

SINGAPORE PERSPECTIVES2026



20 & 26 January 2026

PROGRAMME

TUESDAY, 20 JANUARY 2026

Online Sessions

9.00 am – 10.30 am

Session 1 — Tech and Ties: The Impact of Emerging Technologies on Social Cohesion

This panel presents the findings from an IPS Survey that examines the relationships that Singaporeans form online and the quality of their digital interactions, compared with traditional ties established offline. How do Singaporeans navigate these different forms of interactions, and what do they value in them? How do experiences vary across different demographic groups? How are emerging technologies shaping social connections, and what is the impact on social cohesion, civic engagement and mutual trust among Singaporeans? Panellists will discuss insights from this study and policy implications.

Moderator

Dr Clara Lee
Research Fellow
Social Lab
Institute of Policy Studies

Speakers

Dr Mathew Mathews
Principal Research Fellow &
Head, Social Lab
Institute of Policy Studies

Associate Professor Kokil Jaidka
Department of Communications and New Media
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
National University of Singapore

Ms Grace Ann Chua
Co-founder
Friendzone

Question-and-Answer Session

11.30 am – 1.00 pm

Session 2 — New Ways to Talk Through Tough Topics: Testing Different Modalities of Citizen Engagement

This panel draws on IPS Policy Lab's work to explore how different modalities of engagement can be harnessed to facilitate thoughtful exchanges among Singaporeans, especially on contentious issues.

What methods and tools can we use to create spaces for meaningful conversations on sensitive or difficult topics, even if we disagree significantly? What are the sensitivities and considerations that should be taken into account? How can we promote greater understanding between Singaporeans — even if consensus is difficult?

Moderator

Dr Justin Lee
Senior Research Fellow &
Head, Policy Lab
Institute of Policy Studies

Speakers

Ms Dawn Yip
Organisation Development and Public Participation
Practitioner

Mr Tan Kiat How
Senior Minister of State
Ministry of Digital Development and Information &
Ministry of Health and
Chairman, REACH

Mr Nicholas Thomas
Research Fellow
Policy Lab
Institute of Policy Studies

Question-and-Answer Session

MONDAY, 26 JANUARY 2026
Sands Grand Ballroom (Level 5)
Sands Expo and Convention Centre

8.00 am – 8.45 am

Registration

8.45 am – 9.00 am

Opening Address

Mr Janadas Devan
Director
Institute of Policy Studies

9.00 am – 10.30 am

Panel 1 — Rethinking Social Capital in a Smart Nation

The compact size of Singapore and its urban landscape used to be arguably an advantage in building social capital — fostering opportunities for interactions and chance encounters critical for building trust and bonds. But increasingly, how we make friends, interact with one another, seek information and even social support is moving online. As our society becomes increasingly digitally connected but physically disconnected, what are the implications on Singaporeans' capacity to connect and bond with one another? How will these changes reshape the fabric of our society? What is the broader impact on Singapore as a nation and how does this affect policymaking now and into the future?

Moderator

Dr Chew Han Ei
Senior Research Fellow &
Head, Governance and Economy
Institute of Policy Studies

Speakers

Ms Jasmin Lau
Minister of State
Ministry of Digital Development and Information &
Ministry of Education

Professor Lim Sun Sun
Vice President (Partnerships and Engagement) and
Lee Kong Chian Professor of Communication &
Technology
Singapore Management University

Mr Ang Jin Shaun
Founder
Stranger Conversations

Question-and-Answer Session

10.30 am – 11.00 am

Break

11.00 am – 12.30 pm

Panel 2 — Navigating Challenges to Social Cohesion

Singapore society has become more complex and diverse over the last 60 years. Domestically, signs of social stratification have emerged amid significant shifts in our demographic profile, as our population ages and new immigrants from more varied origins and backgrounds make Singapore their new home. Externally, a more turbulent global environment fraught with fragmentation affects us even as Singaporeans become more exposed to international experiences and influences. How do we balance the flourishing of diverse interests while ensuring that our society is not pulled apart by differences? How can we create more opportunities for Singaporeans from different backgrounds with different beliefs and aspirations to engage meaningfully with one another and promote mutual respect, trust and understanding?

Moderator

Associate Professor Razwana Begum
Head, Global Security and Strategy Programme
School of Humanities and Behavioural Sciences
Singapore University of Social Sciences

Speakers

Mr Jeffrey Siow
Acting Minister for Transport &
Senior Minister of State for Finance

Professor Elaine Ho
Provost's Chair Professor
Department of Geography and
Research Leader, Migration and Mobilities Cluster
Asia Research Institute
National University of Singapore

Ms Shahrany Hassan
Founder and Director
The Whitehatters

Question-and-Answer Session

12.30 pm – 1.30 pm

Lunch

1.30 pm – 3.00 pm

Panel 3 — Building a More Inclusive and “We First” Society

As our society evolves and new challenges to social cohesion arise, how can we strengthen the Singapore identity, moving beyond individual success to embrace a “We First” mindset? This panel discussion explores the pathways to building an inclusive society where every individual feels a sense of belonging and purpose, where there is shared vision driving collective action,

yet different groups and individuals are celebrated for their unique aspirations and achievements.

Moderator

Dr Laurel Teo
Senior Research Fellow &
Head, Society and Culture
Institute of Policy Studies

Speakers

Associate Professor Vincent Chua
Department of Sociology and Anthropology
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
National University of Singapore

Mr Tony Soh
Chief Executive Officer
National Volunteer and Philanthropy Centre

Mr David Neo
Acting Minister for Culture, Community and Youth &
Senior Minister of State for Education

Question-and-Answer Session

3.00 pm – 3.30 pm

Break

3.30 pm – 4.45 pm

DIALOGUE
with Mr Gan Kim Yong
Deputy Prime Minister and
Minister for Trade and Industry

Moderator

Mr Janadas Devan

Question-and-Answer Session

4.45 pm

End

Last modified 21 January 2026