

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
SINGAPORE
OFFICIAL REPORT
CONTENTS

Written Answers to Questions

| | Page |
|---|-------------|
| <u>1. Underground Connection between Marina Bay MRT Station and Downtown MRT Station (Mr Gan Thiam Poh)</u> | 1 |
| <u>2. High Covered Shelter for Boarding and Alighting of Passengers at Bus Stops (Mr Gan Thiam Poh)</u> | 1 |
| <u>3. Profile of Persons Caught for Offences Related to Personal Mobility Devices and Efforts to Reach Out to Elderly PMD Users (Mr Desmond Choo)</u> | 1 |
| <u>4. Number of Singaporeans Continuing to Work beyond 62 and 67 Years Old over Last Five Years (Mr Desmond Choo)</u> | 2 |
| <u>5. Number of Identity Cards Reported Lost Annually (Ms Joan Pereira)</u> | 3 |
| <u>6. MNC Investments in Singapore (Mr Gan Thiam Poh)</u> | 3 |
| <u>7. Update on Design, Build and Sell Scheme for HDB Flats (Mr Leon Perera)</u> | 5 |
| <u>8. Cause of Water Pipe Leakage at Somerset Road on 16 January 2018 (Ms Joan Pereira)</u> | 5 |

UNDERGROUND CONNECTION BETWEEN MARINA BAY MRT STATION AND DOWNTOWN MRT STATION

1 **Mr Gan Thiam Poh** asked the Minister for Transport (a) whether there will be an underground connection between Marina Bay MRT Station and Downtown MRT station; and (b) if not, whether LTA can consider building a permanent covered linkway connecting both stations on the road surface level.

Mr Khaw Boon Wan: The Marina Bay and Downtown MRT stations will be connected via an underground link. The Land Transport Authority will work with the Urban Redevelopment Authority to provide for the underground link as part of its future plans.

[Back to Contents](#)

HIGH COVERED SHELTER FOR BOARDING AND ALIGHTING OF PASSENGERS AT BUS STOPS

2 **Mr Gan Thiam Poh** asked the Minister for Transport whether there is a plan to enhance existing bus stops to include a high cover of 4.5 metres and above that extends into the bus bay so as to provide a covered shelter for boarding and alighting of passengers.

Mr Khaw Boon Wan: Where space permits, such shelters will be built, with priority given to the most heavily utilised bus-stops, especially those connected to MRT stations. More than a quarter of the bus stops at MRT stations have cantilever shelters.

[Back to Contents](#)

PROFILE OF PERSONS CAUGHT FOR OFFENCES RELATED TO PERSONAL MOBILITY DEVICES AND EFFORTS TO REACH OUT TO ELDERLY PMD USERS

3 **Mr Desmond Choo** asked the Minister for Transport (a) what is the profile of persons caught for offences related to their personal mobility devices (PMD); and (b) what are the efforts to reach out to the elderly PMD users who may not be aware of the PMD regulations.

Mr Khaw Boon Wan: In 2017, the Land Transport Authority (LTA) and Traffic Police

caught about 460 personal mobility device (PMD) riders for the offence of riding PMDs on roads, and issued about 1,800 advisories for unsafe riding behaviours on public paths. About a quarter of these persons were over 50 years old.

LTA has launched several campaigns to raise awareness amongst cyclists and PMD users on safe riding habits and the active mobility rules and code of conduct. The campaign messages have been translated into vernacular languages and disseminated widely. In addition, LTA also works with Active Mobility Patrol volunteers to engage and educate the public, including the elderly, on safe riding practices.

Elderly PMD users can also learn more about safe riding behaviours, proper use of active mobility infrastructure, and PMD regulations from the Safe Riding Programme jointly developed by LTA and the Singapore Road Safety Council, which is available at designated community centres.

[Back to Contents](#)

NUMBER OF SINGAPOREANS CONTINUING TO WORK BEYOND 62 AND 67 YEARS OLD OVER LAST FIVE YEARS

4 **Mr Desmond Choo** asked the Minister for Manpower (a) over the last five years, how many Singaporeans continued to work beyond 62 years old and 67 years old respectively; and (b) what are the respective profiles of Singaporeans who are employed beyond 67 years of age and their jobs.

Mr Lim Swee Say: The number of employed residents aged 62 and over, and 67 and over has increased over the last five years (see Table 1).

Table 1: Number of Employed Residents, 2013 to 2017 (June)

| Age | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 |
|-----------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 62 & Over | 166,800 | 193,400 | 195,000 | 212,000 | 230,500 |
| 67 & Over | 61,700 | 77,700 | 77,400 | 85,000 | 100,900 |

Source: Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

Of all employed residents aged 67 and over in 2017: 64% were males; 80% held secondary

and below qualifications, 9% had post-secondary qualifications, while 11% were tertiary-educated; 52% of this group of older workers were employed as production & transport operators, cleaners & labourers, 26% were clerical, sales & service workers, and 22% professionals, managers, executives & technicians. This is broadly in line with their educational profile.

[Back to Contents](#)

NUMBER OF IDENTITY CARDS REPORTED LOST ANNUALLY

5 Ms Joan Pereira asked the Minister for Home Affairs (a) in the last three years, how many identity cards have been reported lost annually; (b) what is the trend over the last decade; (c) how many requests have there been for waiver of the replacement fee; and (d) whether the Ministry will implement a procedure where applicants who appeal for a waiver of the replacement fee can have their qualifying status verified through a central co-ordination point.

Mr K Shanmugam: Losing an Identity Card (IC) is a serious matter as the lost IC may be misused to commit identity fraud and for illicit transactions.

In the last three years, the Immigration & Checkpoints Authority (ICA) received around 31,500 reports of lost ICs annually. Around 13% were granted fee waivers for the replacement ICs.

The trend of lost ICs has been relatively stable over the past decade.

There is no fixed qualifying criteria for the waiver of the IC replacement fee. ICA will consider the circumstances of each case. It may grant a waiver in situations where it assesses that the loss of the IC was not due to negligence, but circumstances beyond the cardholder's control, for example, if he or she had been a victim of crime. We are not able to develop a mechanism or system to automate such assessments, and which the public can use to check if they would qualify for waiver of the IC replacement fee.

[Back to Contents](#)

MNC INVESTMENTS IN SINGAPORE

6 Mr Gan Thiam Poh asked the Minister for Trade and Industry (Industry) (a) how many MNCs have withdrawn their investment from Singapore in the past eight years; (b) what are the reasons for their withdrawal and the industries they come from; and (c) how many MNCs have

increased their investment in Singapore during the same period and what are the industries they are mainly in.

Mr S Iswaran: Multinational Corporations (MNCs) have been an important driver of Singapore's economic growth. They have brought technology, technical know-how and well-paying jobs to Singapore, complementing investments made by Singapore companies. Singapore's pro-business environment, strong connectivity, and well-educated workforce have allowed us to continue positioning ourselves as a strategic base for MNCs looking to serve Asian markets.

Even in a healthy economy, we expect to see a continuous churn of firms, with some bringing in investments while others moving out of Singapore due to a combination of internal and external factors. Firm-specific reasons for locating or relocating business functions and operations range from changes in management and strategy, as well as organisational restructuring in response to competition and the state of their respective industries.

It is thus more indicative to look at overall trends instead of tracking decisions of individual firms. The total number of firms in Singapore has been increasing steadily, from about 163,600 in 2010 to 216,900 in 2016. Foreign-owned firms¹ have been growing in tandem with local firms, making up around 16% of the total number of firms, 30% of employment and 56% to value-added (VA) throughout the period.

Overall trends show that investments have continued to flow into Singapore in the past eight years. The stock of foreign direct investments (FDI) have grown at a compounded annual growth rate (CAGR) of about 13%², reaching S\$1.36 trillion in 2016.

These investments are also made in key areas identified by the Committee on Future Economy, such as advanced manufacturing, digital and hub services, as well as research and development activities across various industries including biomedical manufacturing, electronics, infocomms and media, and logistics.

In particular, there have been an increase in investments in digitalisation and robotics across various industries. For example, in 2017, Procter & Gamble announced plans to invest S\$400 million to set up its first digital innovation centre outside of the US in Singapore; and

¹ Defined as firms with more than 50% foreign equity.

² 2008-2016, 8 year CAGR

Yusen Logistics broke ground for its first future-ready warehouse as a part of a S\$50 million investment to boost operations in Singapore. These new, large investments reflect the continued confidence and commitment of MNCs in Singapore.

[Back to Contents](#)

UPDATE ON DESIGN, BUILD AND SELL SCHEME FOR HDB FLATS

7 **Mr Leon Perera** asked the Minister for National Development whether he can provide for an update on the Ministry's plan to review the Design, Build and Sell Scheme (DBSS) for HDB flats.

Mr Lawrence Wong: The land sales for the Design, Build and Sell Scheme (DBSS) has been suspended since 2012, and MND has no plans to reactivate the scheme.

We remain focused on ensuring that homebuyers have access to a variety of affordable housing options, especially young couples who are buying their first home. These objectives can be met with new BTO flats and Executive Condominiums, as well as the many housing options available in the resale market.

[Back to Contents](#)

CAUSE OF WATER PIPE LEAKAGE AT SOMERSET ROAD ON 16 JANUARY 2018

8 **Ms Joan Pereira** asked the Minister for the Environment and Water Resources (a) what is the cause of the water pipe leak at Somerset Road on 16 January 2018; (b) when was the pipe last checked as part of PUB's routine maintenance; and (c) what is the impact of continuous heavy rainfall on the underground soil where this water pipe is laid.

Mr Masagos Zulkifli B M M: The water pipe leak at Somerset Road on 16 January 2018 was due to stress to the pipe caused by uneven soil settlement. We have isolated the leaking section of the pipe and put the rest of the pipeline back in service. The affected stretch of pipeline is in the process of being replaced under PUB's Pipeline Renewal Programme.

As part of its operation and maintenance regime, PUB carries out checks for leaks on its entire pipe network at least once a year, or more frequently where necessary. The pipe at Somerset Road, which is made of cast iron and laid in 1973, was last checked for leaks in

December 2017, with no leak found. We have not observed any correlation between rainfall and the number of leaks.

When leaks occur, PUB seeks to fix them in the shortest time possible as permitted by site conditions while minimising the disruption to customers and the public. PUB officers need time to identify the pipe and the valves that need to be shut so as to isolate the leak, identify the customers who are potentially affected, and set up the appropriate alternative supply provisions. For the leak at Somerset Road, temporary supply connections to these customers were set up in tandem with the repair works to limit the disruption to public. The repair works had to proceed carefully due to the need to minimise road closures and the presence of several other buried services belonging to the electrical and telecommunications companies near the site. PUB worked together with these companies to ensure that its repair works did not affect other critical services.

To reduce the risk of pipe leaks, including those caused by uneven soil settlement, PUB has been laying pipes made of more resilient materials such as ductile iron and steel, and has adopted enhanced pipe-laying practices such as pipe bedding for better pipe support. Furthermore, we have put in place regulations to ensure that contractors take proper measures to prevent damage to our pipelines during construction activities.

Besides these measures, PUB proactively replaces older pipes or pipes which are in less satisfactory condition under its Pipeline Renewal Programme and is targeting to replace 50 km of such pipes this year, a 20 km increase from last year.

[Back to Contents](#)

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