

TODAY
 WESET YOU THINKING

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More can be expected of govt data, communication

FROM **KWAN JIN YAO**

That the Government is trying different means to “simplify information and provide as much information as possible to the people” is encouraging. (“Govt trying out various platforms to reach out: Chuan-Jin”: Oct 11)

But whether Singaporeans have adequate access to information is not necessarily about the supply or presentation of it. The Government can point to quantitative data on Statistics Singapore, its fact-checking site Factually and parliamentary speeches by ministers.

In question is the utility of such information. Earlier this year, Mr Zainal Sapari, Member of Parliament (MP) for Pasir Ris-Punggol, did not get exact percentages from the Ministry of

“Finance, housing, retirement, insurance and healthcare confound many. Poor communication makes it easier for disinformation to spread because, as readers try to make sense of the issues, they turn to the most intuitive explanations.”

Education concerning the pay grades of school leaders and principals.

Along the same tangent, MP Png Eng Huat asked for specific figures about the employment obligations of foreign students, yet the ministry did not disclose the number of defaulters.

For charities and non-profits to better track the efficacy of their endeavours, there have been calls for more data to plug gaps in the Household Expenditure Survey and Com-Care reports.

Researchers from the Lien Centre for Social Innovation and the Singa-

pore Management University School of Social Sciences reflected that the Average Household Expenditure on Basic Needs is not easily available in the public domain.

Communication of existing information can be strengthened. Everyone has opinions on the mainstream issues of transport, education, culture and heritage, for instance, but has less clarity over complex policies.

Finance, housing, retirement, insurance and healthcare confound many. Poor communication makes it easier for disinformation to spread because, as readers try to make sense of the issues, they turn to the most intuitive explanations.

The Our Singapore Conversation process started with promise and ended with fanfare, so it is a shame that not much has transpired thereafter.

With the Manpower Minister’s acknowledgement that the Government could do better in its outreach efforts and is trying out different platforms and formats, as different people relate to information in different ways, more can be expected of its commitment to information and communication.

Take more steps to conserve energy, reduce noise, HDB

FROM **JOLLY WEE**

The Home Improvement and Neighbourhood Renewal programmes to make Housing and Development Board (HDB) flats and towns continually liveable is laudable, as the maintenance of public housing in many countries is often neglected after some time.

The HDB could take a step further in these programmes to also focus on energy conservation for households and reduction of noise from busy road junctions, bus interchanges and train

tracks near homes.

For example, it could offer, as a cost-sharing option in its flat improvement programme, to replace owners’ sliding windows with casement ones that allow for more natural ventilation as every window can then be opened.

Sun panels could be installed at blocks that do not have them. An extra layer of plastering could be applied externally to reduce the sun’s heat from permeating through the walls. These could help households reduce their energy consumption if fans and air conditioners are used less often.

Finally, noise from identified sources could be reduced by installing barriers, including tall trees with thick crowns. This would also lead to a greener environment.

Why won’t Hume Station open?

FROM **THOMAS TAN ZING**

“LTA keeps expanding the rail network, but is reluctant to open a stop that is being constructed.”

Much has been said about our rail network, but I cannot understand the Land Transport Authority (LTA) on one point. (“Considerations in expanding rail network”; Oct 14)

I live at Hume Park I. Years ago, the LTA’s MRT map had a Hume Station. Now, it has disappeared and become a “shell station”. I fail to understand why it will not be part of the Downtown Line 2 opening in 2016.

Has the LTA moved the goalposts in its population, ridership and other considerations? It keeps expanding the rail network, but is reluctant to open a stop that is being constructed.

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