S’poreans want more say in govt policies

A NEW study has found that more Singaporeans want a greater say when it comes to political participation and policymaking, compared to the situation 12 years ago.

Yet, when it comes to making their views known on public-policy issues to the Government, only a minority will actually step up to the plate.

Findings from a survey conducted by the Institute of Policy Studies last year showed that there was an increased demand for political participation and involvement, compared to that found by the same study done in 1998.

Singapore Management University law lecturer Eugene Tan noted that this trend pointed to a more active citizenry, and said the findings suggest that Singaporeans increasingly expect to be consulted on major policy matters.

“It means that the “we-know-more-than-thou” approach in policymaking is out of sync with the aspirations of Singaporeans. Singaporeans want to be ‘talked with’, not ‘talked to’, by the Government,” he said.

The survey involved face-to-face interviews with 2,016 citizens aged between 21 and 64 years, among whom 12 per cent were new citizens.

The poll, carried out between February and May last year, sought to study the emotional bonds of Singaporeans to their nation. The National Orientations of Singaporeans survey has been done roughly every five years since 1993.

The findings showed that 85 per cent polled agreed that voting was the most meaningful way in which citizens get to tell the Government how to run the country, higher than the 72 per cent who felt so in 1998.

Apart from the vote, 95 per cent of respondents felt there should be other channels for citizens to express their views on government policies, significantly higher than the 79 per cent who agreed in 1998.

When it came to whether citizens, regardless of their level of education and income, should have equal freedom to express their views on policies, 97 per cent agreed, up from 87 per cent in 1998.

THE STRAITS TIMES