

**PRESS RELEASE****Issuance of Correction Direction under the  
Protection from Online Falsehoods and Manipulation Act to Lee Hsien Yang**

1. On 23 July 2023, Mr Lee Hsien Yang published a post on his Facebook page, which made untrue statements that:
  - a) The State paid for the renovations to 26 Ridout Road and 31 Ridout Road because the properties were leased by Ministers K Shanmugam and Vivian Balakrishnan.
  - b) Trees at 26 Ridout Road and 31 Ridout Road were allowed to be felled because the properties were leased by Ministers Shanmugam and Balakrishnan.
  - c) SPH Media Trust fraudulently inflated its circulation numbers.
2. The Minister for Culture, Community and Youth and Second Minister for Law Edwin Tong has instructed for a Correction Direction, under the Protection from Online Falsehoods and Manipulation Act (POFMA), to be issued to Mr Lee Hsien Yang. Mr Lee Hsien Yang will be required to carry the correction notice, stating that the Facebook post contains false statements of fact.

**Clarifications on the False Statements**

3. Firstly, Mr Lee Hsien Yang made an untrue statement that the State paid for the renovations to 26 Ridout Road and 31 Ridout Road because the properties were leased by Ministers Shanmugam and Balakrishnan. The identity of the tenants had no bearing on the decision on the works to be carried out on the properties. The post omits important information that the works done were in keeping with the Singapore Land Authority's (SLA) practice, and were assessed to be necessary in the circumstances, as explained by Second Minister for Law Edwin Tong in Parliament on 3 July 2023.
  - a) SLA invests a significant amount in maintaining conserved properties, which include 26 Ridout Road and 31 Ridout Road. SLA has spent similar, or even larger, amounts on other Black and White bungalows, consistent with conservation requirements (see Factually article in paragraph 6).
  - b) Most of the costs incurred for 26 Ridout Road and 31 Ridout Road were for works that external consultants had determined to be necessary, in light of the condition of the properties and to comply with the relevant conservation requirements. The remaining costs were incurred as part of the usual works done before the commencement of a tenancy to ensure that the property is habitable.

4. Secondly, Mr Lee Hsien Yang made the statement that the trees at 26 Ridout Road and 31 Ridout Road were allowed to be felled because the properties were leased by Ministers Shanmugam and Balakrishnan. This is untrue. The identity of the tenants had no bearing on the felling of the trees at the properties. All decisions to fell trees with a girth size of more than one metre were made following inspections by independent arborists, and safety issues were identified. Where approval was required for any trees to be felled, such approval was obtained from the National Parks Board (NParks). The reasons for the felling of the trees at both properties have been explained by the Second Minister for Law Edwin Tong in Parliament on 3 July 2023.
5. Thirdly, Mr Lee Hsien Yang also made the statement that SPH Media Trust fraudulently inflated its circulation numbers. This is untrue. The overstatement of circulation numbers happened when the media business was under SPH Limited – a listed company. This was before SPH Media Trust was incorporated. When SPH Media Trust took over SPH Limited’s media business, it discovered, reported, and investigated the circulation issue. The Government’s funding agreement to build up public service media capabilities was signed with SPH Media Trust, and not SPH Limited. The funding quantum was based on SPH Media Trust’s transformation needs, and not the circulation numbers.

#### **Publication of Correction Notice**

6. As required by the Correction Direction, Mr Lee Hsien Yang must publish correction notice on the said post on his Facebook page. The correction notice will provide a link to the Factually article, which lays out the facts and clarifications on the matter, at the following link: <https://www.gov.sg/article/factually250723>.

**MINISTRY OF LAW**  
**25 JULY 2023**