

In Conversation with Christina Tan, CEO of Keppel Capital

“To be a resilient organisation that can outlast all of us...”, that is the long-term goal that Christina, or Chris as she is affectionally known, has for Keppel Capital. But while the Company has ambitious growth plans, Chris always reminds her staff that their fiduciary duties should always be carried out with integrity. Read on to find out what she values most in leadership, and also how Keppel Capital is navigating the COVID-19 pandemic and positioning itself for the future.

How is Keppel Capital navigating the Covid-19 pandemic, and has it disrupted plans for 2020?

The COVID-19 pandemic hasn't stopped us from creating value for our partners and stakeholders. Investors continue to be attracted to Keppel Capital, which they see as a part of the broader Keppel Group that can develop and operate real assets and also has an ecosystem of REITs and a business trust that can help to monetise the assets when they mature. I am proud that the entire team at Keppel Capital has kept their spirits up, not letting the pandemic disrupt our work, businesses and plans.

At Keppel Capital, digitalisation has always been a big part of our culture, which allowed us to seamlessly transit to working from home during the mandated circuit-breaker period in Singapore. In addition, digital tools and solutions have helped us maintain high levels of collaboration and social interaction.

In January, we successfully launched a

new US\$1 billion Keppel Asia Infrastructure Fund. The Fund provides global investors access to high quality infrastructure assets as we leverage the Keppel Group's knowhow, expertise and network in energy and infrastructure to create innovative investment solutions.

Even amidst the pandemic, Alpha Investment Partners (AIP), together with a Manulife subsidiary and PT Mega Manunggal Property Tbk, entered into a new venture focusing on Indonesia's fast-growing logistics property sector. Just recently, AIP also announced that Alpha Data Centre Fund will invest approximately RMB 1.5 billion to acquire and develop a high specification data centre in Huizhou's Tonghu Smart City.

Fund raising has continued to be strong in the year-to-date, with US\$1.5 billion raised for various fund initiatives including US\$800 million raised in April and May when many cities were locked down. The interest shown by sovereign wealth funds and large pension funds

shows that demand for real assets with cash flow and which serve as a long-term inflationary hedge remains strong.

As a protector of capital and creator of value, we constantly challenge ourselves to meet our investors' needs. Notwithstanding the headwinds caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, we will continue to steadfastly execute on our growth strategies and long-term goals that will benefit all our stakeholders.

Who would you say is a leader who has most influenced you or whom you most look up to?

One leader whom I particularly look up to is the late Mr Lee Kuan Yew. He was an exceptional leader and a true visionary – one who was fearless, authoritative and who held strong values. Singapore is a small country, but when he spoke, he spoke volumes and garnered much respect internationally.



How do you inculcate strong values in the team?

To be an organisation that can last for the next 50 or even 100 years, we need strong values that will drive a strong culture. We have to communicate and motivate our people to embrace a common set of core values that form the foundation on which we work and conduct ourselves.

At Keppel Capital, we always remind staff and new hires that while we may have ambitious growth plans, our fiduciary duties should always be carried out with integrity, which is key in the fund management business, or any business for that matter.

I sometimes share the example of workers in the tough, metal industry who save their monies in pension plans. These are the real people and real savings behind the investors that we have. When we invest, we are indirectly helping them invest their retirement monies, and our fiduciary responsibilities require us to protect their capital and create value.

How do you build an innovative culture and drive innovation in the company?

I believe that all of us can be innovators and creators, if we dare to dream big, think differently and work creatively.

One of the ways we encourage innovativeness is through offsite meetings where staff from different countries and departments collaborate and come up with ideas for new projects and initiatives. Through platforms such as these, new ideas have arisen and we have implemented some of them successfully in our projects.

On a more personal note, what is one word that describes you the best?

People who know me tend to say that I am intuitive. I can read people quite well. In negotiations, being able to read body language helps me to create rapport, close discussions and win investors over.

What advice would you give to working mothers on how best to balance work and family?

Enjoy what you are doing.

If you love what you do, not only will you not find it tiring, you will tend to give it more than 100%. I believe in

living in the moment. At work, I am very focused, and when I am at home, I concentrate on spending quality time with my family.

I am known by my children and their friends as the 'cool mom' at home. I am like a friend to my children and sometimes join them at events like pop concerts.

I do check on their work regularly, but I am not too bothered if they don't do very well in tests. There are many avenues in life. They will just have to put in more effort and try to do better next time.

Which is your favourite travel destination?

My family and I love theme parks, so if I have to choose a favourite travel destination, it would be the Walt Disney World Resort in Orlando, Florida. We went there a couple of years ago and the 3D ride, 'Avatar Flight of Passage', was exhilarating. 

