

# Panel Discussion – Connecting the Dots: From Research to Policy and Practice

*Summary by Seah Siang Joo, Research Assistant, LKYCIC*

**Key Question:** In the creation of age-friendly urban environments, how can various stakeholders contribute, and what are some suggestions to harness greater synergy from the cooperation among various stakeholders for the development of age-friendly cities?

This session facilitates discussion among academia, industry, policymakers, and practitioners, with the view of promoting active ageing and ageing in place. The speakers offered several insights. For example, Prof Julie Byles spoke about the ecosystem of ageing research and the possible pathways and connections to policymaking. Prof Erwin Viray narrated the special module he had offered to SUTD Architecture undergraduates that brought students to Japan to learn and experience first-hand the issues and challenges of ageing and what design can do to help ease that process. Dr Ng Wai Chong emphasized the importance of learning from failures with examples from his work on aged care, and also highlighted the importance of qualitative research in providing person-centred insights that complement findings from quantitative insights. Mrs Nina Yang shared the decision-making considerations from the private sector when investing on age-friendly development. She highlighted the importance of policy support to facilitate private sector supply of age-friendly facilities, such as senior housing. Security of payments by consumers was highlighted as a key concern to be addressed to facilitate private sector investment in age-friendly facilities. Mr. Chiu Wen Tung spoke about URA initiatives that provided opportunities for social interaction and recreation for urban dwellers including older adults. He also highlighted the importance of incremental innovation for risk management purposes.

The speakers variously suggested that there is a need for interdisciplinary, cross-sectoral cooperation and the inclusion of various stakeholders in the creation of age-friendly environments. They acknowledged the need for researchers, private sector and policymakers, to work together to support healthy ageing. On research, qualitative research methods can complement and be combined with quantitative research methods to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the heterogeneous, person-centred, needs of older adults.

Another is the development of technologies in the provision of goods and services that support healthy ageing. Healthy ageing can be defined as the maintenance of functional ability to support older adults' continual enjoyment of, among other things, independent functioning, social participation and continual learning. Last but not least, the role of education is highlighted as it can play a critical role in sensitizing the young about the issues of ageing. Educators can organize field trips that provide opportunities for students to interact with older adults, with the aim of inspiring future generations of urban designers and planners to aspire towards more age-friendly designs.