

PRESS RELEASE

Work procedures were continually streamlined and productivity improved. The handling capacity was increased six-fold - from some 600 registrants a day in the early stages of the

exercise to an average of 3,600 per day, with the same number of staff. The performance record was achieved in the Hong Kah North CC where 4,038 IC holders were re-registered in a single day. This works out to a turn-around time of 1.6 minutes per registrant throughout the 10-hour day.

Much of the registration work, preparation and procedures were done with the aid of computer equipment. In this regard, the supportive role and contributions of the National Computer Board (NCB) were invaluable. NCB staff worked hand-in-glove with NRO to design, implement and fine-tune the computerised systems and equipment used in the re-registration effort. I commend the support staff from the NCB for their professionalism. The blood grouping teams from the Singapore Civil Defence Force and the crowd control personnel from the Singapore Police Force also deserve special mention for their support.

The People's Association was especially helpful in making available its community centres and clubs to minimise travel for residents. Grassroots leaders, some of whom are here with us today, helped out by publicising the schedule of visits, registration procedures and reminding residents to bring along the required documents. Some even organised buses to bring residents to the CCs. Others proposed adjustments to the venues and made valuable suggestions to enable the NRO to be more responsive to the needs of residents. Thank you for your support.

That the NRO was able to complete this re-registration exercise in just over three years reflects the dedication of NRO staff and the understanding of their family members. No doubt many holiday plans were deferred with staff having to persevere through long working hours. Some had to miss their precious weekend family outings in order to serve those IC holders who could only come on weekends. Even backroom support personnel manning computers and card production centres rallied and doubled up in shifts to cope with the extra workload. Well done.

Many Singaporeans were pleasantly surprised at the hassle-free procedures and the quick turn-around time. Some took the effort to provide valuable feedback and compliments, which in turn encouraged NRO staff to give their best. For instance, NRO even sent a team offshore, to re-register residents at Pulau Ubin, even though residents could easily have been required to make the trip to Changi CC.

There are, however, still another 170,000 or about seven per cent of IC holders who have yet to respond to this re-registration exercise. Some of them may be overseas on work or study. But there are also others who have not registered for some other reasons. I urge this group to go early to the NRO's Head Office at Colombo Court to re-register their ICs. A grace period of 14 months, that is till the end of next year, will be given to this group.

During the grace period, NRO will continue to make house-calls to issue new ICs to the aged and invalid, and to those who are immobile and confined to approved government and private institutions.

From 1 January 1996, the old laminated ICs will no longer be valid for use as a document of identification in Singapore. It is therefore important that those who have not yet re-registered do so immediately and not wait till the last minute.

The smooth completion of the NRIC Re-registration exercise at community centres is the result of a cohesive society working together in a spirit of understanding and accommodation. My appreciation goes out to all who have in one way or another helped to make this nationwide exercise a success.

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