



PRESS RELEASE

15th February 2019

Not all Singaporeans agree that the annual budget has a direct impact on their lives; A quarter of Singaporeans believe a general election will be held this year

Latest Ipsos study reveals perceptions and predictions in the lead up to the Singapore Budget 2019

Key Results

- Two thirds (64%) of Singaporeans agree that the annual budget has a direct impact on their lives.
- Optimism with regard to Singapore's financial security is high, with almost half of all Singaporeans (47%) agreeing that they are confident about the nation's financial security over the next five years.
- The cost of living is the most salient concern in the minds of Singaporeans. More than nine out of ten Singaporeans (96%) consider that the everyday cost of living in Singapore has increased over the past five years.
- Six in ten Singaporeans predict that inflation/cost of living (60%) and healthcare/hospitals (56%) will be the primary areas of focus in the upcoming budget.
- One quarter of Singaporeans (23%) believe that an early election will be held, while half (47%) predict an election in 2020.
- Almost half of all Singaporeans (48%) believe that the national security of Singapore is currently threatened by terrorism.
- More Singaporeans approve (41%) than disapprove (14%) of the way the Singapore Government has responded in the territorial waters dispute with Malaysia.

Perceptions of the Singapore Budget

While 64% of Singaporeans agree that the annual budget has a direct impact on their lives, 30% are neutral, and the remaining 6% disagree. Agreement is significantly higher among males, those



aged 50-64, and those with a monthly household income of SGD 8,000 or more; and lower among females, youth aged 18-29 and those with a monthly household income less than SGD 4,000.

Predictions for 2019 Budget Priorities

More than half of all Singaporeans predict that inflation/cost of living (60%) and healthcare/hospitals (56%) will be the Government's primary areas of focus in the upcoming budget.

Younger Singaporeans - those aged 18 – 49 - are more likely to predict that cost of living will be the primary focus, while older Singaporeans - those aged above 50 years old - are more likely to predict that healthcare/hospitals will be the focus.

See [Chart 1: Singaporeans' Predictions for 2019 Budget Priorities](#)

Alignment of Priority Predictions with Social Issues

However, these predictions are not entirely aligned with the social issues that Singaporeans believe are most crucial in shaping Singapore's future.

When asked to rank the five issues that they deem to be the most important in determining the future of Singapore, the top two issues were in line with their budget predictions - inflation/cost of living (72%) and healthcare/hospitals (49%).

Beyond these however, Singaporeans predict that the government will prioritise the ageing population and the economy, both of which they deem to be less pressing social issues than housing/price of housing.

See [Chart 2: Singaporeans' Perceptions of Social Issues Facing Singapore](#)

See [Chart 3: Alignment of Predictions on Budget Priorities and Social Issues](#)

Perceptions of Financial Security and the Cost of Living

Optimism with regard to Singapore's financial security is high, with almost half (47%) agreeing that they are confident about the nation's financial security over the next half decade. Confidence is elevated among males and those with higher monthly household incomes (SGD 8,000 or more).

Despite this optimism regarding the country's ongoing economic security, fewer Singaporeans (40%) are confident about their personal finances. Confidence is significantly lower among females, those aged 30-49 and those with monthly household incomes less than SGD 4,000.



Singaporeans' lower levels of confidence in their future finances are likely due to commonplace perceptions of increases in day-to-day cost of living. More than nine out of ten Singaporeans (96%) consider that the everyday cost of living in Singapore has increased over the past five years. Across demographic groups, a majority of Singaporeans believe that the increases in everyday cost of living are associated with rising food and grocery prices (79%). Transport (75%), housing (73%) and utilities (73%) are also considered to be drivers of these increases.

Predictions for 2019 Budget Ministry Allocations

When asked to predict the allocation of Government expenditure to Ministries in 2019, Singaporeans' average prediction is that allocation to MINDEF will be highest (13.1% of Government expenditure), followed by MOH (11.9%) and MOE (10.5%).

Predictions for the next Singapore General Election

When asked in what year they think the next General Election will be held, one quarter of Singaporeans (23%) believe that an early election will be held in 2019, while half (47%) predict an election in 2020.

Perceptions of National Security

Almost half of all Singaporeans (48%) believe that the national security of Singapore is currently threatened by terrorism. Perceptions differ significantly according to demographic group: males, those aged 50-64, those living in middle income households and degree holders are more likely to agree. On the other hand, females, youth aged 18-29 and those living in low income households are less likely to view there as being a threat.

Perception of Singapore's Relationship with Malaysia

Six in ten believe that Singapore's relationship with Malaysia has worsened over the past year despite there being more Singaporeans who approve (41%) than disapprove (14%) of the way the Singapore Government has responded in the territorial waters dispute with Malaysia.

Those who approve of the response in the dispute primarily do so because they feel that the Singapore Government has struck a balance between assertiveness and diplomacy, and operated squarely within the bounds of international law.

Robert McPhedran, Associate Research Director at Ipsos Public Affairs comments, "These results indicate that Singaporeans have a favourable view of the Government's fiscal



Press Release - continued -

management. Despite the sense of uncertainty permeating the global economy, many remain confident in Singapore's ongoing financial stability.

This confidence is likely driven by a general perception of shrewd, targeted spending which focuses upon the most pressing social issues.

Everyday cost of living is the foremost stressor in the minds of Singaporeans, and more than half predict that the Budget will contain measures to offset rising costs. If these Singaporeans are right, and rebates are announced to address cost of living concerns, such measures could indeed foreshadow a general election in 2019."

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Technical note/About the Study:

- The survey was commissioned by Ipsos Pte Ltd and conducted in Singapore.
- A sample of n=1,019 Singapore Citizens and Permanent residents were interviewed from Jan 30th to Feb 2nd, 2019.
- Quotas and weighting were employed to ensure that the sample's composition reflects the overall population distribution, based on Singapore Department of Statistics 2018 population estimates.
- The precision of online surveys is measured using a credible interval. In this case, the results reported are accurate to +/- 3.5 percentage points of the views and perspectives of all Singaporeans aged 18+ (at 95% confidence). Credible intervals are wider among subsets of the population.

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Press Release - continued -

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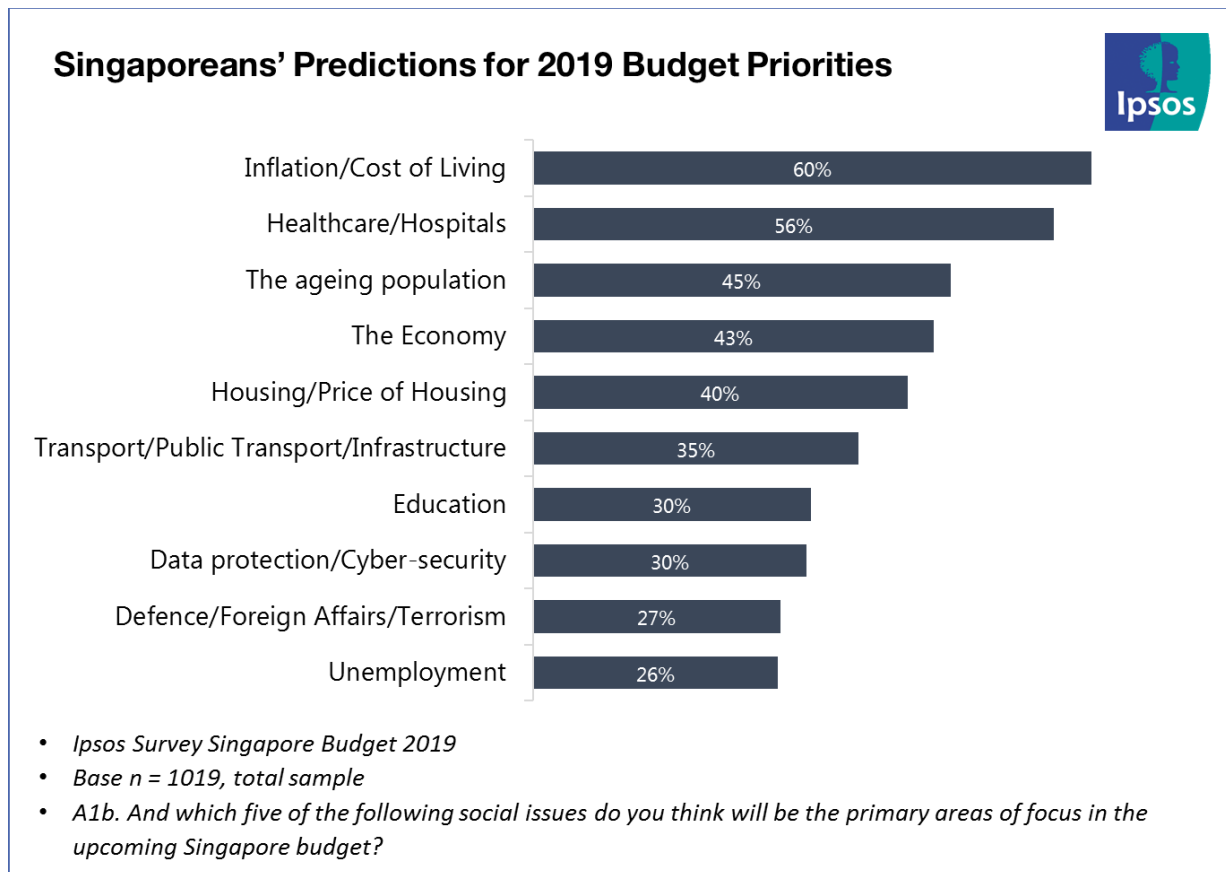
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ISIN code FR0000073298, Reuters ISOS.PA, Bloomberg IPS:FP

APPENDIX: CHARTS

Chart 1: Singaporeans' Predictions for 2019 Budget Priorities



[Back to top](#)

Chart 2: Singaporeans' Perceptions of Social Issues Facing Singapore

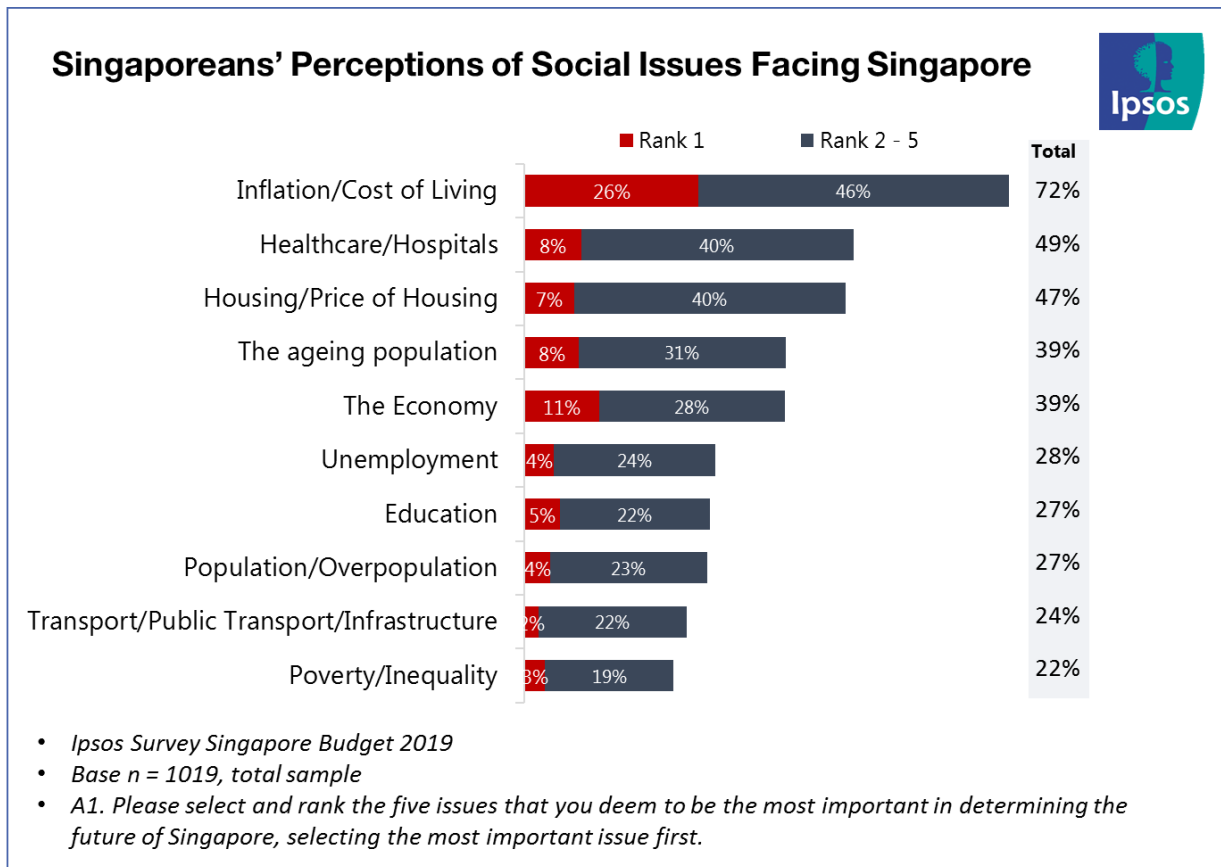
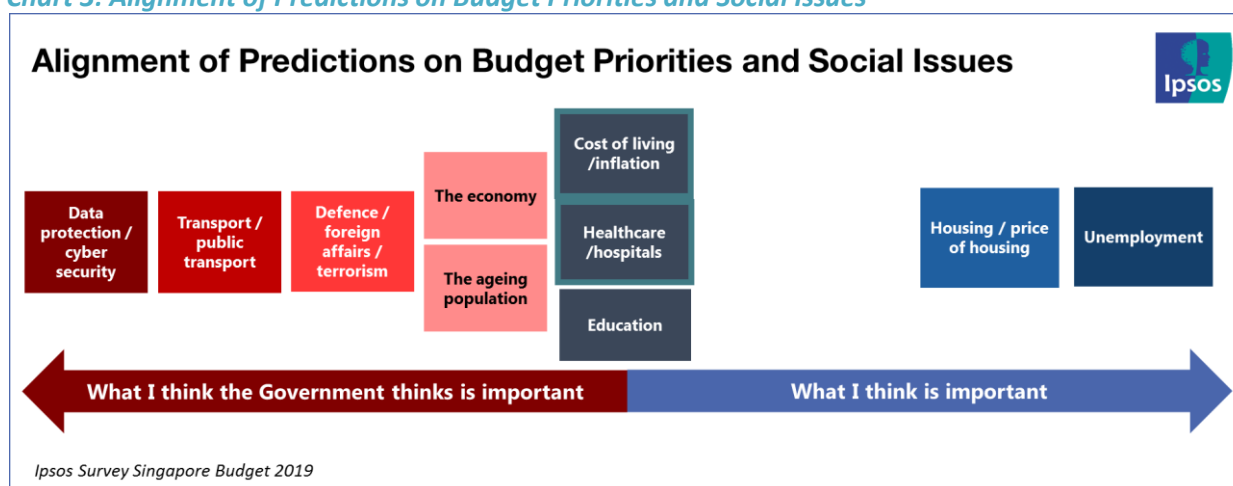


Chart 3: Alignment of Predictions on Budget Priorities and Social Issues



[Back to top](#)