

## **DAP women lock horns over allocation**

**MalaysiaKini.com**

**Aug 30, 2013**

**By Low Chia Ming & Susan Loone**

Former state executive councillor Lydia Ong took a swipe at her successor Chong Eng for questioning the allocation of funds for an arts and cultural centre during her tenure in the Youth and Sports, Women, Family and Community Development Council.

Ong held the post since 2008 and was replaced by Chong Eng after the May 5 general election this year.

dap congress 161212 chong engShe openly criticised Chong Eng (right), who now held her portfolio, for being "too political" in her decision making, adding that the new state exco did not understand the allocation procedure of the state administration.

She was responding to Chong Eng's interview in a Chinese daily where the latter was quoted as saying she did not know why Ong had allocated money to Cultural Creative Industries Research and Development Centre during her tenure.

"Chong Eng's remarks are misleading and can undermine public confidence in the state government's allocation procedure," said Ong.

"She seems to be saying that the state government had simply given out the money," she added at a press meet held together with the centre's president Joan Cheong and a group of artists.

"Chong Eng should learn about the centre's background and operation, including the allocation application mechanism before uttering any comments, to avoid hurting other people's feelings," said the Berapit assemblyperson.

Ong said failing to do so would be "irresponsible" for Chong Eng, who is also Padang Lalang assemblywoman.

'I did not act on my own'

Ong denied acting on her own when allocating money to any group as such matters would be discussed and approved in a committee meeting before being submitted to the executive council for approval.

The approval of Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng would be obtained as well for such allocations, she claimed.

NONE "This matter (allocation to the Centre) had been raised in the women's development committee for discussion and Chong Eng was part of it," said Ong (photo, left).

"Maybe she was absent during the discussion and did not read the minutes of the meetings," she added.

She denied ever hiring consultants or event companies during the five years she had led the council, claiming that her department had carried out the job on its own.

Ong claimed that the biggest amount of allocations which she had handled included giving RM150,000 to the centre and another RM150,000 for the Women's Center for Change, to form a women's service center in the mainland.

On her relationship with Chong Eng, she said they were not as close as in the past, when the former was Bukit Mertajam MP, prior to 2008.

She blamed that on Chong Eng's tendency to make decisions based on political considerations.

She cited examples of this where she alleged that Chong Eng had asked her to remove members from the Penang Sports Council and replace them with party members.

Ong said she would be withdrawing her participation from the women's development committee soon and from the 2012 state-initiated Penang Women's Development Corporation.

But she was quick to clarify that she was withdrawing because she had settled all her tasks and wanted to "focus on her constituency", including her involvement in the Public Works, Traffic and Village Security and Development committees.

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