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## **General Election 2015: Key takeaways in the manifestos**

Political analyst Associate Professor Eugene Tan examines key takeaways in the People's Action Party's and the Workers' Party's election manifestos, both of which were launched on Saturday (Aug 29).

By Monica Kotwani, Channel NewsAsia, Posted 30 Aug 2015 22:33 Updated 30 Aug 2015 23:58

SINGAPORE: If Singaporeans want the People's Action Party (PAP) to form the government, they have to be unequivocal about it through their vote, said political analyst Associate Professor Eugene Tan. He explained that this could be one of the biggest takeaways from Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong's speech at the introduction of his party's manifesto on Saturday (Aug 29).

The Workers' Party (WP) also unveiled its manifesto on the same day, and Professor Tan said despite its clear stand at not being ready to form the government, the manifesto is the party's indication that it is growing from strength to strength.

Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong had called on Singaporeans to take the upcoming General Election "very seriously", and not "wanting one party but voting for a different one".

Professor Tan explained: "It's making clear that Singaporean voters can't have their cake and eat it. So if they want a PAP government, they will have to be mindful of who they are voting for. Because I think he did allude, although without making a clear reference to it, the concern about a freak election result - that people want a PAP government, but believe everyone else will vote for the PAP and that they, in order to put pressure on the government, will vote for the opposition. And then we will have an outcome which they may not have otherwise wanted."

Professor Tan added that the PAP's 88-page manifesto is a "self-appraised report card" that highlights the party's track record over the last 50 years, and of how it has responded to issues raised in the last General Election.

The WP manifesto contains 130 proposals covering areas like the economy and education. Professor Tan said some of these proposals have been mentioned in the previous election, or are refinements to current policies.

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"If the policies are very much similar to the PAP's, we should not be too surprised because very often the Workers' Party would hope to win voters who would have otherwise voted for the PAP. And so they are trying to say, 'We are going to build on PAP's policies but we're going to make it better'," he explained.

With Nomination Day on Tuesday, Professor Tan also touched on the slate of candidates of the two parties: "The big questions for voters are, 'how different will they be? Will they be prepared to stand up and speak for voters, or will they become very much party men and women?'"

- CNA/xq