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Budget for public housing maintenance a temporary solution

The Malaysian Reserve, Malaysia



REHDA

Budget for public housing maintenance a temporary solution

Allocation for maintenance of public housing is short-term, not a holistic measure of the property category

by FARA AISYAH

THE government's budget allocation for the maintenance of public housing is a short-term solution to the challenges in the segment.

The Institution of Engineers Malaysia VP Dr Wang Hong Kok said the RM100 million budget — allocated for the repair and refurbishment of public housing to ensure lifts, electrical wiring, sanitary pipes and roofing are safe and in good working order — is on an ad hoc basis and can only last a year.

"The key issue is, why are so many parcel holders of low-cost and medium-cost housing refusing to pay? The government must investigate the reasons.

"I believe if everyone pays the prescribed service charge, there is no need for an extra out-of-the-way funding from the government," he told *The Malaysian Reserve (TMR)*.

PPC International Sdn Bhd MD

Datuk Siders Sittampalan concurred, and said the allocation for maintenance of public housing is short-term and not a holistic measure of the property category.

"A dedicated body should have been formed to look into this," he said.

The conditions of many low-cost flats and apartments in the country are so poor that intervention from the government is needed to ensure the upkeep of these dwellings.

Many of these dwellings are owned by low-income earners, who face difficulty in paying the maintenance and service charges, causing these low-cost strata-titled developments to be less conducive for living.

Malaysian Institute of Property and Facility Managers president Adzman Shah Mohd Ariffin told *TMR* that while the allocation is a good effort by the government, how it is to be allocated must be clear as it involves the whole country.

"Let's say the allocation is for 12 states and each state gets RM8 million, out of which, there will be quite a number of developments including a huge number of poorly managed ones.

"One of the biggest issues at low-cost housing is elevator maintenance. Some are in such bad condi-



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tions that they need replacing, which costs over RM100,000 each, after which they need to be maintained

and that costs more money," he said. Adzman Shah added that the government must have two core stra-

tegies; one for replacement and one for maintenance.

"There's warranty for the first year but after that, the problem of funding the maintenance will arise. For the next budget, the government should look into the maintenance fund, specifically for buildings which the government has invested money to repair."

Funding, he added, however, is not enough as owners need to be educated.

"A lot of people don't understand that they have to contribute for the place to run. About 70% of people living in low-cost housing might not understand their responsibilities and require education."

Adzman Shah added that if the government can educate parcel holders on the importance of maintaining their properties, there will be better participation and cooperation from the people in managing the issue.

He said with more affordable and low-cost housing coming up soon, the issue will be bigger if the suggestions are taken lightly.

"The social implications from poorly maintained low-cost residences will cause the value of such properties to slump," Adzman Shah said.

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