

# 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 and Chief Executive Officer  
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**

Mr Nicholas Thomas  
Research Fellow  
Policy Lab  
Institute of Policy Studies

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

Ms Dawn Yip  
Organisation Development and Public Participation  
Practitioner

### **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**

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

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

**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, Public Safety and Security Programme  
School of Humanities and Behavioural Sciences  
Singapore University of Social Sciences

### **Speakers**

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

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

### **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 9 December 2025*