

## **PM Lee explains why infrastructure lagged behind population growth**

***May Wong***

***Channel NewsAsia***, 28 January 2013

Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong has admitted the government did not have 20/20 foresight, resulting in problems with inadequate infrastructure in the country.

He was speaking at the “Singapore Perspectives” conference on governance organised by the Institute of Policy Studies today.

Acknowledging the problems of insufficient housing and inefficient transportation network, Mr Lee pointed out that the Government was blind-sided by the outcome of some international events.

He elaborated that in 2000 and 2001, the 9/11 terrorist attack on the United States plunged countries into recession. Singapore was dealt with a slow economy with minimum population growth and local housing prices went down.

But by 2005 and 2006, Mr Lee said the mood changed and the economy started picking up.

So, he said, the Government did what it thought would have been appropriate then. It decided to make up for lost time by growing the population and boosting the economy.

He acknowledged that infrastructure like housing and transport didn’t keep up with that growth.

He said: “We lacked that 20/20 foresight. Next time, we will try to do better, certainly to have a bigger buffer and not to cut things so fine.”

Prime Minister Lee also dealt with sensitive issues that are brought up online.

Replying to a question on why there is a need to moderate social space, he said: “We don’t believe the community in the social space, especially online, moderates itself. It doesn’t happen anywhere in the world.

“You have views going to extremes and when people respond to their views, they may respond in an extreme way, and when people decide to disapprove of something which was inappropriate, the disapproval can also happen in an extreme way.

“It’s in the nature of the medium, the way the interactions work and that’s the reason why we think it cannot be completely left by itself.”