

SINGAPORE PERSPECTIVES CONFERENCE: Parties need to avoid partisan politics: Sylvia Lim

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Workers' Party (WP) chairman Sylvia Lim said yesterday that she makes submissions on government policies away from the public eye, as she believes that political parties need to avoid partisan politics.

And the ministries have treated her feedback objectively, she added.

Ms Lim, an MP for Aljunied GRC, said that as political parties, "we need to constantly check ourselves to avoid getting too embroiled in partisan politics and miss the wood for the trees".

The wood here is the people's well-being, she added.

"We should guard against one-upmanship and ask ourselves, where lies the greater good?" she said at the Singapore Perspectives conference organised by the Institute of Policy Studies.

She also said the WP views political competition as a "safeguard" to improve people's lives.

It contests elections to provide this competition so that the Government is required to show it has performed. In Parliament, it keeps the Government accountable on matters of public interest by pressing it on such issues.

She also stressed, in response to a question about the difference between the People's Action Party (PAP) and the WP, that her party has ideological differences with the PAP in such areas as social justice, civil liberties and issues of governance like transparency and accountability.

Ms Lim acknowledged that some have criticised the WP for being too moderate. But the WP takes this position because of its beliefs, and also because it is sustainable as the party takes into account public support, she added.

"If we find we have no support for the things that we are doing, then I think it's fine for us to review and do things differently.

"But so far, I can see we do have some public support, I believe Singaporeans as a whole do appreciate the opposition politics of the sort that we offer to them."