

Avoid ageing issues with right mindset

To avoid the grim reality of an ageing population where escalating healthcare costs burden the economy and societal fractures arise from competing needs across age groups, everyone must have the right mindset.

Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong said individuals must embrace ageing positively, families must connect and engage with seniors at home and employers need to support older workers and tap their experience and value. As a society, Singapore must also strengthen the culture of respect towards seniors by understanding and valuing them, and avoiding stereotypes that are hurtful and self-limiting.

To do this, the Government will lead in three key areas, Mr Lee said at the launch of the book *Singapore Ageing: Issues And Challenges Ahead*. The potential grim scenario was described in the book edited by Dr S. Vasoo, Associate Professor Srinivasan Chokkanathan and Associate Professor Bilveer Singh who are from NUS' Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences.

Mr Lee said: "In Singapore, we are determined not to go in this direction. But avoiding it will take a whole-of-society effort and everyone having the right mindset."



PM Lee Hsien Loong receiving a copy of *Singapore Ageing: Issues And Challenges Ahead* from Emeritus Professor S. Vasoo at the book launch on April 11. With them are Prof Bilveer Singh and Dr Phua Kok Khoo. PHOTO: GAVIN FOO

He explained that the first step to avoid such a scenario is to raise retirement and re-employment ages in tandem with demographic trends, as many older Singaporeans want to keep active and continue working.

Last July, the retirement age was raised to 63 and re-employment age 68. By 2030, retirement age will be raised to 65 and re-employment age 70.

The second step is to continue ensuring retirement adequacy.

"We've been updating our Central Provident Fund schemes so that they remain fit for purpose, in line with rising life expectancy and changing needs," said Mr Lee.

The third step is to strengthen the healthcare system to meet the increasing demands of an ageing population.

"With Healthier SG, we are moving decisively towards preventive care to reduce the disease burden for Singaporeans. If Singaporeans can stay healthier for longer, it will help to lighten the load on our healthcare system," said Mr Lee.

Meanwhile, the Government continues to build new healthcare infrastructure, upgrade existing ones and expand the social and long-term care services in the community.

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