

# Relook EC housing model

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THE Government has a stellar track record in generating wealth and creating a green environment for the country.

However, as the country matures, it has had its fair share of problems, including the ageing population, low total fertility rate and the strain on infrastructure as the population surges.

To prepare the nation to meet these challenges, the Government has set a lower gross domestic product growth target. Realistically, fiscal expenditure is poised to shrink, exacerbated by the high inflation rate.

In the light of this, some less critical expenses may need to be scaled back.

One example is the executive condominium (EC) housing subsidy.

The prices of ECs are expected to appreciate when they become full-fledged private condos after 10 years. While eligible "sandwich-class" citizens can appreciate the Government's well-meaning intention to fulfil their dreams of owning private property, the question of uneven subsidies against other pockets of need arises.

We provide subsidies for essential commodities and services, and we conduct means testing before granting hospitalisation and health subsidies.

Yet the EC land sale subsidy has grown proportionately since its inception.

To continue to sustain high-end ECs as a form of public housing, against the entire spectrum of needs, may be stretching things a little.

Instead, ECs could be superseded by an equivalent 90-year strata-titled mix of no-frills executive apartments, dual key or multi-generation units.

The savings could go towards a review of the 3M (Medisave, MediShield and Medifund) health-care model, which requires "shot in the arm" funding.

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