

Work for as long as you can, urges Boon Heng

By Teh Shi Ning

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MINISTER for Prime Minister's Office Lim Boon Heng yesterday urged Singaporeans to work for as long as they can, now that average life expectancy here has risen.

With the ageing population, the government expects the proportion of Singapore's workforce aged 50 and above to rise from 24 per cent in 2006 to 29 per cent by 2015.

The tripartite committee, formed to look into the employability of older workers, aims to raise the employment rate of residents aged 55 to 64 from 53.7 per

cent in 2006 to 65 per cent in the medium term.

According to Mr Lim, the committee has "wisely decided not to try to do this through simply raising the retirement age by legislation" but has instead recommended re-employment.

Re-employment legislation will be enacted by 2012, and part of the tripartite committee's work has been to prepare employers.

Mr Lim said: "Singaporeans are also learning from the current financial and economic problems that savings can be wiped out by investments that go awry. It is therefore prudent to work for as long as we can."

He cited the Singapore Workforce Development Agency's Workforce Skills Qualifications, programmes from the Employment and Employability Institute and the NTUC Learning Hub as means for older workers to "maintain and enhance their competence in both knowledge and skills".

Social attitudes, too, must change, said Mr Lim. "Some children stop their elderly parents from working. This is unwise. We should work for as long as we can and for as long as we want to."

He was speaking at a lunch event honouring SingHealth and Alexandra Hospital, winners of the AARP International Innovative Employer Award.



MR LIM

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