.

This is not a Malay problem or a Chinese problem or an Indian problem or a Eurasian problem – it is a Singaporean problem that requires the attention of all Singaporeans.

## **SDP's Solution**

The SDP has proposed a 10-point plan to improve the conditions of the Malay community in Singapore:

### *1. Improve economic conditions*

A paper published by the Nanyang Technological University found that 20 percent of Malay families live on less than \$1,500 a month. The SDP's recommendation of a Minimum Wage law will help to uplift the Malay community economically.

### *2. Nationalise preschool education*

Researchers at Harvard University found that kindergarten education can affect learning and classroom achievement of students. The Government should take charge of kindergartens and provide trained teachers and inexpensive fees instead of leaving preschools unregulated.

### *3. Lower tertiary education fees*

Malays make up only 5 percent of university students, compared to 22 percent for the Chinese and 35 percent for Indians. To help reduce this gap, the SDP proposes that tertiary education fees be lowered so that students from needy families can afford it.

### *4. Fund madrasahs*



Presently, madrasahs do not receive state funds even though their students sit for the PSLE and the O-levels. Madrasahs should receive state funding, consistent with the Government funding of missionary schools. In return, madrasah schools will recruit non-Muslim teachers to teach secular subjects.

### *End discrimination in the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF)*

Distrust of Singaporean Malays who serve in the SAF will breed disloyalty and negatively affect our country's national security. Recruitment and promotion of SAF personnel, including NSmen, should be based on performance and not race.

### *6. Introduce the Fair Employment Act*

Anti-discrimination legislation should be introduced to minimise workplace discrimination against minority ethnic groups, including hiring practices in institutions like the SAF.

### *7. Abolish the Ethnic Integration Programme (EIP)*

The EIP restricts where ethnic minorities may live which negatively affects the re-sale prices of their HDB flats. The EIP should be abolished.

### *8. Make Yayasan MENDAKI non-partisan*

MENDAKI was set up more than 30 years ago to raise the level of education of Malays. After three decades, the majority of Singapore's Malays are still lagging behind in the educational field. This is because the organisation's leadership has been politicised – the organisation is chaired by PAP minister Dr Yaacob Ibrahim. MENDAKI's governing body should, instead, be chosen from civil society and Malay-Muslim organisations.

#### 9. *Make housing affordable*

As Malays disproportionately occupy the lower strata of income-earners, increases in basic necessities such as housing affect them the most. To resolve this problem, the SDP has proposed the Non-Open Market (NOM) flat scheme where HDB sells flats without adding the cost of land. (See our proposal on housing [here](#).)

#### 10. *Make health care affordable*

Like housing, expensive health care affects lower-income Singaporeans the most. As a disproportionate number of Malays find themselves in this category, an affordable health care system goes a long way to alleviate the economic problems faced by the Malay community.

Read the full paper A Singapore For All Singaporeans: Addressing The Concerns Of The Malay Community [here](#).



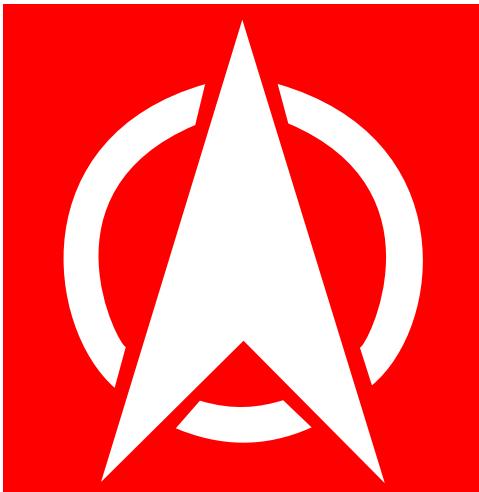
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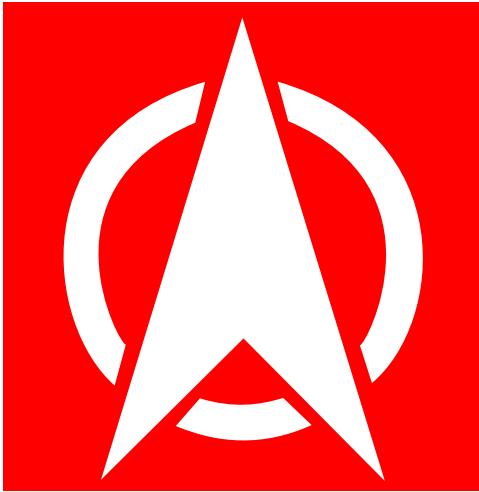
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## Policy: Ministerial salaries

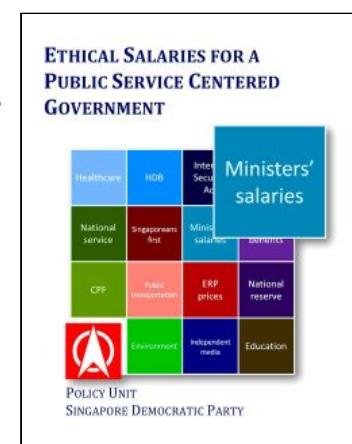
06 August 2015

### The Problem

PAP ministers are the highest paid politicians in the world, earning millions of dollars a year. In 2011, the ministers were paid an incredible 24-month bonus! Because of this, they live in a completely different world from the average citizen and don't understand our difficulties and worries.

### SDP's Solution

We in the SDP believe that those who aspire to govern a country must be imbued with a strong sense of selflessness and love for the nation. To enrich oneself financially while claiming it is one's due for service to the country is incompatible with true leadership.



To determine the appropriate ministerial salary level, the SDP recommends the following measures:

1. Establish an independent ministerial salary commission for each financial year. Such a commission shall compile and publish annually the salaries of ministers, along with their other commercial interests.
2. Do away with variable bonuses such as the GDP Bonus and the Performance Bonus which together can come up to as much as 22 months of a minister's basic salary. Instead, ministerial pay should comprise fixed salary components.
3. Peg ministerial pay to the bottom 20 percent of Singaporean wage earners.
  - i. i. MPs' allowance should be 10 times the mean wage of the bottom 20th percentile (based on the assumption that there is a minimum wage in place).
  - ii. Ministers should be paid three times the MP allowance; the prime minister should be paid four times that amount. Based on our recommendations the prime minister would likely paid \$56,000 a month and a minister \$42,000. These wages are more than fair.
- ii. Provide ministers with allowances for expenses incurred while performing their official duties. The claims should be published to ensure transparency and accountability.
- iii. Move the Corrupt Practices Investigation Board (CPIB) out of the Prime Minister's Office and empower it to investigate all ministers without needing the approval of the President of Singapore.

Read the full paper Ethical Salaries For a Public-Centred Government [here](#).

Read also:

- [Ministerial Pay Cut: Singaporeans Cannot Be Fooled](#)
- [Do Away with Variable Bonuses In Ministerial Salaries](#)



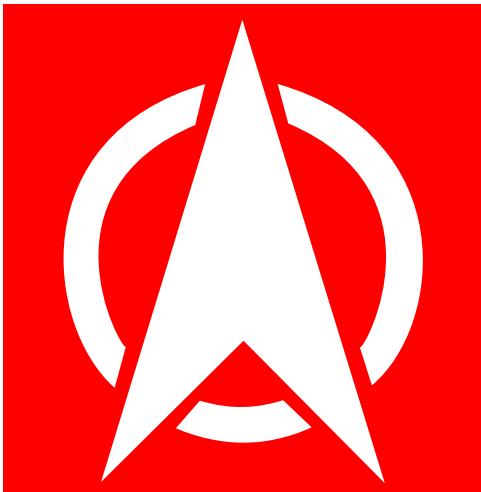
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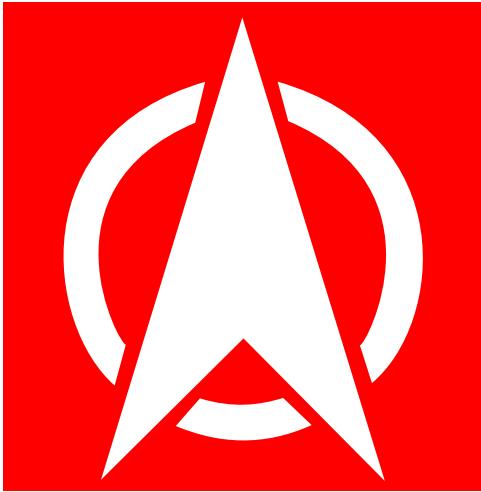
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### **SDP population policy: Hire S'poreans first, retrench S'poreans last**

8 June 2019

This post is at least a year old. Some of the links in this post may no longer work correctly.

*Singapore Democrats*

CORRECTION NOTICE: This post contains a false statement of fact. There is no rising trend of local PMET retrenchment. Local PMET employment has in fact increased consistently and continues to do so today. For the correct facts, click here:

<https://www.gov.sg/factually/content/corrections-on-falsehoods-posted-by-SDP>.

NOTE: As you can see, the above Correction Notice is placed as specified by MOM. However, as stated in our statement, <https://www.facebook.com/yoursdp/posts/10158399553898455>, the conclusions that Manpower Minister Josephine Teo arrived at are disputable. Under POFMA, we have to comply with the order but we will be applying to cancel the Correction Directions.

The SDP pushed for reform of the immigration policy which it says allows in too many foreign workers into Singapore to displace local PMETs.

The party made this proposal when it launched its alternative population and immigration policy [Building A People: Sound Policies For A Secure Future](#) at its office in Ang Mo Kio this afternoon.

The proposals, introduced by a new face in the party Ms Joyce Tan, would take a more measured approach towards allowing foreigners to work in Singapore.



One idea is to adopt a points-based system called the Talent Track Scheme where foreign PMETS wishing to work in Singapore have to apply to. The applications will be assessed based on their qualifications, skills, and experience.

Only those who meet the required number of points will qualify for a list of potential employees.

Employers will then be allowed to hire foreigners from this pool but will have to demonstrate that no Singaporean is available or qualifies for the position before that.

"This will prevent firms hiring foreigners based solely on their ability to accept lower wages," said Ms Tan, a communications professional who has held executive positions in local and international corporations. She currently works in a regional company.

The SDP's proposal comes amidst a rising proportion of Singapore PMETs getting retrenched. Such a trend is partly the result of hundreds of local companies continuing to discriminate against local workers.

Ms Tan also took issue with the idea that Singapore can accommodate a 10 million population. The idea was raised by Mr Heng Swee Keat recently.

With a population density that is one of the highest in the world, Singapore can ill-afford to grow a population of 10 million by bringing in more foreigners.

As it is, Singaporeans are one of the unhappiest and most stressed out workers in the world. By not taking into consideration the physical and mental well-being of the people, the PAP's current approach of cramming more foreigners onto this island is counter-productive.

CEC member Mr Khung Wai Yeen, who presented the policy with Ms Tan, pointed this out. He also noted the low birthrate and high emigration rate that is causing the Singaporean population to shrink.

He cited the high cost of living and stressful lifestyle as causes of younger Singaporeans leaving the country or having fewer children.

To address this problem, the SDP has proposed a 10-point plan under another policy [A Better Life For All: Keeping The Cost Of Living In Singapore Affordable](#) to make Singapore less expensive.

"Raising taxes and fees on a slew of items in the last couple of years makes Singapore even more expensive and, hence, exacerbates the problem of a shrinking population," Ms Tan pointed out. "This is why the raising of the GST to 9 percent from the current 7 percent is a bad idea."

One suggestion in the proposal is to abolish the GST for basic necessities like food, medicine and school supplies.

It points out that the intent of the PAP is to increase GDP growth at all cost, adding that it is misguided for the Government to think that having a larger population, even one made up of a disproportionate number of foreigners, will achieve this goal.

A large population, the SDP says, achieved at the expense of the well-being of Singaporeans is a recipe for disaster. Not only does it hurt the people but it will make Singaporeans even more alienated and disengaged from society.

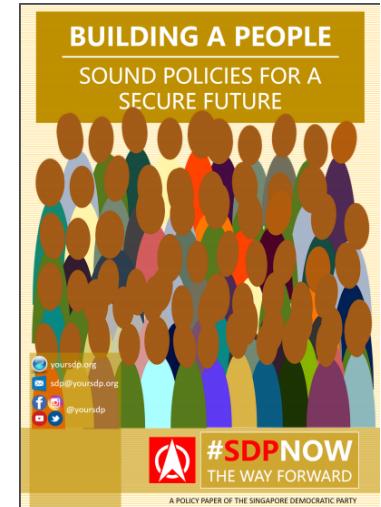
The party has therefore proposed using the Genuine Progress Index (GPI) which measures economic progress by also taking into consideration social and environmental factors.

The alternative also proposes the removal of race identity in our Identity Cards as this serves only to divide Singaporeans when we should be fostering one single Singaporean identity.

The SDP has previously launched other alternative policies in [housing](#) and [healthcare](#).

You can read SDP's population and immigration policy *Building A People: Sound Policies For A Secure Future* here: <http://yoursdp.org/Policy-2019/Building-a-people.pdf>

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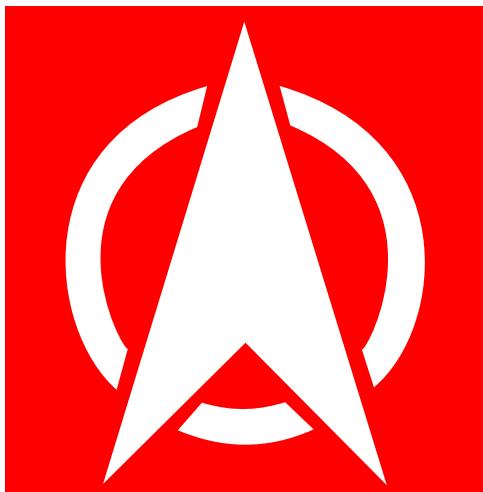
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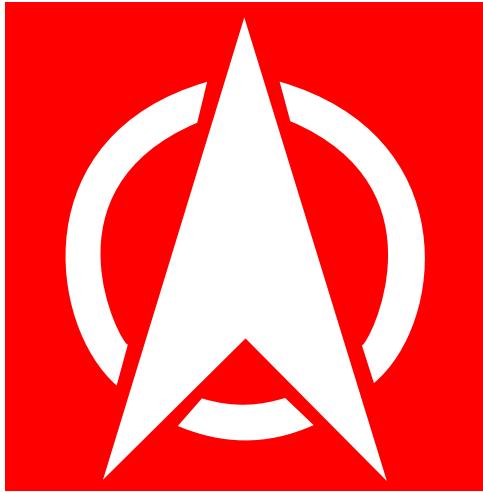
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## **Policy: Town council**

10 May 2015

*Singapore Democrats*

The main objective of an SDP-managed Town Council (TC) is to maintain a clean and well-kept housing estate while keeping expenditure down so that Services and Conservancy Charges (S&CC) can be kept to a minimum.

The statement was made today at the launch of [\*A Promise To The Residents: The SDP Town Council Management Plan\*](#) this afternoon.

Presented by Party Secretary-General Chee Soon Juan and Vice-Chairman John Tan, the paper said that SDP MPs will run the TC on a full-time basis rather than engage a managing agent (MA).

Currently, most TCs engage MAs except for the Bishan-Toa Payoh TC. MAs are profit-driven



private companies and charge an additional fee for managing the TC. This is an added layer of cost to the residents.

The

A PROMISE TO THE RESIDENTS

THE SDP TOWN COUNCIL MANAGEMENT PLAN

Singapore Democratic Party  
Your Voice In Parliament

SDP will, instead, hire qualified and experienced professionals to assist the MPs in running the TC. The savings of not engaging an MA will be passed on to the residents through lower S&CC.

Dr Chee said that while there have been suggestions that MPs be allowed to focus on legislative work in Parliament while leaving the management of TC municipal matters to others, the SDP's stand is that we relish the challenge of doing both.

In government, lawmakers, especially cabinet ministers, are not only responsible for making laws but also for running their ministries.

Similarly, being able to effectively manage TCs while performing our parliamentary roles such as debating legislation, proposing alternative policies, tabling amendments are part and parcel of our duties.

Managing TCs will provide SDP MPs the necessary platform to excel in management and give the public confidence that we will be able to eventually takeover as government. Dr Chee said: "We welcome the challenge and are confident that we will surpass it."

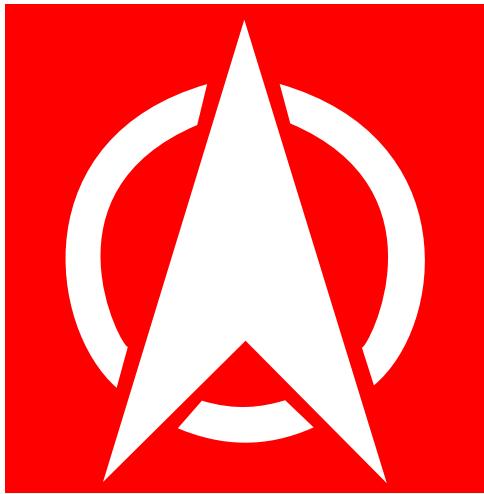
Mr John Tan presented some of the initiatives spelt out in the document, including how SDP will effect the transition from an outgoing PAP TC administration for the first 3 days, 7 days and 30 days.

"We have also listed the milestones that we will have hit after the 100-day mark," Mr Tan said. Some of these include an established TC with fully integrated management teams, a clear budgetary plan, the first interim financial report, etc.

"We've laid out these measures and initiatives so that the voters in the coming elections know exactly what to expect when they vote for the SDP," Dr Chee said. "We invite residents to track our performance."

This is the only way that we can raise the standard of transparency and accountability in governance in Singapore.

For the full document of *A Promise To The Residents*, click [here](#).



## Singapore Democratic Party

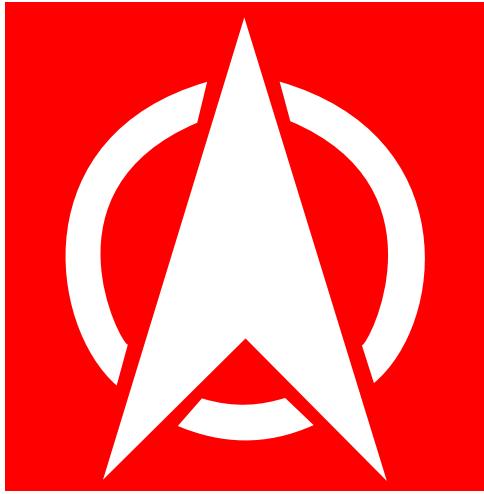
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### **SDP draws up climate change policy, calls out PAP for doing too little**

8 February 2020  
Singapore Democrats

If you don't want to read all of the 39 pages of our climate change policy, here's a summary.

#### **What seems to be the problem and what's it to us?**

As the climate change crisis confronting our planet deepens, Singapore will not be spared its consequences. With rising global temperatures, polar ice-caps will melt and sea-levels will rise. This will flood our coastal areas.

It will also heat up our island and cause health risks. Singapore is heating up twice as fast as other parts of the world.

Such a phenomenon will also wreak havoc with the weather in the region such as prolonged dry seasons and excessive rainfall. It will adversely affect agriculture in our neighbouring countries on which much of our food supply depends. Warm sea temperatures will also cause marine life to die.

All this will have a profound effect on food prices in Singapore - assuming that there is still enough food to go around.

(SDP's Young Democrats launched the policy today. [Read the report here](#) or [watch the event here](#).)

## So what's causing the warming?

The cause of climate change is driven largely by the release of greenhouse gases and other pollutants into the atmosphere primarily through the burning of fossil fuels (like oil and gas) to produce power that enables us to go about our daily lives (like driving and turning on the air-con).



The burning of such fuels in Singapore through our oil refineries has made us a major emitter of greenhouse gases.

## Is the government doing anything about it?

The PAP's lack of decisive and expeditious action to arrest the problem means that Singapore is woefully underperforming when it comes to meeting emission-cutting targets required to slow down and reverse global warming.

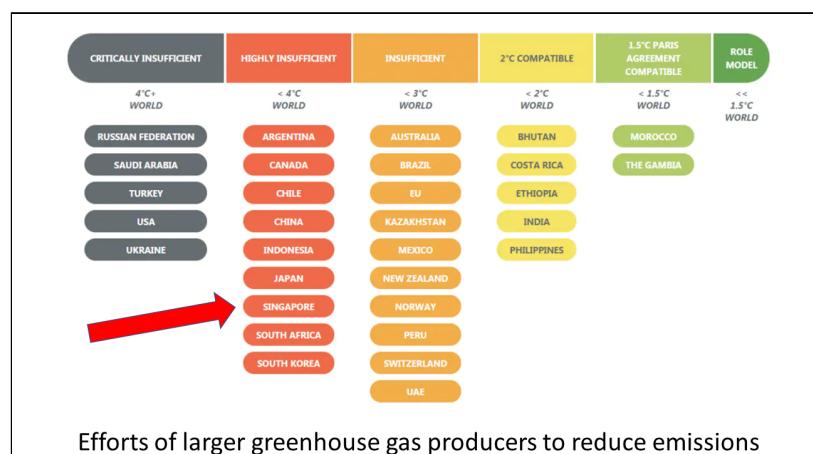
A group called The Climate Action Tracker monitors the progress that countries make in fighting climate change. It ranks Singapore under the "highly insufficient" category.

The present arrangement is untenable and something needs to be done and done urgently if we want to leave the planet and our country habitable for future generations.

## So what's the SDP's plan?

Briefly, the SDP will:

1. Incentivise and mandate motorists to switch to electric vehicles. To achieve this, we will move to ramp up the installation of chargers needed for such vehicles across the island. The target is to have 25 percent of cars on our roads be electric ones by 2030, 50 percent by 2040 and fully electrified by 2050.
2. Expand our use of renewable energy, especially solar power. With technology developing rapidly in harnessing clean energy, prices of electricity from such sources have tumbled making them viable alternatives to oil and gas. SDP will accelerate the installation of solar panels in public spaces, significantly increase R&D funding on solar projects, buy renewable energy from other countries, and collaborate with neighbouring countries to develop clean energy.
3. Regulate the escalation of our population size. Our city is already one of the most densely populated spots in the world. With the cramming of more and more people onto an already crowded island through an overly lax immigration policy, forests and nature reserves are being cleared and disturbed to make way for more construction for housing and transportation. The loss of the island's "lungs" as well as our biodiversity is incalculable.



4. Firmly enforce the Transboundary Haze Pollution Act by prosecuting business entities operating in Singapore that are linked with companies engaged in forest-burning in Indonesia.
5. Significantly upgrade Singapore's Nationally Determined Contributions that we signed under the Paris Agreement to lower and eventually remove harmful emissions.
6. Finally, prohibit corporations from manufacturing products that depend on single-use packaging as well as inculcate among our people the desirable habit of recycling.



**But didn't Minister Vivian Balakrishnan say that Singapore is a "well-designed future-ready city"?**

Yes, but while the PAP talks a good game about taking action on climate change, evidence points to a lack of political will and urgency to ensure a future for Singapore that is smart, sustainable and green. It continues to drag its feet over implementing pressing and meaningful measures to slow down and even reverse climate change. Case in point: Climate Action Tracker's assessment.

This alternative policy is but the SDP's contribution to the on-going struggle to cultivate a Singapore that future generations can live in, free of the ravages of a planet destroyed by our greed and thoughtlessness.

The SDP calls on all Singaporeans, regardless of political persuasion and background, to join in the supreme effort of turning around decades of degrading the very place that we depend on for our continued existence and happiness.

*Read our policy [Climate Change in Singapore: Taking Urgent Measures Towards a Smart and Green Future here.](#)*

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