

TOWARDS A FIRST WORLD PARLIAMENT

MANIFESTO 2011

Published by The Workers' Party

All rights reserved © 2011. This book, or parts thereof, may not reproduced
in any form without the written permission of The Workers' Party.

Printed by Targa Lithography Services

Workers' Party Manifesto 2011

Table of Contents

Introduction	5	Chapter 6 Education	30
Chapter 1 Governance and Civil Liberties	8	6A. Reducing Stress and More Focused Resources	31
1A. Constitution	10	6B. Tertiary Education	32
1B. Elections & Parliament	10	6C. Special Needs Education	32
1C. Cabinet	11	6D. Others	33
1D. Civil Service	11	Chapter 7 Healthcare	34
1E. Civil Liberties	11	7A. Acute and Primary Care	36
Chapter 2 Justice, Law and Order	13	7B. Containing Healthcare Costs	37
2A. The Courts	14	7C. Step Down / Long Term Care	38
2B. Legal Aid	15	Chapter 8 Public Housing	39
2C. Protection of Victims	15	Chapter 9 Transport	41
2D. Criminal Law and Criminal Procedure	16	9A. Buses and Trains	43
2E. Resource Allocation	17	9B. Taxis	44
Chapter 3 Economic Policy	18	9C. Private Vehicles	44
Chapter 4 Society	21	Chapter 10 Labour Policy	45
4A. People with Disabilities	22	10A. Income	47
4B. Elderly and Family	23	10B. Foreign Workforce	47
4C. Children	23	10C. Training	48
4D. Community	24	10D. Trade Unions	48
4E. Social Cohesion	24	10E. Employment	48
4F. Others	24	10F. Equal Opportunities Legislation	49
Chapter 5 Population and Immigration	25	Chapter 11 Central Provident Fund	50
5A. Immigration	27	Chapter 12 Defence and Foreign Affairs	53
5B. Procreation	28	Chapter 13 Sustainable Development	55
5C. Overseas Singaporeans	29	Chapter 14 Arts, Media, Information and New Technology	58
		14A. Arts	59
		14B. Media	59
		14C. Information	59
		14D. New Technology	60
		Chapter 15 Sports and Recreation	61

INTRODUCTION

The Workers' Party (WP) was founded in pre-independence Singapore in 1957. Foremost in our founding members' minds was to promote Parliamentary Democracy. WP has been defending Parliamentary Democracy by contesting in General Elections and By-Elections for more than 50 years.

WP continues to believe that it is in the national interest for the governing party to be subject to political competition, so as to promote higher standards of performance and guard against complacency. We also believe it is in the national interest to ensure that Singaporeans are not held ransom, by having another political party capable of taking over should the ruling People's Action Party falter or lose its mandate to govern.

WP's long-term aim is to form the government. While in opposition, we will promote Parliamentary Democracy by seeking the people's mandate to be Elected Members of Parliament, so that we can call the government to account at the national level.

Our Manifestoes and Policy Ideas

WP is pleased to note that some of the ideas from our 2006 Manifesto have been implemented by the government.

For instance, in the area of education, we proposed setting up a Professional Teachers' Association to look into professionalising teaching and boosting their welfare and morale. Today, the government has set up an Academy of Singapore Teachers, officially launched in September 2010, with similar aims. In the area of criminal justice, we had highlighted the need for fair-play in trial preparations by mutual disclosure of evidence and statements, and that crime victims' rights needed recognition. The Criminal Procedure Code 2010 makes some key changes to promote more disclosure and victim compensation. In the area of healthcare, we continued to highlight the inadequacy of Medisave and Medishield as financing tools, and proposed a public health insurance scheme for hospitalisation. WP notes that the government is still overhauling the Medishield scheme to provide better coverage.

In this Manifesto, WP updates our proposals on government policies, based on our belief in diversity, respect, human dignity, tolerance and equal opportunity as the underlying philosophy of governance.

The ideas contained in this Manifesto also revolve around the theme of empowering Singaporeans so that everyone will see Singapore as home and a place worth fighting for. It is consistent with the theme WP has championed over the years -- *Power to the People*.

Our Philosophy

WP believes that the elected government must work for the people who are, after all, the source of the government's legitimacy. At the same time, the ordinary person must be free to engage as much as possible in shaping and developing our society so as to foster a sense of belonging.

WP believes that for a robust society, the ruling party should not dominate spheres of Singapore life such as business, unions and sports, but should instead welcome organic leadership and voluntary participation of diverse interests and groups. The government must respect civil liberties, be more transparent and recognise the right of the public to information. The rights and dignity of older workers and senior citizens must be respected and promoted. The disabled should be integrated into society on an equal basis as everyone else.

To build a humane society, it is important that the government places human dignity, diversity, tolerance, respect and equal opportunity as the principle considerations in policy formulation and implementation.

WP - A Vehicle To Move Towards a First World Parliament

Singapore has come a long way towards First World infrastructure and economic advancement. However, it cannot claim to be a truly First World country until its governance mechanisms of checks and balances match up.

The Parliament of Singapore today consists of 82 elected Members from the ruling People's Action Party ("PAP") and 2 elected Members from the opposition. If this imbalance is not corrected, we run the risk that Parliament will be seen as a rubber stamp for government agenda.

A First World Parliament is able to balance a strong executive government if there is a credible and responsible opposition with a mandate from the electorate. This will generate a culture of accountability and enable citizens of different political stripes to contribute to nation building and policy formulation in a vital Organ of State.

A First World Parliament leaves nothing to chance and prepares for eventualities, including the decline of political parties which are strong today. The higher the number of established players in Parliament, the greater the insurance for the future.

Let us insure Singapore's future and move towards a First World Parliament.

1

GOVERNANCE AND CIVIL LIBERTIES

Preamble

Governance

The office of Elected President, with his powers to veto key decisions of a popularly-elected government, conflicts with the tenets of Parliamentary democracy.

The political changes made in 2009-2010 to increase the number of Non-Constituency MPs (NCMPs) in Parliament while retaining the Group Representation Constituency (GRC) system and gerrymandering of political boundaries is not the answer for a robust democracy. Increasing the number of Single Member Constituencies from 9 to 12 still leaves 86% of constituencies under the GRC system. Having a 'cooling off-day' is an insult to Singaporean voters; similar arrangements have also been shown to be susceptible to abuse by incumbents in other countries.

Civil Liberties

The PAP government has consistently tinkered with the structure and processes of government to ensure minimal accountability to the public. Citizen activism is encouraged only if the PAP government "leads".

The Public Order Act (POA), which was passed on April 13, 2009 gives our law enforcement agencies such wide discretionary powers that it further erodes the Constitutional rights of citizens to freedom of expression and assembly. Of particular concerns are three areas – Public Assembly, Move-on Order and restriction on filming of law enforcement activities. Under the Public Assembly provision, even one person acting alone is now classified as an 'assembly'. The Move-on order gives the police a new power to order one to leave a place for up to 24 hours, while the restriction on filming allows them to stop one from filming law enforcement activities, including crowd control, crime investigation or other routine matters, so long as the police deem it necessary.

It should be noted that the Penal Code already allows police to charge people with criminal conspiracy for merely agreeing to commit an offence. The Criminal Procedure Code gives the police powers to prevent offences before they occur. The

Miscellaneous Offences Act also criminalises a lot of anti-social behaviour such as abusive language and disorderly behaviour.

It is fundamental that we protect our civil liberties and hold the government to accountability.

Our Beliefs

Governance

1. The Constitution is the supreme law of Singapore. All Constitutional amendments must be carefully scrutinized and public opinion canvassed wherever possible.
2. There should be no Constitutional amendments for partisan advantage at elections.
3. In a Parliamentary democracy, the government must be open and accountable to the people and true to the rule of law.
4. Parliamentary elections should be conducted such as to encourage maximum participation from citizens.
5. Parliament shall consist only of Members elected by the people in free and fair elections.
6. For Parliament to function effectively as a check on the Executive Government, it is necessary for the House to consist of elected Members from political parties other than the ruling party. A significant presence of elected Members from other parties will promote more rigorous scrutiny of government agenda, and provide an insurance against ruling party decline.
7. Political leaders should be paid in accordance with the public character of their office.
8. The civil service must be politically neutral, true to the rule of law.

Civil Liberties

1. There should be an environment conducive to citizen activism and citizens should be free to form associations. Singaporeans should be assured of liberty, and freedom from arbitrary arrest and detention.
2. The local mass media should be socially responsible and free from political influence in respect of content.

Our Proposals

A. *Constitution:*

1. All amendments to the Constitution must be sent to a Select Committee consisting of Members of Parliament from different political parties.
2. The right of every citizen to vote should be entrenched in the Constitution.
3. The voting age should be brought down from 21 to 18. This will encourage young people to have an early interest in political governance. It will bring Singapore in line with many countries in the world which have voting ages below 21, and be consistent with other local laws which set 18 as the benchmark age (e.g. to enter contracts and to be mobilised to defend Singapore in military service).

B. *Elections & Parliament:*

1. The Office of Elected President should be abolished and the Presidency should be reverted to its former ceremonial position. The power of Parliament as the people's representatives should be unfettered.
2. Parliamentary elections should not be organized by the Prime Minister's Office. Instead, an independent election commission should be tasked with this role, reporting to the Chief Justice, to ensure political neutrality.
3. Delineation of electoral boundaries should not be under the Prime Minister's Office. It should be undertaken by an independent committee reporting to President, and open to public scrutiny. The rationale for electoral boundary changes and the proposed boundaries should be announced at least one year before a General Election is called.
4. Group Representation Constituencies should be abolished, as they dilute the individual voter's voice. Instead, the elections should be run on single seats. The Non-Constituency MP (NCMP) scheme would then be unnecessary.
5. The Nominated Member of Parliament (NMP) scheme should be abolished.
6. For better representation of voter diversity, we should work towards an alternative system of proportional representation so that party votes can be reflected at the national level.
7. The one-day cooling off period before polling day should be removed.
8. All registered electors overseas should be entitled to vote. This can be facilitated by all Singapore Overseas Missions and / or postal voting.

C. *Cabinet:*

1. Ministers should be rewarded fairly and equitably for their contribution to the country.
2. Ministers' remuneration should be benchmarked internationally against the political office of developed countries. Their remuneration should also take into account all associated benefits (e.g. benefits-in-kind) under the total remuneration or total employment costs.
3. Ministers should declare all their assets to the public, including deemed interests before, during and after office.

D. *Civil Service:*

1. The civil service should be guided only by law and policy which should be applied consistently, and without fear or favour.
2. The office of Parliamentary Ombudsman should be established. Any citizen aggrieved by the action of any public servant may, instead of commencing an expensive law suit, lodge a complaint with this office. The Ombudsman will be empowered to investigate with full cooperation of the civil service, at nominal cost to the citizen, with powers to advise on corrective actions and recommend prosecutions. This process will enhance government accountability and give more options for citizen redress.
3. While discretion must be given to civil servants to make decisions, such discretion should not be absolute and should be subject to either judicial review (for rationality, not on merits) or review by an independent ombudsman.
4. There should not be laws which make the decisions of the Executive un-reviewable. Any such existing laws should be reviewed.

E. *Civil Liberties:*

1. The Internal Security Act, which provides for detention without trial in cases of alleged subversion, should be abolished. Singapore shall be brought in line with international practices to try such cases, including espionage, with modified procedures to protect official secrets if necessary.
2. In cases of alleged terrorism, the government should be enabled by a dedicated anti-terrorism law to make swift arrests and detain suspects without trial. However, these suspects must be afforded real avenues to challenge the legality of their arrests through the courts and an advisory board. These bodies should be empowered to order the person's release if not satisfied as to the legality of the detention.

3. The Public Order Act (POA) should not be used to curtail active citizenry. In particular, the provisions on Public Assembly, Move-on order and Restrictions on filming of law enforcement operations should be reviewed.
4. Peaceful demonstrations shall be allowed, subject to prior notification to the police, to ensure minimum disruption to traffic and public convenience.

JUSTICE, LAW AND ORDER

Preamble

Singapore's legal and judicial system may be well-ranked on efficiency, corruption indices and calibre of staff. However, these do not adequately measure important aspects where the system still needs to improve, such as in the areas of due process, balancing the interests of stakeholders, and having sufficient accountability for Executive actions.

WP is pleased to note that some of our suggestions towards the review of the Penal Code in 2007 and Criminal Procedure Code in 2010 have been adopted by the government. In addition, the Criminal Procedure Code 2010 has introduced several community-based sentences for offenders of minor crimes, which was an approach advocated in the WP's previous Manifestos.

However, WP concurrently notes with concern the severe enhancements to maximum imprisonment terms for many offences in the Penal Code amendments in 2007, for which weak justifications were given.

Existing procedures in criminal cases are weighted in favour of the prosecution and in certain areas are unfair to the accused. While WP notes some progressive amendments to the Criminal Procedure Code in 2010 relating to pre-trial processes, Singapore still falls short of international best practices.

Our Beliefs

1. The independence of the Judiciary must be protected. Justice should be dispensed by judges and magistrates who must be impartial and are guided only by legal principles.
2. Our legal system must strive for quality and fairness in its processes, balancing the rights and interests of victims, suspects and the general public.
3. When faced with crime trends of concern, a balanced approach should be taken to tackle the problem at its roots, rather than simply enhancing penalties alone. This may require more resources and even addressing social conditions or policies.

4. Mandatory sentences for capital offences should be removed as they take away the discretion of the judge to adjust a sentence to suit the individual case circumstances. Under the current system of mandatory sentences, the real power to determine the offender's sentence shifts from the Courts to the prosecution who will decide which charge to proceed on to produce the appropriate sentence. This encourages plea-bargaining which makes justice less transparent, as the exercise of prosecutorial discretion cannot be reviewed or appealed against.
5. The justice system, both civil and criminal, should be accessible to all. Every person facing investigations or court proceedings should be allowed adequate representation and full opportunity to a fair hearing, including a right of appeal.
6. The litigation process should promote fair-play and an adequate presentation of cases by the parties involved.
7. The court system should strive for efficiency and quality in its processes. However, the pursuit of efficiency must not be at the expense of due process.
8. Victims of crime should be adequately taken care of in our criminal justice system. At present, the victim incurs expense and suffers inconveniences, and stands to recover nothing in most crime cases. The victim's interests should be protected in the criminal justice system.
9. We need more transparency in crime information, so that more focused crime prevention measures can be undertaken by the authorities and the public.
10. Law enforcement agencies such as the Police must be adequately resourced.

Our Proposals

A. *The Courts:*

1. The Constitution should be amended to extend the retirement age of Supreme Court Judges from 65 to 70 years and there should be no extension of this tenure.
2. The present provisions for the appointment of Supreme Court Judicial Commissioners who function as Supreme Court Judges for fixed terms should be removed. Such schemes are convenient but risk undermining the independence of such officers.
3. A Judicial Service should be created, separate from the Legal Service, for judicial posts such as Registrars, Deputy Registrars, Magistrates and District Judges in the Subordinate Courts, and Registrars and Assistant Registrars in the High Court. The structure will exclude members of the Executive from decisions concerning their career or their advancement. All persons desiring to

serve either as government legal or judicial officers will initially be recruited into a common pool for posting into various non-judicial legal posts. After a minimum period in these posts, those considered suitable will be selected for entry into the judicial service and will not be liable for transfer back to the mainstream unless they so request.

4. The fees charged by the Courts for initiating and maintaining proceedings must be kept moderate and in keeping with the public character of their services. Courts should be prudent in their spending and resource management so as not to fuel unnecessary fee increases. There should be flexibility in the review of waivers of fees in cases of financial hardship.
5. Appeals from Subordinate Court criminal cases will continue to go to the High Court which should be free to roster judges at random to hear appeals. This will provide for continuity and stability in the system.
6. For capital cases, the trial should be conducted by a tribunal of two judges whose decision to impose the death sentence must be unanimous. On appeal, the death sentence should be upheld only if it is confirmed unanimously by all three judges in the Court of Appeal.
7. For capital offences, discretion should be given to judges to decide whether the death penalty or a lesser penalty is justified for each case. Parliament can set limits on the degree of discretion, depending on the offence.

B. *Legal Aid:*

1. For civil legal aid, the means test under the Legal Aid and Advice Act should be continuously reviewed to reflect a reasonable cut off income.
2. Government legal aid should be provided for criminal cases. A statutory criminal legal aid scheme should be set up to replace the present voluntary legal aid scheme run by the Law Society. The Law Society scheme is highly commendable but legal representation for the poor in criminal cases should be a government concern. This will also ensure continuity and resources.

C. *Protection of Victims:*

1. WP notes progress in Criminal Procedure Code 2010 to include in the sentencing procedure a formal recognition of the Victim Impact Statement. The next step is to ensure that such statements are recorded widely rather than only in limited cases. Such statements should be used not only in sentencing but also at pre-trial stages such as bail, so that the Court can comprehensively consider the victim's well-being at earlier stages of the case, such as in deciding whether to release the suspect on bail and under what conditions.

2. A state funded Board should be set up to offer financial assistance to the victims of violent crimes, at least for the medical expenses incurred, and to work with community-based agencies to assist victims to recover from their ordeal.
3. The official statistics on crime, which reflect only reported crime as classified by the law enforcement authorities, should be supplemented. In line with best practices internationally, surveys should be conducted to ascertain the extent of unreported crime, the reasons for non-reporting and why the authorities re-classify reports. Such victimisation surveys will enable more focused crime prevention measures.

D. Criminal Law and Criminal Procedure:

1. Criminal procedures should be reviewed to ensure that an arrested person's Constitutional right to consult legal counsel is protected by allowing early access.
2. Persons in custody for investigations by law enforcement agencies should only be detained beyond 48 hours by order of a court made in the presence of the suspect. The Constitutional amendment in 2010 to allow orders for initial remand to be made via video-link while still within the law enforcement agencies' premises should be repealed, so as to enhance confidence in this critical check on the Executive.
3. A person arrested should be told his legal rights upon arrest, especially his Constitutional right to counsel under Article 9 and the right against self-incrimination.
4. Accused persons who are factually innocent but who have been mistakenly arrested and/or prosecuted should be compensated. A mistaken arrest and prosecution brings income loss, stress, loss of reputation and payment of legal costs of defence. The burden of the executive's errors should not be borne by the innocent.
5. The heavier sentences in the Penal Code amendments in 2007 should be reviewed and specifically justified for each offence type.
6. The Penal Code and the Criminal Procedure Code should be re-examined to review the classification of cases which are non-arrestable. For instance, more situations of voluntarily causing hurt may need to be classified as arrestable for better protection of the public.

7. The Criminal Procedure Code should be amended to make it clear that an appellate court hearing an appeal from an accused person against sentence does not have the power to increase the sentence unless the prosecution cross-appeals to increase the sentence.
8. While the Criminal Procedure Code 2010 has made important progress in the area of pre-trial disclosures between prosecution and defence, it is still confined to disclosure of accused's statements and material that each side has obtained and intends to use. We should work towards the higher standards practised elsewhere, such as the United Kingdom practice of requiring the prosecution to disclose to the defence material which it has obtained during investigations but does not intend to use.
9. Video recording of accused's statements should be implemented, to serve the dual purpose of reducing frivolous challenges in court and for more accountability.
10. The Criminal Law (Temporary Provisions) Act allowing detention of suspected criminals without trial should constantly be re-examined and its necessity and use closely scrutinised, with the goal of abolishing its use in favour of having the usual trial process.

E. Resource Allocation:

1. Adequate resources should be allocated to the Home Team to fight crime. The government should continue to monitor and moderate the workload demands in terms of population growth, new crime concerns and events security, to ensure that the community is not adversely affected.

3

ECONOMIC POLICY

Preamble

1. Despite record economic growth in 2010, and a burgeoning number of millionaires, many Singaporean workers continue to experience low wages, long working hours by multiple family members to maintain living standards, job insecurity and unrelenting price increases.
2. The PAP government's preoccupation with economic growth has led to the opening of the floodgates to foreign workers to boost growth through labour inputs. This has suppressed low-income Singaporean workers' wages, heightened job insecurity and caused overcrowding in land-scarce Singapore. The liberal foreign labour policy has also come at the price of lagging productivity, forcing low-wage workers to depend on government hand-outs to subsist.
3. Economic growth is meaningful only if the fruits of growth are equitably distributed; otherwise, we risk becoming an ever more divided and polarised society.
4. Despite the many schemes devoted to encouraging entrepreneurship, Singapore still lags behind other Asian economies like Taiwan and South Korea in terms of successful home-grown enterprises.
5. While a free market economy has its benefits, the consequential effect is income disparity. Those with economic power tend to congregate with those with political power resulting in a power elite network. The consequence of such a structure could result in imbalance in policy formulation.

Our Beliefs

1. WP is committed to economic growth where each citizen is provided opportunities to contribute to the best of his or her ability, and live a dignified life.
2. Social mobility should not be disrupted and taken over by the "free market" based on the financial might of the individual.

3. There should be a re-distribution of wealth through fiscal and tax measures and social policy to ensure that the fruits of the economy are shared equitably.
4. The government should contribute to the growth of local SMEs by levelling the playing field for them to compete with government-linked companies (GLCs) and multinational corporations (MNCs).
5. WP believes that by empowering the individual and the private sector, we will have a creative economy that will propel us forward in our next stage of economic development.
6. Singapore needs to move away from its over-reliance on GLCs and MNCs. Their monopoly power in our small domestic market crowds out local entrepreneurs and chokes off market-based channels of upward social mobility. Instead, we should focus on nurturing home grown enterprises and encouraging our best talents to start companies and work in local enterprises.
7. GLCs should focus on growing Singapore's external economic wing and helping local enterprises to venture abroad, instead of crowding out local SMEs.
8. Independent thinking, self-reliance, and the courage to be different are necessary ingredients of entrepreneurship. We must cultivate resilience through the spirit of risk-taking and a "not-afraid-to-fail" attitude.
9. Companies should be encouraged to exercise corporate social responsibility and get involved in building and developing the community they are benefiting from. In the long run, it will benefit their businesses too.
10. We must be mindful of escalating land costs in land-scarce Singapore, which could impact our economic competitiveness.

Our Proposals

1. Government agencies should give local SMEs a fair chance at contracts, rather than choosing GLCs and MNCs because they are the "safe" option.
2. Instead of crowding out local business with their government-linked status and financial muscle, GLCs should instead invest in SMEs to propel their growth and development.
3. GLCs should, where practicable, be broken up into smaller entities and divest their non-core entities to the private sector. This will reduce the crowding out effect that large GLCs currently have on smaller local companies.

4. Singapore should leverage on its huge reserves and existing business networks that the GLCs and the Government of Singapore Investment Corporation (GIC) have built up over the years to strengthen the economic position of Singapore abroad.
5. High rentals and land costs negatively affect the costs of businesses. Effective measures to curb property and land speculation should be in place to maintain the cost competitiveness of businesses, especially SMEs.
6. The number of government scholarships with service bonds awarded each year should be reduced. Instead, these scholarships should bond their recipients to only work in Singapore for a number of years, which could include setting up their own local companies. This will better spread local talent to the private sector.
7. Our tertiary institutions should seek to send their students on exchange programmes to places renowned for entrepreneurship, so that our students are better exposed to an entrepreneurial culture.
8. The government should seek to attract more venture capital firms to Singapore so that they not only provide the funding to promising start ups, but the managerial expertise as well.
9. The annual reports of GIC should reflect its annual performance, instead of its current reporting of only its annualised rolling 20-year rate of return. This will increase transparency and accountability to Singaporeans, who are the ultimate stakeholders and beneficiaries of the investments. This is in line with the practice of well-managed sovereign wealth funds like the Norwegian Pension Fund.

4

SOCIETY**Preamble**

Every citizen has a right to a decent standard of living, work and a life of choices and opportunities without discrimination. The government has the responsibility to look after its citizens and should not just play a “charity role” when tackling the needs of the people and building a community.

The government’s minimalist approach to social welfare, in particular its rigid emphasis on family as the first line of defence, has caused much stress to poor and sandwiched Singaporeans.

There is disconnect in Singaporeans’ sense of place and identity. While urbanization and re-settlement from kampongs was inevitable, the deliberate government policy of splitting communities to different housing estates resulted in a weakening of community bonds and the spirit of self-reliance and mutual assistance, preciously built up over decades. Today, even after 45 years of nation-building, many young Singaporeans have little idea of living in a community.

The income gap in Singapore has also been rising steadily. The Gini coefficient, which measures income inequality, rose from 0.44 in 2000 to 0.48 in 2009. Even after taking into account government transfers, the rise was from 0.43 to 0.45.

Protecting our children is also key to the security of our future. Although current legislation provides some protection against sexual predators, they are primarily deterrent measures. Preventive measures need to be implemented to reduce the risk of children being neglected or abused physically, emotionally and psychologically.

Our Beliefs

1. WP is for a caring society and believes that social justice must be intrinsic to the concept of government. It also recognizes that Singapore is a multicultural society and everyone should be treated equally.
2. The society, as a whole, must direct resources to support the underprivileged.
3. The government has the obligation to protect and provide for vulnerable groups of people, especially the poor.

4. The government must provide needs-based social welfare to ensure that no one who needs help is left stranded. Social workers should be given discretion to assess each case on its merits. Although it may mean that more resources and effort will be needed to examine some cases, no citizen in need should be deprived of assistance.
5. People with disabilities have the right to live a dignified and fulfilling life and be integrated with the rest of the community.
6. The problems of the aged, especially the chronically ill, do not only refer to those who are destitute but also those whose families are unable to care for them for genuine reasons. Affordable healthcare and support facilities for them are essential. Voluntary welfare organisations are playing important roles here and more support from the government is necessary.
7. Besides physical health, the mental health of the elderly is equally important. Many retirees are still able to contribute to society and should be encouraged and given the opportunities to do so.
8. Single parents must not be left out of available assistance schemes.
9. The development of a strong and vibrant community will strengthen our social fabric, foster social cohesion and in the process build a national identity. We need to encourage individuals within the community to serve the neighbourhood to foster the organic growth of a natural community leadership.
10. Multiculturalism should be actively promoted and should form a corner stone of our social policies.
11. All children have the right to grow up with dignity in a safe environment free from the risk of abuse. Deterrence alone is no guarantee to ensuring the safety of our children. The environment must inherently reduce the risk of abuse and thus, safeguard the well-being of children.

Our Proposals

A. People with Disabilities:

1. The government should ratify the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and take a whole-of-government approach to ensure that its key provisions are implemented in Singapore.
2. More resources should be developed to cater to the education needs of people with disabilities, including lifelong learning for adults. This includes more resources to adequately equip them with necessary life-skills. The Ministry of Education should take the lead in providing special education.

3. Better infrastructure must be put in place for the public transport needs of people with disabilities. Barrier-free access should continuously be reviewed for improvement.
4. Early intervention programmes for children with disabilities should be better resourced to reduce waiting time.
5. More incentives should be given to employers to encourage them to employ those capable of work. Public education is also necessary to eradicate any misconceptions and prejudice against them and their ability to contribute to society. The government, as the largest employer, should lead by example.

B. Elderly and Family:

1. We need to provide more avenues to train the “younger elderly” to provide care and organise social events for the aged within their neighbourhoods. This could be done through clan associations, community-based entities or voluntary welfare organisations with support from the government.
2. There should be sufficient choices for the elderly to live within the community rather than being confined to an institution. A care centre can be built in each precinct for those elderly whose family members are unable to look after them. The centre can be jointly maintained by those using it and volunteers from the neighbourhood.
3. We should extend the current policy of encouraging children living near parents to living near siblings and close relatives.

C. Children

1. The government should conduct studies to determine which child-safe policies have been most effective at combating sexual grooming and other similar offences in other countries. A roadmap should be developed for the implementation of child-safe policies on a stage-by-stage basis.
2. We should look at setting up a Child Safety Council. Having a coordinated approach for protecting our children allows for better allocation of resources. It will provide focus on implementing child safety policies across the board. Child Safety Officers should be appointed to ensure compliance with child-safety policies in the country

D. Community:

1. The system of Resident Committees (RCs) and the Citizens Consultative Committee (CCC) should be abolished. Government grassroots serving as eyes and ears of the government cripple the growth of natural community leadership

and hinder the development of community living. The attempts by RCs in some areas to segregate the neighbourhood by zones further hinder the population from developing a true sense of community identity.

2. The Group Representation Constituency (GRC) system, which leads to the artificial aggregation of estates, should be abolished. We should revert to single constituencies based on geographical areas to promote community identity.
3. Rules and controls on individuals organising events for the community should be relaxed.
4. Community Clubs (CCs) should be run for the purpose of providing amenities and services, disseminating information and gathering feedback for the government on policy and community issues. They must be non-partisan; the chairman and members of the management committee should be elected by the community through a localised election.
5. The policy of upgrading older estates and building new flats in mature estates to minimise the movement of population should be continued.

E. Social Cohesion:

1. We should declare a Social Cohesion Public Holiday to mark the successful integration of Singapore as a multi-racial and multi-religious society and to remind ourselves of the need to continue the social cohesion process and not to take religious and racial harmony for granted. The integration of citizens and permanent residents should also be promoted.
2. We should increase the number of Community Mediation Centres (CMCs) and promote it as “the” place to settle community disputes if individual efforts fail. In line with its work to help “Build Bridges to Reconciliation”, the Centres should also promote and educate the public on the harmony of community living.

F. Others:

1. All discriminatory policies against single parents should be removed. In particular, the denial of Housing and Development Board subsidies to single parents has created much hardship and ends up punishing innocent children.
2. There should be a Board of Equal Opportunities to ensure that there is no discrimination on account of ethnic origin, religious belief, gender, socio-economic class or age.

POPULATION AND IMMIGRATION

Preamble

The population policies of the PAP government over the past 40 years have been erratic. Singaporeans have experienced the strong population control policies of the 1970s and the discriminatory eugenic policies of the 1980s. The government’s use of penalties and disincentives to discourage childbirth to achieve its desired population size alienated many Singaporeans. Now it has put in place costly incentives to encourage Singaporeans to have more children. It is apparent that the government lacks a consistent direction and objective in its population policies.

Strong population controls were put in place in the 1970s, including the liberalisation of abortion laws, sterilisation programmes and low priority admission to primary schools for the fourth child and beyond. These caused the birth rate to plummet to replacement level by as early as 1975. Yet, it was not until the mid-1980s that the government made an about turn in its anti-natalist programmes. This has contributed to our current low birth rate, labour shortage and ageing population problem.

Singapore’s Total Fertility Rate as at 2010 is 1.16, one of the lowest in the world. Our nation faces a real threat of a declining population in the coming decades, which could lead to slower economic growth and an increasingly ageing population.

Singapore’s population has grown from 4.03 million in 2000 to over 5.08 million in 2010 - a 26% increase over just 10 years, mainly due to the PAP government’s extremely liberal immigration and foreign worker policies. This was effected without consultation with Singaporeans or any clear public communication about the population goals and strategic objectives. This huge influx of new arrivals has contributed to overcrowding on our public transport system and hospitals. There is now a shortage of public housing and flat prices have gone beyond what many homebuyers consider affordable. The current population growth trajectory is unsustainable and requires an urgent re-evaluation before the strain becomes too much for Singaporeans to bear.

The PAP government’s immigration policies appear to be focused mainly on meeting the manpower demands of businesses, and ostensibly to grow our population in the

face of declining local birth rates. However, increasing the population by granting citizenship and permanent residence status to working-age foreigners may make our ageing problem even worse in the future. This is because these immigrants will eventually grow old and retire, and this could increase the dependency ratio if their fertility rates are also below replacement level. Data from the Singapore Census 2010 already shows that birth rates among foreign-born women are on the downward trend.

Our Beliefs

Immigration

1. WP is not an anti-immigrant party. We welcome immigrants who contribute to the economic vibrancy, diversity and future population growth of our nation. However, we believe that the rate of immigration should not exceed the capacity of the country's infrastructure and the comfort level of the local population.
2. The most important objective for our immigration policies should be to improve the well-being of individual Singaporeans and their families.
3. The criteria for qualifying for citizenship and permanent residency should be made transparent and open to public scrutiny.

Procreation

1. Lowering workplace and career impediments to childbearing and childrearing are critical if we hope to increase Singapore's total fertility rate.
2. Material incentives alone are not enough to encourage Singaporeans to have more children. A sense of nationhood and belonging, a vision and hope of a better future, and a less stressful schooling and working environment are essential elements in encouraging procreation. This might also stem the flow of Singaporeans emigrating.
3. Single parents should not be left out or disadvantaged by ostensibly pro-family policies.
4. There is a need to look into new and less conventional ways of increasing Singapore's total fertility rate, without compromising on the social values that Singaporeans hold dear.
5. There are over 12,000 abortions carried out each year in Singapore, with the majority performed on married women. There is a need to look into ways to encourage parents to keep their babies.

Overseas Singaporeans

1. There are currently over 180,000 Singaporeans living, studying or working abroad. We need to find more tangible and meaningful ways to engage overseas Singaporeans, in order to help them maintain their links to Singapore and continue to contribute to our nation, either while overseas or when they return to Singapore.

Our Proposals

A. Immigration

1. The overall rate of population increase should be moderated to allow for the nation's infrastructure improvements to catch up with the huge population increase of the past decade.
2. A points-based system should be developed to assess individuals applying for citizenship and permanent residency, while retaining the government's discretion to make the final decision. The criteria for the points system should be made public. This will provide more transparency and reduce unhealthy bureaucratic discretion in deciding on such applications. Best practices in developed countries should be studied. The criteria for the points system should include the following:
 - Educational Qualifications
 - Language Proficiency (including English)
 - Work Experience
 - Job Offer in Singapore for an occupation in the Qualifying Occupations List (which should be developed in consultation with industry groups to identify occupations that face a shortage of workers)
 - Family relationships with Singaporeans
 - Qualifications of spouse
 - Period of stay in Singapore
 - Entrepreneur or investor points
 - Commitment to National Service
3. In assessing citizenship and permanent residency applications, priority should be given to applications by family units as compared with individuals or couples. This will encourage applicants to sink roots here, commit their male children to National Service, and facilitate better integration.

4. All foreign spouses of Singaporeans should be issued with residential visas and be allowed to work locally. Priority should be given to their PR applications and eventually their citizenship applications. This will ensure the unity of the family and possibly encourage the couples to have more children who grow up in Singapore.
5. The Department of Statistics should be more transparent and publish the annual numbers of new citizens and PRs with their country of origin. The number of Singaporeans giving up their citizenship annually should also be published.

B. Procreation

1. More time should be set aside in the school curriculum to impart to students the joys and responsibilities of family, marriage and parenthood, so as to better prepare them to take on these responsibilities in the future.
2. There should be increased support and strong incentives for employers to implement better work-life balance practices and flexi-work arrangements. The civil service should set the example for the private sector to follow.
3. To recognise the important role of fathers in sharing the responsibilities of infant care, paternity leave of at least 6 days, half of which will be funded by the government, should be introduced and legislated.
4. There should be more affordable, conveniently-located and quality infant care and childcare facilities made available in Singapore.
5. Stay-at-home mothers should receive the same infant care and childcare subsidies as working mothers. They have chosen a noble profession that is no less important than any other salaried job, and have often put their careers on hold to nurture the next generation.
6. While having children outside of marriage should continue to be discouraged in our society, children born to single parents should not be denied the benefits that children of married parents receive. The children are innocent parties and should not start life being disadvantaged. Single parents should receive the same parenthood benefits packages as married parents.
7. Adoption of children should be actively promoted.
8. Assisted conception procedures such as in-vitro fertilisation (IVF) should be partially subsidised by the Government for up to the first three treatment cycles. This will help Singaporean couples who want to have children but have difficulty conceiving. More research on improving the success rate and

lowering the cost of assisted conception procedures should be initiated and encouraged by the Government. More public funds should be made available for such research.

C. Overseas Singaporeans

1. All overseas Singaporeans should be allowed to vote in General Elections and Presidential Elections by postal votes, as is done in many other advanced democracies. This will save them the effort of travelling to the designated Singapore overseas missions, which could be thousands of kilometres away from where they reside, or even in another country. Facilitating their involvement in the electoral process will help them to remain more engaged and feel a greater stake in Singapore, even while they are abroad.

6

EDUCATION

Preamble

Developing our people to the best of their abilities and talents is of utmost importance in our nation building. Creative and inclusive approaches should be adopted to bring the best out of our students.

The current education system has spawned a stressful culture highly dependent on private tuition to deliver the results. Even self-help groups are spending an inordinate amount of their public funds on tuition for needy students.

In the past four decades, some ill-conceived streaming policies have stigmatised many young children as slow learners and underachievers. The obsession with testing, benchmarking and grouping young talents in our education system has caused unnecessary anxiety and bred pockets of elitism in our schools and society.

Flexibility and autonomy given to schools in the pursuit of a broad-based, holistic education must not affect the fundamental duty of teachers which is to teach.

WP is pleased to note that the government has set up the Academy of Singapore Teachers to look after the professionalism and well-being of teachers. We are also pleased that the government is leaning towards a flexible and diverse approach to educating our children. Such initiatives were proposed in our 2006 Manifesto.

One of the key findings of the Enabling Masterplan (2007-2011), targeted at helping special needs Singaporeans ‘to reach their full potential and be included as part of Singapore’, was that Special Education (SPED) should be viewed as education and the Ministry of Education (MOE) should take the lead in this sector. To date, there is still no clear leadership from MOE to better coordinate SPED among Volunteer Welfare Organisations (VWOs) and National Council of Social Services (NCSS).

Our Beliefs

1. The formative years of our young children should be better spent on cultivating their love for learning and exploring rather than on grooming them for high-stakes examinations.

2. Apart from having a carefully planned curriculum, the well-being of teachers is an essential catalyst to a successful education system. WP believes an environment conducive for learning begins with an inspired teacher in a small class size setting.
3. Teaching content should be reduced so that teachers can move beyond textbooks and share with students life skills in areas such as current affairs, inter-personal communication, enterprising initiatives and creative development in the arts, music and culture.
4. Schools should promote moral values and social responsibility.
5. Cross training and learning should be encouraged and we should not narrowly define the fields of learning for our students.
6. To effectively cope with globalisation, we should put emphasis on multi-lingualism.
7. Every student should be required to learn his mother tongue and to attain as high a standard of proficiency as possible.
8. Learning of Bahasa Melayu, which is our national language, should be encouraged.
9. Public funding for local tertiary education must be seen as an investment in human capital development. Tertiary education will benefit not only the individual student but Singapore as a whole.
10. Every child matters. Special needs children are no different. MOE should assume greater social responsibility in SPED and be seen as driving the educational goals of all children.

Our Proposals

A. *Reducing Stress and More Focused Resources:*

1. A small class size will reduce the workload of a teacher, which in turn, will facilitate more interaction between teacher and students. It will allow a teacher to focus more attention on weaker students and get to know their strengths and weaknesses better. We should target to reduce the class size for all levels of primary and secondary schools to approximately 20 pupils.
2. Taking the Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE) is a stressful experience for children and parents alike. At a tender age of 12, a young pupil has to face the most important examination of his pre-adolescence life - an examination that may affect his entire future. We should study the feasibility of a primary-secondary integrated programme.

3. Additional funding and support should be given to neighbourhood schools, as independent schools already have their own strong community support and well-established alumni network and are better able to garner sufficient resources.
4. More administrative staff should be hired to assist teachers in managing non-academic duties like co-curricular activities, projects, etc. This will allow teachers to spend more time on what they do best – teach.

B. Tertiary Education:

1. The tuition grant for local undergraduates should be increased to better reflect the value of our citizenship and make tertiary education more affordable. Currently, the tuition grant for all undergraduates is the same regardless of nationality.
2. The co-payment portion of the university tuition fee by citizens should be capped at 10 per cent of operating expenditure of local universities.
3. The intellectual climate of all tertiary institutions in Singapore should be kept free whereby lecturers and students are able to explore the full limits of academia.
4. Local tertiary institutions should ensure that there is a sizeable community of local students and staff.
5. Local academic staff in our tertiary institutions should be paid equitable salaries to non-resident colleagues of equivalent standing and expertise.
6. Any tuition fee increases for tertiary institutions should be subject to scrutiny by an independent watchdog that will ensure that increases are minimal and justifiable. It is imprudent to fix a quantum for permitted tuition fee increases per year.
7. The Government should fund the infrastructure costs of local tertiary institutions.

C. Special Needs Education:

1. While WP recognises the complexity of SPED, MOE should bring SPED schools (including early intervention programmes) under its direct funding and total administration. VWOs should then be invited to work closely with MOE to support these fully funded SPED schools.
2. Any additional funds raised by VWOs should be used to enrich the programmes for special needs children.

3. The SPED school fee should not be means tested. Parents of special needs children are already saddled with higher maintenance costs. They should not be penalised further with a means-tested school fee.
4. SPED teachers and Allied Educators should be given more certainty in their career development. SPED teachers should come under the direct employment of MOE.

D. Others:

1. The curriculum content of the National Education should be reviewed to incorporate the teaching of our Constitution, the political system of Parliamentary Democracy, the rights and obligations of being a citizen and the meaning and spirit of our national symbols such as the national flag and national pledge.
2. The Community Involvement Programme in secondary schools should be reviewed to empower students to explore diverse ways to serve the community and appreciate the underlying rationale.

7

HEALTHCARE**Preamble**

“We can die but cannot afford to be sick.” This common refrain from the people is certainly no laughing matter. Health care is an essential service and no one should be deprived of health care for any reason.

While the World Health Organization ranks Singapore 6th in overall performance of the healthcare system, it is placed 101st for fairness in financial contribution. There is a risk that some Singaporean families face catastrophic payments for healthcare. Some families have even been advised to sell their flats to pay medical bills.

Current government expenditure on healthcare is about 1% of GDP, which accounts for only about 25% of total health expenditures. This is far lower than the OECD average of about 75% (Miles et al, 2003). While the government may be proud of this achievement, questions of fairness and sustainability arise.

The government health budget must increase over time due to the following factors:

- (a) Relative longevity;
- (b) Ageing population;
- (c) Weaker disposable earnings;
- (d) Emergence of more virulent and hardier strains of viruses and bacteria;
- (e) More sedate lifestyle;
- (f) Medical inflation.

Around 2005, the government indicated its intention to introduce means-testing for subsidies at C class hospital wards. WP campaigned against this move in the 2006 General Election, which resulted in the PAP Health Minister announcing in mid-campaign that the government might not implement it if it was not cost-effective to do so. However, during Budget 2008, the government announced that it was going ahead with the move, commencing Jan 2009. Patients admitted to B2 and C class wards in public hospitals now get different levels of subsidy depending on their income or home values. By doing this, an important bedrock of social protection has been removed.

There have been significant hospital bed shortages since 2006, showing the lack of planning between health services and the deliberate foreign population surge.

The cost of step-down care in Singapore is too high for the average family. Some Singaporeans are now leaving their sick elderly family members in long-term care institutions in neighbouring countries for cost reasons.

While WP recognizes the need for prudence in public health care expenditure, we should be mindful that if we continue to tighten the Health Budget, it would inevitably result in “cutting corners” and a deterioration of basic standards of medical services. By correspondingly placing higher payment burdens on patients, there is the danger that Singaporeans will ration their consumption of necessary medical treatment and services, worsening their health problems. For instance, WP notes the high incidence of leg amputations due to the under-treatment of diabetes.

The government has attempted to limit its obligations towards healthcare by emphasising self-reliance and family support. This poses difficulties for sickly persons from the working and sandwiched classes, especially those with few or no children.

The 3 Ms of Medisave, Medishield and Medifund, while touted as the pillars of Singapore’s healthcare financing system, account for only a small part of healthcare expenditure.

As financing tools, Medisave and Medishield have significant limitations. For a start, some of those who need healthcare most, such as elderly women who have never formally worked, are not covered.

Medisave, which relies on individual savings, will not be able to keep up with medical inflation.

MediShield covers catastrophic illnesses, now up to 80% of hospital bills. However, the coverage is unsatisfactory. There is a high deductible and various excluded conditions. There are also monetary limits on specific items, with annual limits of \$50,000 and a lifetime limit of \$200,000. Patients over 85 years old and children born with congenital conditions are excluded from coverage. The premiums increase significantly with age and add to the healthcare burden of the elderly.

Our Beliefs

1. It is the fundamental duty of the government to ensure that our citizens have access to the best possible healthcare the nation can afford. All citizens should be provided with quality basic healthcare services, regardless of their income.

2. The core goals of any healthcare system are to provide patient care and promote public health. Availability and affordability are central to a good healthcare system.
3. We need to develop a proper healthcare financing model and an effective system of checks to prevent runaway costs.
4. In checking costs, we should take care not to undermine the quality of our healthcare services.
5. It would be more cost effective to pool the risks of the population in meeting healthcare needs.
6. The government should promote healthy living through proper nutrition and wellness, so as to enhance the quality of life, encourage active ageing and prevent health conditions.
7. As our population ages, early detection of chronic conditions and the affordability of long-term care are critical.
8. A comprehensive approach to mental health issues should be undertaken.

Our Proposals

A. *Acute and Primary Care:*

1. To cover acute hospital bills, there should be a compulsory Basic Hospitalisation Insurance Scheme with co-payment of the premium from the government. Lessons can be drawn from other countries with experience in such schemes. In essence, the scheme should aim to achieve the following:
 - a) There should be universal coverage for all basic hospital health care, based on the costs of the class B2 ward of government re-structured hospitals.
 - b) The premium should be the same regardless of age. Once a person reaches 75 years, he will pay a special one-time premium to cover the rest of his life.
 - c) There will be no maximum coverage age.
 - d) There should be a maximum life-time payout, but no annual claim limit.
 - e) The premium should be kept affordable to the 90th percentile of the working population based on Medisave contributions. The government should pay (e.g. through Medifund) the premiums of those who have insufficient Medisave savings, subject to a means assessment.

- f) Deductibles and co-insurance requirements should be worked out subject to an absolute cap. These amounts would be fixed and not vary with the age of the patient. This is to discourage over-consumption, but not deter necessary consumption. One factor will be affordability to 90% of the working population. In any case, these limits should not be stricter than the current Medishield requirements.
- g) Patients who opt for a better class of ward will pay the difference between the insurance payout and the charges of the class of ward opted for.
- h) Singaporeans who wish to have insurance cover for higher classes of wards and for better terms of coverage may do so, on top of the basic hospitalisation insurance scheme at their own cost.

2. Subsidies to government hospitals for hospitalisation treatment can be removed after full implementation of the above basic hospitalisation insurance scheme to allow private hospitals to compete based on pricing benchmarks.
3. Patients should not be required to be referred by polyclinics in order to receive subsidised rates at specialist clinics at public hospitals.
4. Medisave withdrawals for outpatient medical treatment should be further facilitated (e.g. for specialist and major outpatient services), subject to a cap on usage. Patients above 75 years old should be allowed to use Medisave for medical treatment without restriction.
5. We should maintain Medifund as a safety net for health care. The amount placed in Medifund and the criteria for assistance should be reviewed on the side of generosity.

B. *Containing Healthcare Costs:*

1. A National Basic Health Care Council could be set up to decide what should be included in the Health Care package covered by the Basic Hospitalisation Insurance Scheme.
2. We need to study how advancements in medical technology can reduce rather than increase healthcare costs.
3. Information technology could be used to reduce administrative and manpower costs in healthcare.
4. Outsourcing of some areas of healthcare delivery could reduce costs.
5. All hospitals should provide detailed costing of each medical treatment and make such information public.

6. A National Medical Standards Board should be set up to ensure quality of health care services, treatment and delivery.
7. HIV/AIDS medication and treatment should be covered under the Basic Health Care package.
8. The government should ensure that basic health care at primary healthcare level, such as polyclinics, and step-down institutional care, is affordable.
9. A National Central Pharmacy should be set up to monitor and manage the supply and inventory of drugs of the pharmacies and medical community of Singapore. It should negotiate bulk rates with drug manufacturers for the benefit of patients and ensure the availability of ample supply of drugs in a national emergency.
10. The List of Standard (or Subsidised) Drugs should be published. The decision-making process leading to the inclusion or exclusion of specific drugs should be transparent.

C. *Step Down / Long Term Care:*

1. Though the Long Term Care sector services are provided largely by Voluntary Welfare Organisations (VWOs) and commercial enterprises, the government must play its role to monitor them and provide support and intervention, where necessary, to ensure that long term care services are available, of good quality, and affordable.
2. Sufficient institutional care facilities such as convalescent homes, community hospitals, rehabilitation centres, and hospices should be provided to cater to the different needs of patients.
3. Step-down care within the community and at the home of the patient should be encouraged. The government should support facilities and private providers of medical care and equipment.
4. Subsidies for each patient should be based on a means test, and Medifund will fund those who cannot afford to pay. Medisave withdrawals should also be allowed for such purposes, subject to a set of guidelines to prevent abuse.
5. The means test used for deciding subsidies for long term care should take into account the net disposable income of families after deduction of the typical bill for long-term care. In view of medical inflation, the means test should build in a formula for annual review.
6. For coverage and sustainability, risk pooling to finance Long Term Care will need to be studied seriously. The Eldersshield scheme is a start, but the viability of a broader-based insurance scheme with higher coverage should be pursued.

PUBLIC HOUSING

Preamble

The PAP government has admitted that the surge of immigrants in 2007 and 2008 caught them by surprise and it did not provide for this in its housing plans.

The rapid increases in the cost of public housing in the past 10 years have far exceeded inflation and wage growth. This has placed a heavy strain on many Singaporeans who are in need of housing. This could lead to some couples deferring childbearing, which could have a knock on effect on our already low birth rates.

The PAP government continues to insist that HDB flats are “affordable” because the majority of lessees use less than 30% of their income to pay their mortgage. However, this argument is flawed as it does not take into account the length of the loan. Most Singaporeans now spend practically their entire working lives paying off their 30-year housing loans. This high investment in property leaves less disposable income for consumption.

Our Beliefs

1. The goal of public housing schemes should be to make housing affordable to all Singaporeans, including lower income groups.
2. Singaporeans should not be spending their entire working lives paying off their HDB flat loans.
3. HDB flats should be seen as primarily a home for Singaporeans to live in. They should not be used for property speculation.
4. Housing planning should be a key component of population planning. Steps must be taken to ensure that there is sufficient housing to accommodate any changes in population.

Our Proposals

1. The prices of new HDB flats should not be pegged to the resale market price and then discounted to take into account overall median salaries, as is the current practice. This formula fuels inflation as resale prices climb. Instead, the prices of new flats should be pegged to median incomes of Singaporean

households who qualify to buy HDB flats. This will ensure that new flats are always affordable for the majority of Singaporeans.

2. The price of new HDB flats should be affordable enough to enable most lessees to pay off their loans in 20 years rather than 30 years.
3. In order to reduce the demand on resale HDB flats during times of a housing crunch, permanent residents (PRs) should only be allowed to buy resale flats if they have been PRs for at least 3 years.
4. HDB should be fully transparent about the breakdowns of development costs of new flats.
5. HDB policies should be continually adjusted to ensure that flat lessees do not use their flats for speculative purposes.
6. The relevant ministries and agencies should coordinate in their planning to ensure that the supply of housing is adjusted according to anticipated changes in population.
7. Many Singaporeans who sell their flats and cannot afford to buy another flat are left stranded for long periods of time because of strict HDB rules on rental housing. The criteria to qualify for public rental housing should be more flexible to cater to families who are financially straitened. The number of flats available under the Public Rental Scheme should be increased significantly to cope with increasing demand.
8. As our society has now attained a level of multi-racial integration, the ethnic quotas governing home ownership of HDB flats should be removed to allow all Singaporeans freedom of choice of home locations, regardless of race. The ethnic quota system also contradicts the policy of encouraging young families to live close to their parents, and can prevent young Malay and Indian families from buying homes close to their parents'.
9. The HDB's Lease Buyback Scheme has seen a very low take-up rate since its inception. The eligibility criteria for the Scheme should be reviewed to extend it to more households who may be in financial need. It should be extended to lessees of 4-room or larger flats so that more elderly will benefit from the scheme. In addition, HDB should provide better public education on this complex scheme so that there will be a higher take up rate among the elderly.
10. A Housing Tribunal could be set up to handle disputes between the HDB and flat lessees, and disputes between lessees. Currently, lessees and HDB would have to settle their disputes through the court, which is a tedious process. In cases where the HDB or Town Council fails to settle disputes between lessees, the lessees can bring the matter before the tribunal for adjudication.

TRANSPORT

Preamble

Most Singaporeans depend on public transport for their daily transportation needs. Because of this, an affordable, reliable and convenient public transport system is critical for Singapore's economic and social development. Increasing ridership on public transport will also help to reduce the demand for private cars and all their attendant problems like air pollution and road congestion.

While the Land Transport Master Plan 2008 indicates that the Land Transport Authority (LTA) will take on the role of being a central bus network planner, the government's role must go further than this.

The PAP government's policy of outsourcing public transport to the Public Transport Operators (PTOs) SBS Transit and SMRT, which are profit driven, results in conflicts against public interest. Given that public transport is a basic necessity of modern life, serving the public interest should be paramount.

The percentage share of peak hour morning travel on public transport fell from 63% (in 2004) to 59% (in 2008). The government has admitted that the fall is due to the lack of major infrastructural improvements to the public transport system between 2004 and 2008, while the human population and vehicle numbers were allowed to grow.

The justification of having two PTOs so as to enable the public to reap benefits from competition has proven to be hollow. Most commuters have no choice between operators, due to the carving up of rail and bus routes between the two operators. Maintaining two PTOs also means the inefficiency of maintaining two managements and administrative support teams.

The government has failed to ensure that the capacity of Singapore's public transport infrastructure has kept pace with the sharp population increase in the past decade. This has resulted in overcrowding of our commuter trains and buses, particularly in the last 5 years. Commuters often have to endure extremely crowded MRT trains, buses and MRT station platforms, to get to and from work. Often, even after the rush hour, trains and buses are still very crowded. MRT stations like Jurong East Interchange regularly experience crowds so huge that the platforms are unable to accommodate them.

Singaporeans have been the victims of poor co-ordination of town planning and transport infrastructure. While the towns of Sengkang and Punggol were developed, the building of the Kallang - Paya Lebar Expressway lagged behind, resulting in motorists losing precious hours and forking out high Electronic Road Pricing (ERP) payments day and night on the congested Central Expressway.

Taxi fares have also seen several increases over the past 5 years. Since 1998, the Government has stopped regulating taxi fares, purportedly to increase greater competition in the market. However, ComfortDelGro is still the overwhelmingly dominant player in the market.

Our Beliefs

1. The most 'liveable' cities in the world commonly have strong public transport systems provided by public agencies. Transport policy is a cornerstone which will directly affect the quality of life of Singaporeans and others who choose to live, stay or visit. As such, the government must play a leading role in policy formulation and implementation, as well as in the provision of public transport.
2. Given the density of population in land-scarce Singapore, it is critical to have excellent public transport infrastructure, with auto (car) disincentives.
3. Town / urban development and transport infrastructure planning should be integrated and co-ordinated.
4. Public transport should be provided as a public good and not for profit.
5. The transport system must be efficient and run cost-effectively.
6. To have direct public accountability, the government rather than an independent body such as the Public Transport Council should regulate public transportation including deciding licence conditions, fare revisions and service standards.
7. Transport costs must be kept affordable for all Singaporeans, especially the low income earners, who spend a large proportion of their income on transport.
8. Cycling as an alternative transportation mode should be promoted if road conditions can be made safer for cyclists.
9. Taxis provide an important supplement to public transport for residents who do not own cars. Low-income earners occasionally need to take taxis when riding on public transport is not an option---for example, ferrying a sick relative to hospital, travelling to a remote location or for the disabled to travel to areas not covered by wheelchair accessible buses. It is therefore important that taxi fares are also kept affordable.

Our Proposals

A. *Buses and Trains:*

1. The Public Transport Council should be dissolved. All public transport including the MRT and public buses servicing major trunk/inter-town routes should be brought under a National Transport Corporation which will oversee and provide universal transport service to all. This will ensure a smooth integration of the overall national transport network to avoid unnecessary duplication of services and cost of overheads incurred by multiple operators.
2. The National Transport Corporation should not be profit-oriented and should aim to provide public transportation service on the basis of cost and depreciation recovery.
3. The National Transport Corporation should be allowed to operate shops and outlets within the property under its control to cross-subsidise its operation.
4. The National Transport Corporation should concentrate on providing trunk services.
5. The government should build the infrastructure and pay for the initial operational equipment of public transport service as a social investment. The National Transport Corporation is to ensure its proper routine and cyclical maintenance as well as timely replacement, the costs of which should be borne by the Corporation.
6. The train network should be comprehensive to cover all the main population centres.
7. Intra-town feeder bus services should be de-regulated to allow individual private operators to operate mini-bus services, as is the case in Hong Kong. The high mobility and relatively low overheads of the private operators would give them the flexibility to effectively meet the requirements of the local residents, according to market demand.
8. Service levels should be benchmarked with other relevant service industries and monitored regularly by the relevant regulatory authority.
9. A unit should be set up under the Land Transport Authority to:
 - a. Receive feedback and complaints regarding public transport services;
 - b. Audit the standard of services;
 - c. Regularly review productivity of the National Transport Corporation;
 - d. Examine the need to adjust fares.
10. Public buses should be exempted from unnecessary or additional taxes such as ERP, so as to contain transport costs.

11. The frequency of buses and trains should be increased during both peak and off-peak hours so as to reduce overcrowding in trains and buses. Currently, the frequency of trains and buses during “peak hour timings” are only for a narrow 45 to 90 minute window. The duration for increased frequency of trains and buses during peak hours should be increased to at least 2.5 to 3 hours, to take into account the realities of morning and evening peak travel. This would also bring it in line with the periods during which taxis have peak hour surcharges.
12. Wheelchair accessible buses (WAB) should be made available on all trunk and feeder bus routes. This should be done much earlier than the currently targeted date of 2023. The cost of purchasing WAB should be borne primarily by the government. Besides enabling the disabled to work and integrate into society, WABs also benefit the elderly and parents with infants in prams. The government should take up the responsibility and bear the cost of modifying all bus stops to make them wheelchair accessible.
13. All public buses should be converted to use clean fuel, like compressed natural gas (CNG). This is already being done in many major cities, even those in developing countries, like New Delhi, India.
14. Concession passes on public transport for the elderly should be extended to all operating hours. There should be more generous concessions given to senior citizens, and these should be funded by the government, not by public transport operators.
15. To make public transport affordable to the disabled, the government should fund disabled transport concessions, in line with the best practices in other developed countries.

B. Taxis

1. Taxi fares should be regulated by the government.
2. Some private ownership of taxis should be re-introduced.
3. ERP for taxis should be abolished to keep fares affordable and to encourage taxis to ply into ERP zones.

C Private Vehicles

1. COEs for motorcycles requiring Class 2B licences should be abolished, as these are lower capacity motorcycles usually used by lower income persons for work purposes.
2. Hybrid cars should be priced lower than petrol cars through reduction of the Additional Registration Fee (ARF).

LABOUR POLICY

Preamble

Singapore has one of the most competitive and skilled labour forces in the world. The progress of our economy and our nation has been built on the backs of our workers, to whom our nation owes a debt of gratitude.

The incomes of the bottom 20% of households have seen a decrease in the past decade, in contrast to a more than 50% increase for the top 20% of households. The wage gap between the top and bottom income earners has also widened from a decade ago. In 2009, the top 20% of households earned 12.7 times the income of the bottom 20%, which is one of the highest income gaps in the world.

The current situation of high and increasing cost of living paired with stagnant low wages is not just a by-product of globalisation which the government has no control over. The influx of foreign labour into our country has depressed the wages of many workers.

The Workers’ Party has, on numerous occasions, pressed the government to assist lower-income workers, either by helping them to cope with the increased cost of living, or to upgrade their skills and improve their employment opportunities. We have also stressed the need to have a strong social safety net in place for lower-income Singaporeans. We welcome the introduction of the Workfare Income Supplement (WIS) scheme.

Over 90% of trade unions in Singapore are affiliated with the National Trades Union Congress (NTUC), which has publicly proclaimed a “symbiotic relationship” with the PAP. This leaves workers without much bargaining power vis-à-vis the PAP government.

We are pleased to note that the definition of an “employee” under the Employment Act has been amended to allow certain employees in the managerial, executive positions to enjoy some protections under the Act. This was proposed in our 2006 Manifesto.

The employment outlook for older workers is a concern. The employment rate for workers aged 55 to 64 was only 59% as at 2010. In 2007, the government pushed

back the draw down age for Central Provident Fund account balances from 62 to 65, while the statutory retirement age remains at 62. Re-employment provisions introduced in January 2011 provide opportunities for re-employment of older workers by their employers after 62, but weak obligations on the part of employers to offer re-employment or reasonable terms for re-employment.

As the economy transforms and growth moderates, cyclical and structural unemployment will come about; people will face increasing risks of retrenchment. Looking for alternative employment takes time. There must be some level of support for the unemployed to continue to live a decent and dignified life.

Our Beliefs

1. WP strongly advocates uplifting the wages and welfare of lower-income Singaporeans.
2. Wages must keep pace with the increasing cost of living. Every Singaporean who is employed should receive an income that is sufficient for a decent and dignified life.
3. WP recognises the contributions of foreigners to the economic vibrancy of our nation and the need for foreign expertise in certain fields. However, the reason for admitting foreigners into our country should be to enhance the quality of life of Singaporeans.
4. There must be sufficient opportunities for Singaporeans to earn a decent living and to advance their careers in their own country.
5. Employers should give priority to hiring Singaporeans. Foreign manpower should primarily be employed in positions Singaporeans are unable to fill.
6. Singapore should reduce its over-reliance on foreign workers through increased automation and productivity improvements of our local workforce.
7. The government and employers have a responsibility to ensure that foreign workers in Singapore enjoy decent and safe working and living conditions, including sufficient rest.
8. While we support continued government investment in worker training, funding should continue only for training programmes which deliver expected benefits to both employers and workers. Fulfilling training hour targets should not be an end in itself.
9. Trade unions should be independent and should be free to carry out their duty of protecting the rights of workers without political interference or obligations.

10. Employment legislation should protect the rights and ensure the welfare of all workers, including professionals, managers, executives and technicians (PMETs).
11. Older workers must be protected from exploitation and financial hardship upon turning after 62.

Our Proposals

A. Income

1. The Workfare Income Supplement (WIS) should be expanded to better narrow the income gap. There should not be a minimum 3-month work requirement to qualify for WIS. WIS should be paid out for every month that the worker remains employed, instead of the current half-yearly or yearly payouts. This will be more effective in helping them meet their monthly expenses.
2. The current policy requires informal workers to make Medisave contributions before qualifying for WIS payments which are credited entirely into their Medisave accounts. This policy should be revamped, as it discourages participation in the WIS scheme. Informal workers should receive their WIS payments without any preliminary Medisave contributions. A portion of their WIS payments should be in cash.
3. WIS payments should be increased so as to benchmark against the cost of living and an income sufficient for a decent and dignified life in Singapore. The major portion of WIS payments should be in cash.
4. The quantum of WIS payments for informal workers should be raised to match that of formally employed workers.
5. An unemployment insurance scheme should be introduced to help workers cope during the difficult period of unemployment and retraining while seeking a new job. The premiums can be covered by both the employer and employee contributing a percentage of the workers' monthly income. The insurance funds should be managed by third-party corporations. Employees will be eligible to make a claim if they are retrenched. The payout will be a proportion (e.g., 75%) of their last drawn salary. This would be reduced by 7.5% each month until the payout is zero.

B. Foreign workforce

1. The inflow of the foreign workforce at all skill levels should be calibrated for each industry, taking into account the suitability of Singaporeans for those industries, productivity targets and sustainability.

2. The dependency ratio or quota for foreign manpower should be further fine-tuned to the specific industry, rather than broad sectors such as manufacturing or services, to better ascertain and calibrate the need for foreign manpower vis-à-vis employment prospects for Singaporeans.
3. Analysis and tracking should be done to ascertain if there are occupations which Singaporeans will not take up at all (e.g. as live-in domestic helpers). For such occupations, the foreign worker levy should be reviewed with a view to removing it, which will reduce employers' costs.

C. Training

1. All government-funded training programmes should have an outcome-based training effectiveness measuring system in place. This will measure if the training programmes are delivering expected benefits for both companies and workers. Government funding should be adjusted according to the results of these measurements.
2. On-the-job training (OJT) is recognised as one of the most effective forms of training, especially for blue-collar workers. There should be greater government funding for companies to provide structured OJT programmes for their workers and new hires. This could include payroll subsidies and funding for OJT supervisor training. OJT subsidies could help companies overcome their resistance to hiring local workers who may lack the necessary experience and skills. In addition, workers do not need to miss work in order to attend training.

D. Trade Unions

1. Instead of just negotiating on retrenchment benefits, trade unions should be allowed to discuss with the management the rationale for retrenchments. This would enable unions to be involved and explore with the management if an alternative solution might be viable.
2. Government ministers and political party leaders should not be allowed to accept leadership positions in trade unions in order to preserve the political independence of these organisations.

E. Employment

1. Given today's increasingly volatile employment situation, the number of years of continuous service required to qualify for retrenchment benefits should be reduced from three to two years.

2. In the absence of an agreement on retrenchment benefits, the mandatory retrenchment benefit should be increased from one to two weeks of the basic salary. This will provide recourse to such employees in cases of unlawful dismissal or to claim arrears of salary through the Commissioner for Labour/ Ministry of Manpower. A salary ceiling should be fixed for this category of employees to be eligible for protection under the Act.
3. The provisions in the Employment Act allowing employers not to pay workers for overtime should be repealed.
4. The re-employment provisions under the Retirement and Re-employment Act need to be re-worked to provide stronger protections for older workers. Since the government has delayed the draw down age for Central Provident Fund withdrawals from 62 to 65 years, it should move the statutory retirement age to 65 or otherwise provide for seamless continuity of employment.

F. Equal Opportunities Legislation

1. In line with the spirit of Article 12 of the Constitution (Equal Protection), Equal Opportunities Legislation should be enacted to prohibit unjustified employment discrimination on the basis of age, race, religion, gender or disability.
2. The Board of Equal Opportunities should hear complaints from job applicants or employees who have been discriminated against.

11

CENTRAL PROVIDENT FUND

Preamble

The Central Provident Fund (CPF) scheme, initially designed to provide mainly for the social security needs of Singaporeans, has instead been subject to conflicting government objectives which weaken the nest egg for retirement. The CPF has been relied upon to support retirement, housing, medical and even education needs (loans for tertiary education). In its 2007 review of the CPF scheme, the Prime Minister has admitted that its scheme 'is flawed', and inadequate to cater for the retirement needs of Singaporeans.

Losing sight of CPF's main purpose, the government has used the CPF contribution rates as a tool to cut employers' costs during a downturn. During periods of economic growth, increases in CPF contribution rates are used to justify higher HDB flat prices and healthcare costs.

Singaporeans have committed significant portions of their CPF savings into housing purchases. While the rise in property values from the 1970s to date has been significant and given good returns overall in asset enhancement, the current high levels of property prices throw into doubt how much return younger Singaporeans will get by sinking much higher amounts into housing purchases today.

The floor rate of return on CPF monies, legislated at 2.5%, barely keeps up with inflation. While the rate for SMRA (Special, Medisave, Retirement Accounts) balances up to \$60,000 is now pegged to the yield of the 10-year Singapore Government Security plus 1%, there is uncertainty about how the rate will change over time.

CPF Life was introduced in 2007 as a compulsory national annuity scheme, to provide income to Singaporeans should they live beyond the period of draw-down on their CPF balances. Though the rationale is justifiable, the scheme is subject to solvency risks and its outcomes not guaranteed.

There is a lack of transparency in the way CPF monies are invested and what returns have been obtained by the government through the use of CPF monies.

Our Beliefs

1. CPF should not be used as a tool to manage business costs in the economic downturn.
2. CPF should be re-focused towards providing for retirement. This will include housing needs.
3. Since the government investment companies have leveraged on CPF monies to bring in consistently much higher returns than the CPF interest rate, the government should share some of these gains at periodic intervals with CPF members.
4. Senior citizens (aged 60 and above) are a diverse group, with varying financial resources, health conditions, and employment opportunities. Flexibility should be built into the CPF system to cater for CPF members to choose to commence their draw-down from age 60 and above. The draw-down age should not be linked to the statutory retirement age or re-employment age.
5. Since a major part (estimated at about 70%) of a member's CPF savings is sunk into housing, maximum flexibility should be given to senior citizens to monetise the value of their homes.
6. Given that many individuals will not be able to save enough for retirement, society has a responsibility to ensure that those with insufficient resources are provided for through the use of public funds.

Our Proposals

1. The total long-term CPF contribution rate should be 35% for employees age 55 and below. The employer and the employee should each contribute 17.5% to the Fund.
2. For employees aged above 55, a reduced CPF rate will increase their competitive advantage in the employment market.
3. There should be a more comprehensive scheme for CPF savings. The government should look at ways to pool the funds together to enable members to enjoy economies of scale when making investments. They can then avoid paying the hefty financial charges incurred should they invest on their own.
4. A comprehensive study should be done on the feasibility of a pension fund model to enhance returns on CPF monies.

5. For as long as the CPF Life scheme is in place, the government should underwrite its solvency to protect senior citizens.
6. Monies should be set aside by the government through transfers from budget surpluses into a Longevity Fund. Singaporeans aged 85 and above who are not covered by CPF Life or whose CPF Life payouts are below the prevailing Public Assistance allowance should be supplemented with a monthly Longevity Allowance drawn from the Fund to make up the difference.
7. Citizens who are in dire financial straits should be allowed to withdraw from their own Central Provident Fund accounts. To avoid abuse, withdrawals must fulfill strict guidelines.

DEFENCE AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Our Beliefs

1. WP recognises the need for a strong military defence force that will be able to present a credible deterrent to any potential aggressors.
2. We believe it is equally important to cultivate strong diplomatic relations with countries in the region and around the world, based on mutual respect and interests.
3. A strong military deterrent together with active diplomacy are needed to safeguard Singapore's national interests and sovereignty.
4. Every citizen has a responsibility to contribute to national defence and security.
5. While advanced technology provides a force multiplier to our defence capabilities, the morale and fighting spirit of our military personnel are essential if Singapore is to prevail in the event of a conflict.
6. It is important that our citizen-soldiers feel a sense of belonging to Singapore such that they will be motivated to defend our country.
7. We should seek greater cooperation with other countries to counter the scourge of terrorism, and adopt all precautionary measures to ensure the safety of Singapore against terrorist threats.
8. There must be transparency in the expenditure of national defence without compromising defence security.
9. We must maintain a balanced relationship between our strategic partners regionally and internationally.
10. We support Singapore Armed Forces' (SAF's) participation in internationally sanctioned peacekeeping and relief activities.

Our Proposals - Defence

1. Defence expenditure should be subject to the same degree of scrutiny as all other government expenditure, with the necessary safeguards to prevent disclosure of military secrets.

2. With the advent of information technology and more sophisticated military hardware, we could explore a framework of external defence wings that can respond effectively to the defence needs of Singapore.
3. National Service should not unnecessarily burden our young men during the prime years of their lives. The government should continually look into the possibility of reducing full-time National Service from the current 2 years.
4. All Singaporeans should be given equal opportunities for advancement in the SAF, subject to the necessary security and background checks.
5. Singapore's arms exports should be strictly restricted to only responsible members of the international community.

Our Proposals – Foreign Affairs

1. Singapore should seek to build deeper and more multifaceted relations with our Southeast Asian neighbours. This includes promoting more cultural exchanges not just at the government-to-government level, but at the semi-formal level (such as through Non-Governmental Organisations) and people-to-people level as well.
2. Young Singaporeans should be better educated about the culture and languages of countries in our region. This will lessen the occurrences of unnecessary misunderstandings and tension, and promote greater economic, security and cultural cooperation within our region.
3. Singapore should remain non-aligned so as not to be left beholden to only one global power.
4. We should actively support and participate in the initiatives of the United Nations which are in Singapore's national interest.
5. Singapore should not feel compelled to participate in non-internationally sanctioned activities beyond our shores.
6. Singapore should seek to build closer and more substantive relations with countries in the Middle East, Central Asia, Africa and South America. This could help expand our trade with these emerging economies, and also garner more support at international fora for Singapore when the need arises.
7. As more Singaporeans start living, studying and working overseas, Singapore should grow the ranks of Non-Resident Ambassadors and Honorary Consuls-General, so as to provide better consular and diplomatic representation for our citizens abroad.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Preamble

The scarcity of land and resources in Singapore makes sustainability a top priority. While economic development is important, it should not overshadow the importance of environmental sustainability. A sustainable environment is essential to economic growth.

Singapore's economic development has taken a toll on our natural resources and created pollutants in our environment in the process. We are rapidly losing our natural heritage as a result of urbanization and rapid development.

While we are mindful of the scarcity of land in Singapore for housing and economic development, we must balance the needs of urban development and preserving nature.

Ecological awareness to protect and preserve our biodiversity is low in Singapore. Recycling is not yet a way of life in Singapore. Increasing recycling rates is key in extending the lifespan of our landfills.

Noise pollution is often a problem in Singapore. We should be mindful to ensure a 'civic and gracious' social environment.

Climate change is a reality, and extreme changes in the weather can be expected in future. We should be ready to react to sudden changes in the environment.

Most of Singapore's food today is imported. There is little certainty that food supplies can be sustained through prolonged periods of emergency.

Our Beliefs

1. We should encourage research and implementation of the use of sustainable energy and related products.
2. Commercial users should be incentivised to conserve energy and water.
3. Corporations should be encouraged to exercise corporate social responsibility to protect the environment.

4. A rich ecosystem is necessary for a quality environment, and it is the responsibility of the government and our people to protect our natural heritage.
5. The government must educate and encourage greater awareness of indigenous flora and fauna, as well as marine life.
6. Natural habitats like the marshland habitats, mangrove swamps and coral reefs, marine animals and wild birds must be protected for our future generations.
7. A clean and healthy environment is also essential to ensure the physical well being of our people. We need to do more to motivate every individual to take up environmental ownership and to care for the environment as a way of life.
8. The culture of recycling should be imbued from young.
9. There should be a more holistic approach to deal with noise pollution.
10. We have to explore ways to increase our self-sufficiency in food supplies.
11. We need to be prepared for extreme weather changes. Contingency plans should be drawn up according to various possible scenarios.
12. We require sustainable energy to ensure water sustainability for the country via technologies like NEWater. Energy costs should also be reined in; otherwise water costs will increase in tandem.
13. Budget should be provided for research into solar power usage for water reclamation plants. A possible investment in offshore water catchments and processing plants should be studied.

Our Proposals

1. Natural habitats with ecological and educational value should be gazetted as permanent natural reserves.
2. We need to strive for more regional cooperation to contain environmental hazards such as forest fires or chemical leaks so as not to affect air quality.
3. Plans for projects likely to adversely affect the natural environment should be accompanied by Environment Impact Assessments (EIA) and mitigation plans before they are approved. This is especially important in the case of the feasibility study on nuclear power use in Singapore. Radiation monitoring capabilities should also be strengthened in view of this.

4. More programmes should be implemented to encourage local farming. We should explore vertical farming or high-rise farming technology to offset the problem of limited land for food production. We should also further diversify our food sources to enhance our food security.
5. As an equatorial country, we should explore alternative ways such as fuel cell and solar energy to mitigate the worldwide shortage of natural gases and fossil fuel. This has potential to create maintenance and engineering jobs and reduce expenditure on raw energy resources. We could also export our knowledge and products based on fuel cell and solar technology.
6. Green vehicle adoption should be encouraged via price incentives and improved refuelling infrastructure support.
7. We can provide tax relief and incentives for companies to encourage innovative ways to recycle waste and increase energy conservation.
8. “Social noise pollution” such as karaoke sessions at home, dog barks and children playing at common areas disturbs the comfort of others. We should cultivate civic awareness to prevent such noise pollution in a high-density living environment.
9. A comprehensive approach including a legal framework and a centralised agency to regulate noise pollution should be set up.
10. Noise meters should be installed around potential noise pollution ‘hot-spots’, including MRT/LRT rails and roads to ensure noise levels remain within the legal limits.
11. A dispute resolution mechanism should be set up at the Community Development Council level for greater accessibility.
12. A Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA) should be performed to understand the risk posed to Singapore by climate change. Adaptation policies should be communicated to citizens. As part of this, a task force needs to perform scenario planning for adverse and extreme weather changes. Contingency plans should be drawn up in response to these scenarios.

14

ARTS, MEDIA, INFORMATION AND NEW TECHNOLOGY

Preamble

Singapore aims to be an arts and cultural hub. Yet, global rankings of liveable cities give Singapore relatively low scores on culture and freedom of information.

Strict censorship laws apply to various art forms like film making.

Provisions of the Official Secrets Act and the Evidence Act protect most official information from disclosure to the public, without any counter-balancing provisions for citizen access or de-classification after the passage of time.

Our Beliefs

1. To develop a vibrant nation and to allow people to develop their potential, there must be a free and open environment where the arts, media and information can thrive.
2. We must foster a social milieu where creativity can be explored in a wide variety of ways and yet respect the beliefs and sensitivities of Singapore's multi-ethnic, multi-religious, cosmopolitan and globalised population.
3. There should also be support for art activities at grassroots level.
4. Support for the arts must cater to the needs of the local arts community in order for them to gain international exposure.
5. The media should not only be socially responsible but also be free from political influence with respect to content.
6. Citizens have a right to access information of public interest.
7. There is a need to look into protection of information relating to individuals.

Our Proposals

A. *Arts:*

1. The licensing of the arts should be taken out of government control and given to an independent body with representation from the arts community.
2. Financial and infrastructural assistance should be provided for community-based arts at the grassroots level.
3. More diverse and well-defined arts programmes in educational institutions that channel students' creative energies should be created. This will give them more options in their career and lifestyle choices.

B. *Media:*

1. We should create competition by issuing licences to allow local private and commercial media to operate broadcast services and newspapers in Singapore.
2. The Newspapers and Printing Presses Act should be amended to abolish clauses which give the government the right to approve the holders of the management shares and to control the shareholdings and voting power of newspaper companies. Similarly, the Broadcasting Act should be amended to remove the government's right to approve the top management of broadcasting companies and to control their shareholdings and voting power.
3. Independent and professional organisations should be established to monitor the media. These organisations can include ex-journalists and civil society activists, for the purpose of making journalists and media companies more accountable to Singaporeans when they report on issues of national interests.
4. The Films Act should be further amended to liberalise the law on making "political" films, allowing groups and individuals to express their views by making such films.

C. *Information:*

1. We should enact a Freedom of Information Act containing provisions to allow citizens to gather information from the State and to ensure that the government puts out sufficient information.
2. Temporary statistics and information collected by the government, particularly aggregated social statistics, shall, as far as possible, be de-classified and made available in the public domain to promote research and informed debate on matters of public interest.

3. Official secrets should be de-classified after a maximum period of time has passed or as soon as the information is no longer sensitive. This will enable the public to debate the course of history and deepen citizens' understanding of key events.
4. A Privacy Act should be enacted to ensure that ordinary citizens' rights to privacy are protected.

D. *New technology:*

1. The restriction on use and ownership of satellite dishes should be removed.
2. We need to amend the Internet Code of Practice to remove the requirement for religious and political sites to register.

SPORTS AND RECREATION

Preamble

1. Taking part in sports and other recreational activities improves physical fitness, uncovers talent, instils discipline, perseverance and teamwork, and cultivates important social skills.
2. In Singapore's highly competitive and urbanised environment, sports and recreation provide healthy outlets for many Singaporeans to manage their stressful lifestyles.

Our Beliefs

1. We support the building of a strong sports culture in Singapore, nurturing competitive athletes as well as providing facilities and opportunities for recreational sports participants.
2. While we do not object to the pursuit of international sporting glory for the nation, there should be a fair allocation of resources for mass sports participation by ordinary Singaporeans.
3. The objective of Sports Excellence should be to forge greater patriotism, national unity, promote friendship with other countries, and inspire young people to pursue their dreams. Winning medals at international competitions should not be the over-arching goal of Sports Excellence.
4. We should seek to increase participation in recreational sports, in order to promote a healthy lifestyle among all segments of society, including home-makers, the elderly and people with disabilities.
5. We welcome the contributions of foreigners to our sporting scene. However, their purpose should be primarily to transfer skills and knowledge to home-grown Singaporean athletes, and inspire the next generation of Singaporean sportsmen and women. Foreigners should not be brought in just to win medals for us.
6. Promising young athletes should be provided the necessary support they need to excel in their sporting endeavours.

7. Schools should aim to provide maximum opportunities for their students to participate in sports that they enjoy, rather than being overly fixated on pursuing sporting glory. While we recognise that resources and facilities are limited, popular sports should not be dropped just because they do not stand a chance of winning national championships for the schools.
8. Participation in sports should be motivated by the spirit of sportsmanship and fair play.
9. Sports activities and organisations should be community initiatives. Hence, leaders of such organisations should come from the sporting fraternity.
10. Sports and recreational facilities should be accessible to all and public facilities where possible should be free.

Our Proposals

1. The goals for Sports Excellence should be revised. There should be stronger emphasis placed on sports that are popular among Singaporeans and have a greater ability to rally the nation together, rather than sports with only medal-winning potential but which do not have a large local following.
2. The Foreign Sports Talent scheme should be revamped to focus on engaging qualified foreigners to support our local athletes (e.g., through coaching, sports science/medicine, sports management). Foreign athletes should not be recruited and granted citizenship for the sole purpose of winning medals for Singapore.
3. Disabled athletes should get their fair share of sports funding and support, so as to further build up their capabilities to compete in regional and international competitions like the Paralympics.
4. Singapore's previous participation in the Malaysia Cup football championship galvanised and united our nation, and drew huge crowds of fans like no other event since. The Football Association of Singapore (FAS) should explore re-entry of a Singaporean team into the Malaysia Cup on terms that are fair to our players, fans and other local stakeholders. The domestic S-League should also be strengthened in terms of playing standards and marketing, so as to resurrect it to a state of health, provide good career opportunities for local players and support the national team.
5. The Singapore Sports School (SSS) is a key institution for grooming the next generation of national athletes. SSS should admit students who meet the performance criteria for their respective sports, even if they have not performed as well in their studies. Students who qualify for the Normal stream should be admitted to SSS, provided they meet the sport performance selection criteria.
6. The leaders of National Sports Associations should be elected from among the sporting fraternity. Politicians should not hold such positions.
7. Sports development at the grassroots level should be improved by fostering the appreciation and enjoyment of sports at the precinct level in order to more effectively reach out to residents.
8. Elderly persons should be provided more opportunities to participate in sports by introducing more activities suitable for them (e.g., gateball, lawn bowling) at the community level.
9. Low-cost sports and recreational facilities should continue to be developed within HDB estates so that youths and residents can easily access them.
10. Sufficient vacant space should be incorporated in the design of all new HDB housing estates to provide avenues for youths to enjoy sporting activities.

