

## ISSUANCE OF CORRECTION DIRECTION UNDER THE PROTECTION FROM ONLINE FALSEHOODS AND MANIPULATION ACT (POFMA) TO MR KENNETH JEYARETNAM

1. The Minister for Transport and Second Minister for Finance Chee Hong Tat has instructed for a Correction Direction<sup>1</sup> under the Protection from Online Falsehoods and Manipulation Act (“POFMA”) to be issued to Mr Kenneth Jeyaretnam (“Mr Jeyaretnam”) in respect of his Facebook post on 15 June 2024. The post contains false statements of fact.
2. This is the eighth Correction Direction that has been issued to Mr Jeyaretnam for 21 online posts. Mr Jeyaretnam’s website, The Ricebowl Singapore, and his accounts on Facebook, Instagram, X, and LinkedIn have also been declared as “Declared Online Locations” under POFMA, with effect from 12 December 2023, for carrying three or more different false statements of fact that were subject to active POFMA directions at the material time.
3. Notwithstanding these actions, Mr Jeyaretnam has continued to make false and misleading statements about Government policies and the operations of public agencies, despite publicly available facts and having the falsehoods and their corresponding facts pointed out to him. He has repeatedly made false statements, even when the facts are clear and should be known to him.
4. POFMA Office and the Singapore Police Force commenced investigations against Mr Jeyaretnam for possible offences under POFMA and the Administration of Justice (Protection) Act 2016, respectively. Agencies have been in communication with Mr Jeyaretnam since April 2024 and have invited him to assist with the investigations. He has thus far remained out of jurisdiction and not made himself available to assist in investigations by attending any interviews.

### Clarifications regarding falsehoods

2. First, the post claims that the Government intentionally sets artificially high land prices, for sale to HDB. **This is untrue.**
3. The prices for sale of state land to HDB are not set by the Government. Rather, the Chief Valuer (“CV”) determines the sale price, and fixes it with reference to the fair market value.

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<sup>1</sup> A Correction Direction is a Direction issued to a person who has communicated a falsehood (i.e., the recipient) that affects the public interest. It requires the recipient to publish a correction notice, providing access to the correct facts. The Direction does not require the recipient to take down their post or make edits to their content and does not impose criminal sanctions if the Direction is complied with.

4. The CV is an independent office, whose appointment requires the President's concurrence, and whose professional assessment is made without influence from the Government.

5. Further, the CV determines the sale price based on established valuation principles, taking into consideration relevant resale transactions on the open market, and other relevant factors such as specific parameters of the site. Such valuation principles are similarly adopted by professional valuers in the private sector.

6. Second, the post claims that the endowment and trust funds are not transparent. **This is untrue.**

7. Top-ups to the endowment and trust funds can be found in the Revenue and Expenditure Estimates (i.e., the Budget book) and the Supply Bill, which are tabled to Parliament for approval.

8. The amount of top-up to each endowment and trust fund, as well as the starting and ending-FY balance and annual outlay, can be found in the various Financial Statements published by either the Government, the relevant Statutory Board appointed as the trustee / agent / custodian, or the Institution of a Public Character / charity. These Financial Statements are publicly accessible.

9. Key expenditure items making up the total outlay of each fund are also listed within the respective Financial Statement of each fund. For example, the Statement of the GST Voucher Fund in the Government Financial Statements breaks down the annual disbursement into the four components of the GST Voucher scheme, i.e., (i) GST Voucher - Cash, (ii) GST Voucher - MediSave, (iii) GST Voucher - S&CC Rebate, and GST Voucher - U-Save.

10. Third, the post claims that the reason why the Government maintains a large land bank of heritage properties is to keep land prices as high as possible and preferably rising rapidly, and that this is part of the Government's strategy of boosting the reserves. **This is untrue.**

11. The Government's approach to land management is based on Singapore's planning and development needs, and not to maximise land sales proceeds nor to increase the value of the reserves. Certain properties in Singapore are not redeveloped but conserved because of their heritage and/or historical value. This was explained by Minister Edwin Tong in his Ministerial Statement on the rentals of state properties on 3 July 2023.

12. Mr Jeyaretnam will be required to carry a correction notice, which states that the post contains false statements of fact and provide a link to the Government's clarification. This will allow readers to read both versions and draw their own conclusions.

13. For facts of the case, please refer to the Factually article *Corrections regarding falsehoods published by Mr Kenneth Jeyaretnam on 15 June 2024* at the following link: <http://www.gov.sg/article/factually040724>

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We achieve this together with our departments (Accountant-General's Department, Singapore Customs and Vital), and statutory boards/bodies (Accounting & Corporate Regulatory Authority, Inland Revenue Authority of Singapore, Tote Board and Singapore Accountancy Commission).

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