

Gan Siow Huang prepared for tough fight in defending Marymount seat

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Minister of State for Manpower and Education Gan Siow Huang said she is prepared for a tough fight as she defends her single seat of Marymount in the coming general election.

But five years after the former air force general made her electoral debut, Ms Gan said on April 20 that she is confident she has built a community in Marymount, and that residents know who she is beyond her military background.

Speaking to The Straits Times between a Hari Raya celebration and a temple dinner to celebrate sea goddess Mazu's birthday, Ms Gan said she and her team intend to step up their pace of resident outreach over the nine days of the campaign period, even as they have been very active for the past five years.

Ms Gan, 50, said she was "thankful for winning GE2020, not by a big margin", against PSP's former

assistant secretary-general Ang Yong Guan.

In 2020, she won 55.04 per cent of the vote against Dr Ang's 44.96 per cent. PSP said in February that Dr Ang, a psychiatrist, would not be contesting the coming general election, following a three-year suspension of his medical licence for professional misconduct.

Instead, Ms Gan will face off against Mr Jeffrey Khoo, who was part of PSP's best performing team at the 2020 polls, which took 48.32 per cent of the vote in West Coast GRC.

On April 12, PSP secretary-general Leong Mun Wai said during a walkabout in Marymount that he was confident Mr Khoo, who works in insurance, can achieve a "breakthrough" in the single seat at the coming polls.

Marymount SMC has its boundaries retained for the upcoming election. The constituency now has 23,219 registered voters, slightly lower than the 23,439 recorded in GE2020.

Asked about her PSP opponent on April 20, Ms Gan said: "I believe

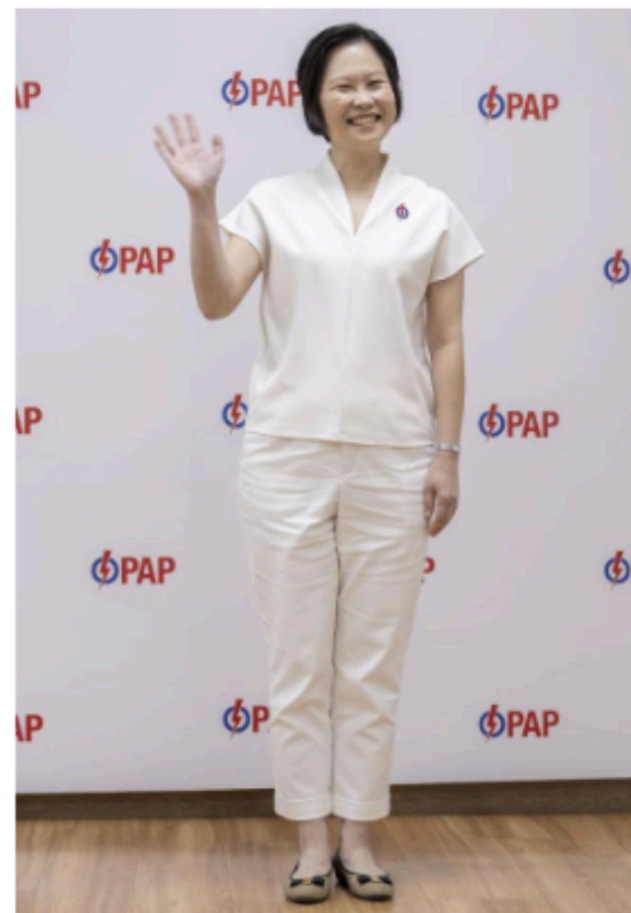
Singaporeans are discerning, and will vote for the party and candidate whom they trust to keep Singapore strong, united and ready for challenges ahead."

Ms Gan recounted the initial hesitation some Marymount residents had felt in 2020 about their estate being carved out from Bishan-Toa Payoh GRC, and for the new seat to be led by someone who was from the military.

Pandemic election rules that limited face-to-face interactions made it challenging for candidates to connect with residents, and it was also "a little awkward, maybe even uncomfortable", to be labelled a certain way when people did not know who she was, Ms Gan said without elaborating.

On Nomination Day in 2020, Ms Gan had cut a commanding figure behind the microphone. Clips of her rallying voters went viral, and some netizens joked that she could turn their cats into lions.

Today, she feels things have changed, given that she has had time to build a team, know her residents and to help the vulnerable



Minister of State for Manpower and Education Gan Siow Huang will defend her Marymount seat in the coming general election against Mr Jeffrey Khoo, who was part of PSP's best performing team at the 2020 polls. She said she is confident that she has built a community in Marymount, and that residents know who she is beyond her military background.
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among them. "I believe more residents now know and understand what matters to me and the work I do with my team," she said. "That gives me more confidence going into this election."

Ms Gan had said on April 18 that she would continue to be the PAP's candidate for Marymount SMC, during a press conference that also confirmed the ruling party's lineup for Bishan-Toa Payoh GRC.