

## Youth aspirations 'not radically different'

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THE aspirations of Singapore youth are not that "radically different" from those of the rest of the population, said Mr Desmond Lee, a newly elected Member of Parliament (MP) for Jurong GRC.

"We want stability and security; we want good governance, desire good homes and a comfortable living environment; we want good jobs and the opportunity to pursue our dreams," said the 34-year-old.

This group of Singaporeans grew up in a stable country and are grappling with the effects of globalisation. They are willing to speak up and are conscious of higher ideals such as human rights, he said.

They "do not hold any particular affiliation" to a political party, and instead support having more voices and checks on the Government, he noted.

Mr Lee was speaking yesterday at a forum on "What Youth Want", organised by the Institute of Policy Studies. He was part of a panel made up of one representative each from six political parties.

Among the other panellists were Workers' Party Hougang MP Yaw Shin Leong, 35; National Solidarity Party candidate Nicole Seah, 24; and Singapore Democratic Party's Ms Michelle Lee, 35.

At the forum, Ms Seah downplayed the notion that social media was the main catalyst for the results in the General Election.

"It's really giving it too much credit. What it achieved is that it amplified human truths that Singaporeans have been seeking for the longest time," she said.

Social media offered a platform for the youth, who crave an avenue to exchange opinions, find like-minded individuals, be acknowledged and heard, and to feel a sense of rootedness in the country, she added.

Ms Lee said Generation Y has witnessed the failure of institutions in the wake of terror attacks, wars and financial crises. This has created a generation that is far more sceptical about the establishment.

Youth now value different things and look for more than just material comfort, she added.

"Financial and material incentives do not work as readily with them... (Hence) the automatic deference we have for the rich and the powerful is weakened," she said.

Mr Lee said that although social-networking tools are great ways to engage young people, having a personal touch is still key to building relationships.

He said: "It's the old ways, but refreshed. It's the pounding of the pavements, meeting people and getting them to recognise that we are sincere in reaching out to them, and (that) what they say makes a difference."