

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES**  
**SINGAPORE**  
**OFFICIAL REPORT**  
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## SCORING METHODOLOGY USED TO DETERMINE CIVIL SERVANTS' CURRENT ESTIMATED POTENTIAL

1 **Mr Louis Ng Kok Kwang** asked the Prime Minister whether the Ministry will be able to (i) provide greater transparency on the scoring methodology used to determine a civil servant's Current Estimated Potential (CEP) as well as an officer's CEP score at a point in time and (ii) implement a 360-degree feedback appraisal system for civil servants which is currently common practice in the private sector.

**Mr Teo Chee Hean (for the Prime Minister):** The Civil Service uses Currently Estimated Potential (CEP) as one tool to plan for the career development of officers. CEP is expressed in terms of the highest job responsibility level an officer is currently assessed to be capable of handling in the future. Hence an officer's CEP may change with assessment over time. CEP is assessed based on demonstrated "AIM" qualities, which stand for (1) Analytical and Intellectual Capacity; (2) Influence and Collaboration; and (3) Motivation for Excellence. After a supervisor assesses his officer for CEP, the assessment is subject to counter-signing and ranking processes at the Ministry level, to ensure that the assessment is robust and fair.

All officers have access to information on the CEP assessment framework and definitions of the AIM qualities through Instruction Manuals, assessment guides, and training by the Civil Service College. Our agencies also encourage supervisors to have frank conversations with officers and help them along in their career development. We are placing emphasis on developing supervisors so that they are better prepared to coach their officers.

The Civil Service encourages timely and regular feedback as part of the appraisal process. Today, leaders receive 360 degree feedback on their leadership qualities when they attend milestone leadership development programmes. The feedback helps them to understand their strengths, developmental areas and blind spots, and motivates them to improve. For other officers, the feedback loop is generally between officers and their supervisors through day to day interactions and work review sessions which culminate in the completion of their Individual Development Plans. The Civil Service is looking into ways to make "giving timely feedback to one another" a cultural norm.

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## BREACHES OF COOLING-OFF DAY REGULATIONS

2 **Assoc Prof Daniel Goh Pei Siong** asked the Prime Minister (a) since the introduction of Cooling-Off Day regulations, how many individuals have been investigated by the Elections Department for the publication of electoral advertising on the Internet for (i) the People's Action Party and (ii) other parties on Cooling-Off Day and Polling Day; (b) how does the Department come to be alerted to these individuals' publications; and (c) what are its priorities in selecting the individuals to be investigated.

**Mr Chan Chun Sing (for the Prime Minister):** The prohibition of election advertising on Cooling-Off Day and Polling Day allows voters time to step back from the excitement and emotion of campaigning, to reflect on the issues at stake before casting their votes. In assessing whether any breaches have occurred online, the Elections Department (ELD) takes into consideration the intent, reach and impact of the posts published, regardless for whom the posts are made.

In the various elections since the Cooling-Off Day was introduced in 2011, right up to GE2015, the ELD had investigated more than 100 cases involving candidates and supporters from both the ruling and opposition parties for potential breaches of the election advertising law. The approach then was to give warnings in respect of these breaches. However, despite the fact that Cooling-Off Day had been publicised several times, the ELD observed what appeared to be deliberate and serious breaches of the law during the 2016 Bukit Batok By-Election. These posts were published in spite of the advisory that the ELD had issued prior to Cooling-Off Day and a subsequent reminder on Cooling-Off Day against such activities. Given the egregious nature of these breaches, the ELD reported them to the Police for further investigation.

The ELD relies on different sources of information to identify potential breaches. For instance, the ELD monitors candidates' declared campaigning sites as well as online platforms that regularly engage in discussion, propagation or promotion of political issues. The ELD will also look into feedback or complaints from candidates or members of the public.

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## REVIEW OF VOTING AGE

3 **Ms Sylvia Lim** asked the Prime Minister whether the Government will review the voting

age.

**Mr Chan Chun Sing (for the Prime Minister):** Our minimum voting age is set at 21 under Section 5 of the Parliamentary Elections Act. The reasons for keeping to this minimum voting age had been explained in this House before on more than one occasion. Let me state them again.

Voting in elections is a very serious matter. Voters choose their Member of Parliament and in turn the group of individuals they will entrust to eventually form the government, or the President to exercise the custodial and veto powers set out in the Constitution. This is a choice that a voter needs to have the necessary maturity to make.

These reasons for keeping the minimum voting age at 21 remain valid today, and we have no plans to review it.

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## **MEASURES TO REQUIRE BANKS TO UPGRADE BRANCH SECURITY PROTOCOLS**

4 **Ms Sylvia Lim** asked the Prime Minister what measures are being considered by MAS to require banks to upgrade their branch security protocols in light of the recent bank robbery incident at Holland Village on 7 July 2016.

**Mr Tharman Shanmugaratnam (for the Prime Minister):** The Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS) expects banks to carry out thorough security threat assessments for all their branches and ensure that they have appropriate measures in place to mitigate security risks.

Following the recent robbery, MAS and the Singapore Police Force (SPF) have reminded banks to conduct regular threat assessments and to enhance security measures where necessary. These measures include ensuring closed circuit television systems and panic alarms are in good working order, as well as deploying armed security personnel to safeguard premises that are assessed to be high-risk or vulnerable. In addition to adopting security measures, banks are reminded that in the event of a robbery, the safety of employees and customers are paramount and that bank staff should be properly trained to act in an appropriate manner and to call the police only when safe to do so.

MAS is also collaborating with the SPF and the Association of Banks in Singapore on

enhancing physical security best practices including drawing on learning points from this recent incident.

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## **BUILDING OF ADDITIONAL MRT STATION BETWEEN CHUA CHU KANG AND BUKIT GOMBAK MRT STATIONS**

5 **Mr Zaqy Mohamad** asked the Minister for Transport (a) whether the Ministry will review the building of an additional MRT station between Chua Chu Kang and Bukit Gombak MRT stations to serve the large number of residents who will be moving into BTO units in Keat Hong and Chua Chu Kang Towns and the future Tengah Town; and (b) what are the technical and cost considerations in the Ministry's review on such a viability.

**Mr Khaw Boon Wan:** Ridership is a key consideration in deciding whether to build an additional MRT station. In this case, while there will be some increase in ridership with the new BTO units, it is still insufficient to support a new station for now. We will continue to monitor developments in the area and will reconsider our position if and when the ridership case becomes stronger.

Meanwhile, to serve the additional residents in the area, three new bus services have been introduced under the Bus Service Enhancement Programme. This should be sufficient for now. We will further increase bus services and capacity as necessary.

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## **REDUCING LIGHT POLLUTION ON STREETS AND ITS IMPACT ON SAFETY**

6 **Mr Seah Kian Peng** asked the Minister for Transport whether LTA has plans to reduce light pollution on the streets and how will LTA balance the issue of lighting and its impact on safety given that Singapore is the most light-polluted country based on the latest issue of Science Advances Journal.

**Mr Khaw Boon Wan:** Street lighting in Singapore is provided in accordance with international standards for road safety. Reducing the level of lighting will endanger motorists and pedestrians. Light pollution is naturally highest in densely populated cities. Singapore is the only

city-state included in the study, which could explain our high ranking.

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## **MAKING BUS STOPS FRIENDLY TO WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE BUSES**

7 **Mr Dennis Tan Lip Fong** asked the Minister for Transport (a) how many of the 169 bus stops that were inaccessible to Wheelchair Accessible Buses (WABs) in 2013 remain inaccessible today; (b) what are the criteria for bus stops to have priority conversion to being wheelchair-accessible; (c) whether consecutive bus stops along the same road are part of this criteria; and (d) when will all bus stops be converted to become WAB-accessible bus stops and whether there is a deadline for this.

**Mr Khaw Boon Wan:** 137 bus stops are not yet wheelchair-accessible. This is less than 3% of our 4,700 bus stops. The site conditions of these bus stops make conversion challenging. For example, new footpaths may have to be built and major drains covered. In extremis, the entire bus stop and bus bay may have to be rebuilt.

LTA is targeting to upgrade all these bus stops by 2020. The implementation schedule takes into consideration various factors including if consecutive bus stops along the same road are wheelchair inaccessible.

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## **EFFECT OF ISLAND-WIDE ELECTRIC CAR SHARING PROGRAMME ON COE QUOTAS**

8 **Miss Cheng Li Hui** asked the Minister for Transport whether the vehicles that are part of the island-wide electric car sharing programme will affect COE quotas.

**Mr Khaw Boon Wan:** As the Electric Vehicles (EV) Car-Sharing Scheme is a trial to test EVs in fleet-based operations, the COEs used to register the EVs will not be drawn from the COE quota.

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## **MINIMUM WIDTH OF FOOTPATHS FOR SAFE USE BY PEDESTRIANS AND CYCLISTS**

9 **Er Dr Lee Bee Wah** asked the Minister for Transport given that pedestrians have to share footpaths with cyclists (a) whether the Ministry will review the minimum width for all footpaths so that there is sufficient room for both pedestrians and cyclists to use them safely; and (b) when will the Ministry roll out a comprehensive policy to give clarity to the rules governing the use of bicycles, e-bikes, personal mobility devices, and the enforcement and penalties for offenders.

**Mr Khaw Boon Wan:** Our footpaths are generally about 1.5 to 1.8 metres wide, but can be as wide as 3.6 metres where there is high pedestrian traffic. New footpaths along roads will be at least 1.8 metres wide. For existing footpaths, we will widen them where we can.

Footpaths can be found nearly everywhere. Allowing cyclists to share them with pedestrians is helpful as we promote and facilitate safe cycling. However, we clearly prefer dedicated cycling paths and will continue to expand the network of cycling paths in all our HDB towns. As we have said before, cyclists must be considerate and gracious on footpaths and always give way to pedestrians. This is for their safety and that of other path users.

The Active Mobility Advisory Panel had released to the public its full report and recommendations in March this year. As announced at the Ministry's Committee of Supply debate, the Government has accepted in full the Panel's recommendations. We will need some time to put them into legislation. This should be done by the end of this year. In the meantime, LTA, together with Traffic Police, NParks and Town Councils, will be stepping up our enforcement and education efforts, including through posters and pamphlets.

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## **SERVICE STANDARDS FOR RESPONDING TO CALLS VIA EMERGENCY**

### **CALL BUTTONS ON MRT TRAINS**

10 **Mr Low Thia Khiang** asked the Minister for Transport (a) what are the service standards for responding to calls made via the emergency call buttons on MRT trains; (b) what alternative action can commuters take to stop a moving train in cases that the station control cannot be reached during an emergency; and (c) how does LTA intend to enhance emergency procedures for commuters on MRT and LRT trains.

**Mr Khaw Boon Wan:** There are several ways for commuters to raise an alert or stop the

train in an emergency. First, they can contact the train captain, station staff or the Operations Control Centre (OCC) using the intercom units inside the trains and on station platforms. LRT passengers can also call the OCC using their mobile phones. The OCC contact numbers are displayed inside the LRT trains. Second, commuters can use the emergency stop buttons on station platforms, the intercom units inside MRT trains, and the “Emergency Next Station Stop” buttons inside Bukit Panjang LRT (BPLRT) trains, to bring the train to a safe stop.

The train operators are required to ensure that these mechanisms function properly, and that train captains, and station and OCC staff respond in a timely manner. LTA and the operators review these safety facilities and procedures periodically. LTA is currently investigating the Bukit Panjang LRT incident.

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### **REASON TRAIN CAR AT BUKIT PANJANG LRT FAILED TO STOP AT THREE STATIONS ON 28 JULY 2016**

11 **Mr Liang Eng Hwa** asked the Minister for Transport (a) whether LTA has investigated the reasons why a train car at Bukit Panjang LRT (BPLRT) failed to stop for three stations on 28 July 2016; and (b) in light of reports of jerking actions on some train cars by commuters, whether the BPLRT poses any safety issues for commuters.

**Mr Khaw Boon Wan:** Investigations are on-going. But preliminarily, reports from SMRT point to the fact that the Train Stop Antenna system was faulty. The Train Stop Antenna system controls the start and stop of the LRT train at each station. As the system was faulty, the train did not detect that it was arriving at the three stations from Jelapang to Bukit Panjang, and hence did not stop.

The safety of the passengers was not compromised during the incident. The BPLRT is protected by the Automatic Train Protection (ATP) System. This ensures that trains do not exceed the maximum operating speed of 55km/hr, and that a minimum safe distance is kept between any two trains at all times. The ATP operates independently of the Train Stop Antenna system. The ATP system was functioning properly, and halted the train before Phoenix station, as it had detected another train ahead. As the ATP system is safety-critical, it has built-in redundancy. If one ATP Antenna malfunctions, the back-up will immediately take over. LTA and SMRT are working with the manufacturer, Bombardier, on the possibility of incorporating a

similar redundancy into the Train Stop Antenna system.

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## **SOLE DISTRIBUTORSHIP AGREEMENTS UNDER COMPETITION ACT**

12 **Dr Tan Wu Meng** asked the Minister for Trade and Industry (Trade) (a) whether the Competition Commission of Singapore regards sole distributorship agreements as anti-competitive under the Competition Act; and (b) if so, what are the preferred modes of redress for sole distributorship agreements.

**Mr Lim Hng Kiang:** Sole distributorship agreements are generally understood as vertical agreements, whereby a supplier sells its product through a single distributor. Such vertical agreements are not agreements between competitors and hence do not in themselves constitute anti-competitive behaviour under the Competition Act<sup>1</sup>. However, anti-competitive behaviour can arise in a situation where a sole distributor abuses its market power to impose other restrictions in the market to impede its competitors from competing. The Competition Commission of Singapore (CCS) will have to assess each case based on the specific facts to determine if there is any infringement of the Act.

In the event where a sole distributor is found to have infringed the Act, CCS has the power to impose a financial penalty on the infringing player, and also issue directions to bring the infringement to an end. This may include directing the infringing player to amend its sole distributorship agreement by removing the offending clauses, or by terminating the entire agreement.

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## **USE OF CPF ORDINARY ACCOUNT BY HDB LESSEES TO SERVICE HOME LOANS**

13 **Mr Chen Show Mao** asked the Minister for Manpower (a) how many current HDB lessees have reached their (i) Valuation Limit (VL) or (ii) Withdrawal Limit (WL) for the use of their CPF Ordinary Account to service their home loans; (b) how many appeals have been received by CPF Board or HDB in 2014 and 2015 for the continued use of CPF to finance HDB

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<sup>1</sup>Section 34 of the Competition Act (Cap. 50B)

mortgages; and (c) how many appeals have been successful.

**Mr Lim Swee Say:** The Valuation Limit (VL) policy encourages CPF members to make prudent property purchases and take up housing loans within their financial means. This helps to minimise the risk of CPF members not being able to recover the full amount of CPF that they had withdrawn for their property purchases upon sale.

The VL is set at the lower of the purchase price or property value at the time of purchase. CPF members who have set aside their Basic Retirement Sum (BRS) can continue to use their CPF savings above the VL for housing. However, for properties purchased with bank loans, there is a cap known as the Withdrawal Limit (WL) which is set at 120% of the VL. In the case of Build-To-Order flats purchased with HDB loans, both the VL and WL do not apply as these are sold at subsidised prices.

Currently, more than 500,000 HDB lessees use their CPF savings to service their housing instalments. Of these, about 15,000 (2.8%) have reached their VL and are still using CPF for their housing instalments. Another 2,500 (0.5%) have less than the BRS and hence cannot use CPF savings beyond their VL for housing. The number of lessees who have reached the WL is about 60 (0.01%).

For affected CPF members who find it difficult to service their housing loans in cash after they reach the VL, flexibility can be provided upon appeal. In 2014 and 2015, CPF Board received a total of about 6,000 appeals, including repeated appeals, from members to use CPF savings beyond their VL. The majority of appeals from single property owners were successful. However, the general principle remains that members should be prudent in their housing purchase decisions, so as to put aside sufficient savings for their retirement needs.

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## **UPDATE ON EFFECTIVENESS OF COMPULSORY DAY OFF POLICY FOR FOREIGN DOMESTIC WORKERS**

14 **Mr Kok Heng Leun** asked the Minister for Manpower (a) if he can provide an update on the effectiveness of the compulsory day off policy for foreign domestic workers; and (b) for 2014 and 2015, what is the number of (i) foreign domestic workers who do not have a weekly day off (ii) foreign domestic workers who are not compensated if they do not have a weekly day off (iii) complaints which the Ministry has received about employers not granting rest days and

(iv) complaints which the Ministry has received about employers not compensating foreign domestic workers in lieu of not taking their weekly day off.

**Mr Lim Swee Say:** The rest day policy introduced in 2013 requires employers to provide their Foreign Domestic Workers (FDWs) with a weekly rest day while giving employers the flexibility to compensate their FDWs with extra pay if the FDW agrees to work on her rest day. This arrangement is in recognition that some employers may have genuine difficulties giving FDWs weekly rest days and that some FDWs may prefer the option to work and earn more by forgoing their rest days.

This policy has been making encouraging progress. Since its introduction, the vast majority of our FDWs have reported having rest days. In a 2015 survey of FDWs, it was found that 97.5%, or almost all, received at least one rest day every month, up from 53% in 2010. Furthermore, more than 55% received a weekly rest day in 2015, up from 13% in 2010.

Complaints from FDWs to MOM regarding rest day arrangements and compensation-in-lieu of rest days are small in number. There were around 40 complaints received by MOM from 2014 to 2015, representing less than 0.02% of the FDW population. No rest day-related violations were found in these cases from MOM's investigations. Our investigations showed that some of the FDWs wanted to change their rest day agreement with their employers while others were unsure if they had been paid rest day compensation. MOM resolved these cases after clarification with the respective FDWs and employers.

To minimise misunderstandings, we have enhanced the In-Principle Approval letter sent out to all FDWs before they arrive in Singapore. This letter, in the FDW's native language, details the FDW's basic salary, the number of agreed rest days, and the compensation for each rest day foregone. The letter allows the FDW to be fully aware of her salary and rest day compensation before she decides to come to Singapore.

It is important that FDWs are treated fairly. FDWs who need assistance on issues relating to rest days can approach MOM through our MOM FDW hotline.

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## **MINIMUM YEARS OF CITIZENSHIP AS ADDITIONAL QUALIFYING CRITERION FOR SILVER SUPPORT SCHEME**

15 **Miss Cheng Li Hui** asked the Minister for Manpower whether the Ministry will

consider imposing the criterion that in order to qualify for the Silver Support Scheme, eligible Singaporeans must have been citizens for at least a certain number of years.

**Mr Lim Swee Say:** The Silver Support Scheme is the latest addition to our social safety net. It provides a cash supplement to the bottom 20% of Singaporeans aged 65 and above, who had low wages through life and who currently have little or no family support.

The Pioneer Generation Package (PGP) is the only scheme that considers the year in which an individual becomes a citizen. This criterion is relevant because the PGP is meant to honour and thank all members of the first generation of Singaporeans who contributed to Singapore's nation-building. It included all pioneers, irrespective of their means.

The Silver Support Scheme on the other hand, like all other social assistance schemes, provides targeted support to Singaporeans who require additional help, regardless of their length of citizenship. Such schemes have various eligibility criteria in place to help ensure that the support is channelled to the intended beneficiaries.

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## **USE OF MEDISAVE ACCOUNTS OF DECEASED MEMBERS FOR THEIR FUNERAL EXPENSES BY FAMILY MEMBERS**

**16 Ms Foo Mee Har** asked the Minister for Manpower whether balances in the Medisave accounts of deceased members can be deployed by family members to fund the funeral expenses of the deceased members according to their wishes.

**Mr Lim Swee Say:** When a CPF member passes on, all CPF savings, including those in the Medisave Account are disbursed based on a CPF member's nomination. In the absence of a nomination, they are disbursed by the Public Trustee according to intestacy laws.

With a valid CPF nomination, nominees will generally receive their monies within four weeks from the date CPF Board receives their applications. This is because processing time is needed to check and verify the applications and supporting documents, to ensure that payments are made to the rightful nominees. Nominees who are responsible for the last rites can then use the bequest to pay for the funeral expenses.

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## **LICENSED FOREIGN EMPLOYEE DORMITORIES**

17 **Assoc Prof Randolph Tan** asked the Minister for Manpower (a) how many foreign employee dormitories are currently licensed; (b) how many licensed operators have had enforcement actions taken against them; and (c) whether there have been any cases of breach of licence conditions which have resulted in revocation of licences.

**Mr Lim Swee Say:** With the Foreign Employee Dormitories Act (FEDA) coming into operation on 1 January 2016, larger foreign employee dormitories with 1,000 beds or more will require a licence to operate. Operators were given six months to apply for a licence. To date, all 57 dormitories which require a licence have submitted their applications. Nine licences have been issued, and the remaining applications are being processed. All the licensed dormitories are in compliance with the FEDA. No licences have been revoked.

The Ministry will conduct routine and ad-hoc inspections at all licensed dormitories to ensure that the operators abide by the licence conditions.

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## **MDA'S DUE DILIGENCE AND OVERSIGHT PROCESSES IN PROVISION OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT**

18 **Mr Leon Perera** asked the Minister for Communications and Information (a) what due diligence and oversight processes have been exercised by MDA prior to it providing financial support to RGM Entertainment and RGM Group in 2010 and 2011; (b) what lapses occurred in MDA's due diligence and oversight processes in this case, if any; and (c) what measures has MDA since taken to strengthen its due diligence and oversight mechanisms in making such awards.

**Assoc Prof Dr Yaacob Ibrahim:** In 2010 and 2011, MDA invested \$15 million in RGM Entertainment and RGM Group to position Singapore as a media financing and production hub.

Before proceeding with the investments, MDA checked RGM's track record, assessed the projected returns, and examined the backgrounds of other co-investment partners.

However, in 2011, MDA had difficulty recovering its funds from RGM and suspected wrongdoing on the part of the company. MDA immediately reported the matter to the Commercial Affairs Department (CAD), and commenced legal action to recover the monies

owed. After investigating the matter, CAD found that RGM's principal, Devesh Chetty, had forged bank statements to hide MDA's missing funds. In June 2016, CAD brought criminal charges against Chetty, who was found guilty of forgery and sentenced to 22 weeks' of jail. The RGM entities were also wound up by the High Court.

Following a review of the incident, MDA no longer enters into such equity co-investments given their inherently more complex nature and higher risks. Instead, MDA has moved to a grant-based model where money is disbursed only after clearly defined project deliverables are achieved. MDA has also instituted additional governance measures such as tightening the qualifying criteria for grants, implementing an online grant management system to improve the audit trail, and commissioning project audits directly instead of through the grant recipients. In addition, MDA has implemented whistle blowing hotlines for anyone to report potential wrongdoing to MDA.

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## **PUBLICATION OF RESULTS OF PUBLIC OPINION SURVEYS BY GOVERNMENT AGENCIES OR STATUTORY BOARDS**

19 **Mr Chen Show Mao** asked the Minister for Communications and Information regarding surveys of public opinion undertaken by Government agencies or statutory boards (a) under what conditions are the results of such surveys not published; and (b) how many instances of such opinion surveys have been published in 2010-2015 versus those that have not been published.

**Assoc Prof Dr Yaacob Ibrahim:** Many agencies in Government conduct surveys to gather feedback on public perception of policies and issues. Such surveys enable our agencies to understand public sentiment on issues, and to assess public awareness of, and response to, specific government policies and programmes. Survey data has been used to evaluate if there are segments of the population who might benefit from a better understanding of a policy or programme. In some cases, such data allow us to adjust the way we deliver government services to better meet the needs of citizens.

The Government does not compile statistics on the surveys conducted by various agencies, or which among them are published. In my own ministry (MCI), REACH periodically releases survey data on a range of issues. In recent years, REACH has released surveys of public

perceptions on the annual Budget and the National Day Rally Speech, CPF changes, public transport, and the public's awareness of financial assistance schemes, among other subjects.

These survey findings may also be found on REACH's website.

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## **STATUS OF REVIEW ON NEED TO REPEAL MARITAL RAPE IMMUNITY**

20 **Mr Louis Ng Kok Kwang** asked the Minister for Home Affairs (a) what is the status of the review on the need to repeal marital rape immunity as stated by the Government during the 32nd Human Rights Council; (b) when immunity from marital rape will be repealed; and (c) whether this will be a total or partial repeal with exceptions.

**Mr K Shanmugam:** This issue is being reviewed actively. We will give an update when the position is clearer.

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## **MEASURES TO DEAL WITH ROADBLOCK EVASIONS**

21 **Mr Desmond Choo** asked the Minister for Home Affairs in light of the increasing trend of roadblock evasions (a) how is the Ministry protecting police officers at such roadblocks; (b) how can road users be better protected during consequent car chases; and (c) whether there is a need to review the current legislation to deter roadblock evasions.

**Mr K Shanmugam:** Police conduct road blocks to deter and detect crime. The safety of police officers and the general public is an important consideration in the planning and execution of road blocks. Light beacons and signs are also placed ahead of the road blocks to give motorists advance notice to slow down their vehicles, while officers don reflective vests to make them more prominent to road users. Police vehicles are deployed in a manner to cause approaching vehicles to slow down safely.

The vast majority of motorists who encounter a road block comply with the directions of the Police. In the event of an evasion, Police will pursue the vehicle with full consideration for the safety of road users. Police will alert road users through the use of sirens and blinkers. Members of public are advised to give way to Police vehicles in a safe manner. Depending on the circumstances, Police will terminate the pursuit if it becomes too dangerous.

Road block evasion is irresponsible and dangerous. As such, my Ministry amended the Police Force Act last year to increase the penalties for such offences. Offenders can be fined up to \$5,000 and/or jailed up to one year. This is aligned with the penalty for the Penal Code offence of rash driving or riding which endangers the life or personal safety of others. Motorists who evade Police road blocks or otherwise endanger the lives of others will be dealt with firmly under our laws.

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## **REVIEW OF STANDARD DRUG LIST TO INCLUDE MEDICATION FOR COMMON AGE-RELATED ILLNESSES**

22 **Ms Foo Mee Har** asked the Minister for Health whether the Ministry will review the Standard Drug List to include medication that doctors frequently prescribe for common age-related illnesses.

**Mr Gan Kim Yong:** The Ministry of Health (MOH) Standard Drug List (SDL) is reviewed regularly to include new medications. Feedback from doctors regarding commonly used drugs, including those for age-related illnesses, are taken into account in these reviews.

Over the last three years, 44 drugs have been added to the SDL, of which, 34 (77%) drugs are used for common age-related conditions such as diabetes and high blood pressure.

MOH will continue the practice of regular reviews of the SDL drug list.

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## **APPLICATIONS FOR MEDIFUND AND GRANTS DISBURSED**

23 **Mr Low Thia Kiang** asked the Minister for Health (a) how many Medifund applications have been made in the past five years; (b) of these, how many have been rejected and what is the breakdown of the reasons for rejection; and (c) of the applications approved, what is the median, 20th percentile and 90th percentile quantum of Medifund grant disbursed in each case.

**Mr Gan Kim Yong:** About 670,000 Medifund applications were made per year in the past five years. These applications were surfaced to the Medifund Committees of the public healthcare institutions after assessment by medical social workers. Less than 0.15% of the

applications were not approved by the Medifund Committees.

The amount of Medifund granted to each recipient varies widely, depending on the patient's bill size and copayment required, frequency of treatment and his financial circumstances. On average, in the past five years, more than 92% of Medifund applications were granted full assistance. In 2014, the average assistance provided ranged from \$450 for day surgery to \$1,800 for hospitalisations, \$100 for outpatient treatment and \$300 for care in the Intermediate and Long-term Care facilities.

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### **REASON FOR INCREASE IN DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CORPORATE TAX RATE AND RATE OF EFFECTIVE TAX PAYABLE BETWEEN FY2014 AND FY 2015**

24 **Mr Dennis Tan Lip Fong** asked the Minister for Finance (a) what is the reason for the increase in the difference between the corporate tax rate and the rate of effective tax payable between FY2014 and FY2015; and (b) why is there a significant gap between the chargeable income and effective tax paid depending on the industry sector.

**Mr Tharman Shanmugaratnam:** As corporate tax returns for the financial year ("FY") ending 2015 are only required to be filed by 30 November 2016<sup>2</sup>, the effective tax rates for companies relating to the FY 2015 or Year of Assessment ("YA") 2016 are not available yet.

The corporate tax rate of 17% is applied to the chargeable income of a company to arrive at the tax payable. Chargeable income is derived after making the necessary adjustments to accounting net profits, such as for non-taxable gains of capital nature, unutilised losses carried forward from past years, as well as for allowable and non-allowable<sup>3</sup> tax deductions and tax allowance.

A company's effective tax rate can be lower than 17% of its chargeable income due to a variety of factors, for example, corporate tax rebates that impact firms with different levels of profits differently, and tax credits allowed for foreign-sourced income which is remitted to

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<sup>2</sup>This filing deadline is extended to 15 December 2016 if business e-File their tax returns.

<sup>3</sup>Non-allowable expenses have to be added back to the company's accounting net profits to arrive at the chargeable income. For example, deductions for expenses that are capital in nature or not incurred in the production of income are not allowable. These include bad debts (from non-trade debtors) and goodwill payments.

Singapore. It may also reflect tax incentives granted for limited duration for qualifying economic activities in Singapore.

As each company's situation is different, rates of effective tax payable may vary across years and across industries. In general, effective tax rates among different industries vary by between one and two percentage points from the average across all industries.

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## **RATIONALE FOR PERSONAL INCOME TAX RELIEF CAP**

25 **Mr Christopher de Souza** asked the Minister for Finance whether he can explain the rationale behind the personal income tax relief cap in greater detail especially in light of the effect it has on the Working Mother's Child Relief scheme.

**Mr Tharman Shanmugaratnam:** The personal income tax relief cap makes our personal income tax system more progressive. We currently have 15 personal income tax reliefs. Each tax relief serves a worthy objective. However, taken together, the tax reliefs may unduly reduce the taxable income for a number of individuals with high incomes. After studying the reliefs being claimed, we decided to limit the total reliefs that one individual can claim to reduce taxable income, in order to preserve the progressivity and fairness of our tax structure.

The relief cap of \$80,000 is set at a level that will not affect 99% of tax resident individuals. A majority of working mothers will not be affected. In fact, among those currently claiming the Working Mother's Child Relief (WMCR), 9 out of 10 are expected to continue to claim it fully, without being affected by this cap. This includes those with more children – slightly over 8 in 10 individuals claiming WMCR on 2 or 3 children are not expected to be affected by the cap.

Beyond tax reliefs, the Government provides a comprehensive suite of measures to support Singaporeans in having and raising children, managing work and family commitments, and sharing parental responsibilities. Over the years, we have introduced and significantly enhanced various schemes to support parents in having and raising children. This includes the Baby Bonus Cash Gift, Child Development Account (CDA), Medisave Grant for Newborns, Foreign Domestic Worker Levy Concession, and also the newly introduced CDA First Step. We also provide significant subsidies for education, from pre-school level through to the Institutes of Higher Learning.

Our support for families also goes beyond monetary support, and includes our wider push to make it easier for families to manage their work and family responsibilities. For example, in 2013 we introduced Child Care Leave for parents of older children aged 7 to 12 years old and introduced one week of paternity leave. This year, we announced the legislation of a second week of Government-paid paternity leave for all fathers of citizen children born from 1 January 2017, and an increase in Shared Parental Leave from one week to four weeks for citizen children born from 1 July 2017. With all these measures, the Government remains committed to supporting Singaporeans in fulfilling their marriage and parenthood aspirations.

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## **PUBLIC SECTOR PROCUREMENT GUIDELINES FOR DEFECTIVE PRODUCTS SUPPLIED**

26 **Dr Tan Wu Meng** asked the Minister for Finance whether the public sector's procurement guidelines include "lemon" provisions for full replacement, rather than repair, in the event of significant defects being found in a significant proportion of supplied products.

**Mr Tharman Shanmugaratnam:** The standard terms and conditions used in Government contracts for goods provide safeguards against "lemons". In particular, the supplier is required to completely repair goods that are found on delivery to be damaged, defective or in any way inferior to approved samples, or not in accordance with the contract. Further, in the event of significant defects, the supplier has to fully replace the goods. All repair and replacement costs, including the cost of returning the defective goods, are borne entirely by the supplier.

Typically, payment is only made after the goods have been delivered in good condition to the Government. In addition, it is the norm for Government contracts to include warranty clauses which require the supplier to repair or replace faulty goods during the warranty period even after payment has been made.

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## **UPCOMING SURVEY ON INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE**

27 **Assoc Prof Daniel Goh Pei Siong** asked the Minister for Culture, Community and Youth with regard to the upcoming survey on intangible cultural heritage (a) how will the vendors be evaluated for their expertise in conducting the survey; (b) whether all findings of the

survey and findings from previous research done by the National Heritage Board will be released to the public and, if not, why not; and (c) whether there will be extensive public consultations in the creation of the national inventory.

28 **Mr Kok Heng Leun** asked the Minister for Culture, Community and Youth with regard to the intangible cultural heritage survey commissioned by NHB (a) whether a 16-month period is sufficient for a survey of such a scale; (b) whether the many other cases apart from the 150 cases will be covered; (c) whether there will be another survey conducted and, if so, when; (d) how will the agency conducting the survey be selected; and (e) what will NHB do with the survey and research results.

**Ms Grace Fu Hai Yien:** NHB is committed to safeguarding our tangible heritage, such as our national monuments. Beyond such tangible heritage, we also want to safeguard and deepen our understanding of Singapore's intangible cultural heritage.

We are guided by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) in definitions of intangible heritage. UNESCO describes intangible heritage to include practices, representations, expressions, knowledge and skills that communities and individuals recognise as part of their cultural heritage. Intangible cultural heritage is "living" heritage that is transmitted by communities, organisations and individuals from one generation to the next, and will evolve over time. These include rituals, traditions, foods and ways of life that bind us as Singaporeans. While Government agencies can support their promotion and transmission, the community and practitioners play a major role in safeguarding these aspects of our shared heritage.

The upcoming survey will identify key elements of Singapore's intangible cultural heritage. It will complement the tangible heritage survey that NHB embarked last year.

As with all government procurement, we will evaluate the tender for the survey based on the key principles of transparency, open and fair competition, and value for money. The selected vendor needs to demonstrate their expertise in intangible cultural heritage as well as heritage research and fieldwork.

We will share the findings on NHB's online platforms such as the Roots.sg heritage portal, and through exhibitions and educational programmes that NHB will be developing. NHB's past research findings on topics such as traditional trades are already available on Roots.sg and on its

HeritageTV YouTube channel.

NHB is working on the basis of a 16 month project duration to derive findings in this survey of Singapore's intangible cultural heritage elements which can be shared with the public. As this is the first such survey to be undertaken, the length of time is assessed to be optimal for the scope defined and the resources to be dedicated to the survey.

This survey is only the beginning of our efforts to deepen our understanding of our intangible heritage. After the survey is completed, NHB will continue to identify and document additional elements over time. NHB will also continue to collaborate with our partners to conduct more detailed research in selected areas. Currently, NHB's survey is guided by its Heritage Advisory Panel comprising external experts from different fields. Over the coming months, NHB will consult heritage groups, stakeholders and practitioners; as well as invite the public to contribute their knowledge, memories and stories.

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### **STATISTICS ON CHILDREN BORN IN SINGAPORE WITHOUT FATHER'S NAME ON BIRTH CERTIFICATE OR WITH FATHER NAMED BUT PARENTS NOT MARRIED AT DATE OF REGISTRATION OF BIRTH**

29 **Mr Kok Heng Leun** asked the Minister for Social and Family Development over the last 10 years, what is the number of children born in Singapore who (i) do not have a father named on their birth certificate and (ii) have a father named on their birth certificate but the parents are not married on or before the date of registration of birth.

**Mr Tan Chuan-Jin:** From 2006 to 2015, there was a drop in the number of babies born each year to citizen mothers who were not married to the father of the child at the point of birth registration.

The further breakdown by whether the father's name is reflected in the birth certificate is as follows:

| Year  | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|---|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| (i) Single Parent Registration Births by citizen mothers  | 432  | 480  | 471  | 468  | 470  | 450  | 447  | 415  | 375  | 345  |
| (ii) Births by citizen mothers who were not married to father named in the child's birth certificate at point of birth registration | 720  | 738  | 667  | 639  | 629  | 620  | 668  | 535  | 557  | 518  |

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### CONVERSION CRITERIA FOR HEAVY VEHICLE PARKING LOTS AND NORMAL PARKING LOTS

30 **Mr Leon Perera** asked the Minister for National Development (a) what are the criteria for converting heavy vehicle parking lots into normal parking lots and vice-versa; and (b) what are the plans for lorry parking in the Changi Village area in view of its proximity to Changi Business Park and Changi Airport and the past conversion of heavy vehicle parking lots to normal parking lots in that vicinity.

**Mr Lawrence Wong:** For public car parks, requests for conversion of heavy vehicle parking spaces to regular car parking spaces and vice versa are assessed depending on the needs of each location. For instance, in Changi Village, six heavy vehicle spaces were converted in September 2014 to mechanised car park spaces to mitigate the shortage of regular car park spaces in the area.

We have also assessed that there is adequate provision of heavy vehicle parking spaces in the Changi area. Apart from public parking spaces, there are available private heavy vehicle parking spaces in or close to the area (see Table 1).

Table 1: Available Private Heavy Vehicle Parking Spaces in Changi Area

| S/N | Heavy Vehicle Parks      | No. of Heavy Vehicle Parking Spaces | Available Heavy Vehicle Parking Spaces |
|-----|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| 1   | 40 Alps Avenue           | 18                                  | 6                                      |
| 2   | 61 Alps Avenue           | 22                                  | 4                                      |
| 3   | 32 Loyang Way            | 18                                  | 5                                      |
| 4   | 26 Changi North Rise     | 10                                  | 5                                      |
| 5   | 45 Changi South Avenue 2 | 17                                  | 14                                     |

Information on the latest availability of heavy vehicle parking spaces can be found on LTA's One-Motoring website.

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### **FOOD CENTRE AND MARKET AT BLOCK 511 BEDOK NORTH STREET 3 AFTER EXPIRY OF LEASE IN OCTOBER 2017**

31 **Mr Muhamad Faisal Bin Abdul Manap** asked the Minister for the Environment and Water Resources (a) whether the food centre and market at Block 511 Bedok North Street 3 is scheduled for improvements under the Hawker Centres Upgrading Programme or any form of renovations after its lease expires in October 2017; and (b) if not, what are the reasons.

**Mr Masagos Zulkifli B M M:** The wet market and hawker centre at Block 511, Bedok North Street 3, has already been upgraded under the Hawker Centres Upgrading Programme (HUP) in July 2004. The HUP is a programme that the Government ran from 2001 and it finally ceased in 2014 after all eligible centres that opted for the programme had been upgraded.

On its part, the Town Council is responsible for the management and maintenance of the common property of this centre, including carrying out the necessary cyclical repairs and redecorations (R&R) works such as re-painting of the centre and replacing any fixtures or fittings. Thus far, the respective Town Councils have carried out the cyclical R&R works for the centres under their purview in a timely and responsible manner.

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### **COMPREHENSIVE NATIONAL PLAN FOR MANAGING E-WASTE**

32 **Assoc Prof Randolph Tan** asked the Minister for the Environment and Water Resources (a) whether there is a comprehensive national plan for managing e-waste; (b) how does NEA facilitate e-waste recycling in Singapore; and (c) what are the statistics on the rate of e-waste recycling by entities differentiated according to commercial, Government and/or households categories.

**Mr Masagos Zulkifli B M M:** While my Ministry currently does not collect data on the rate of e-waste recycling by households, government or commercial entities, it is estimated from the available data that about 60,000 tonnes of e-waste is generated annually in Singapore. About half is estimated to be common household information technology (IT) products and home appliances, while the rest comprises information and communications technology (ICT) equipment generated by the commercial and industrial sectors.

My Ministry is exploring options for a comprehensive system for the collection, recycling and management of e-waste to be implemented nationwide. The National Environment Agency (NEA) commissioned a study in March 2016 to develop possible options. The study includes a survey of the entire e-waste collection and recycling value chain, including treatment and disposal. The survey results will help in the development of feasible designs for an efficient and effective e-waste management framework, along with inputs from stakeholder consultations which will take place in the coming months.

To facilitate e-waste recycling in Singapore and in preparation for the possible implementation of an e-waste management framework, we have formed a national voluntary partnership for e-waste recycling with interested stakeholders. The partnership comprises producers and retailers of electronic and electrical products, as well as e-waste recycling service providers.

We also support voluntary recycling programmes such as REcycling Nation's Electronic Waste (RENEW), which is led by StarHub, DHL and recycler TES-AMM. RENEW now covers 185 locations around Singapore with 235 e-waste recycling bins in place. We will work with our partners to expand these programmes and explore new ones, to increase awareness of e-waste recycling and provide convenient recycling services for the public.

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**BUILDING OF PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS AND JUNIOR**

## COLLEGE IN FERVALE IN SENGKANG

33 **Mr Gan Thiam Poh** asked the Acting Minister for Education (Schools) whether there will be a new primary school, secondary school or junior college built in Fernvale in Sengkang and, if so, when will they be built.

**Mr Ng Chee Meng:** MOE regularly reviews the demand and supply trends at the national and regional levels to ensure that there are sufficient school places for school-going children. Our school planning takes into account the current and projected population and planned housing development programmes to ensure that there are sufficient school places to meet the needs of each residential area.

While MOE tries to ensure that every child of school-going age in Singapore has a place in a school reasonably near his or her home, it will not always be possible to do so. Every new school needs to have a sufficient catchment of students, over a sustained period of time, to enable it to mount a range of activities for the benefit of the students, and to be run efficiently.

There are currently two primary schools, Sengkang Green Primary and Fernvale Primary in Fernvale estate. MOE has plans to build a third primary school near the Kupang LRT station to meet the needs of residents moving into this new estate. Construction of the school is expected to start soon, and we will provide more details of when the school will be opened in due course.

There are currently six secondary schools (Pei Hwa Secondary School, Nan Chiau High School, Compassvale Secondary School, CHIJ St. Joseph's Convent, Seng Kang Secondary School and North Vista Secondary School) located in Sengkang. There are also other secondary schools, e.g. Hougang Secondary School, Xinmin Secondary School and Monfort Secondary School, which are located near Fernvale. As there are sufficient secondary school places in this area, we have no plans to build any new secondary school in Fernvale.

There are no plans to build a new Junior College (JC) in Sengkang.

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## INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN POLYTECHNICS AND UNIVERSITIES NOT FULFILLING THEIR SCHOLARSHIP BONDS

34 **Mr Png Eng Huat** asked the Acting Minister for Education (Higher Education and Skills) (a) from 2010 to 2015, how many international students in polytechnics and universities

have not fulfilled their scholarship bonds each year; (b) when did the Ministry put in place additional measures to track these students; and (c) what improvements in default rates have there been since the Ministry enhanced its efforts to track scholarship recipients.

**Mr Ong Ye Kung:** There are no MOE scholarships given to international students in the polytechnics.

MOE takes a serious view towards the fulfilment of bond obligations by scholars. Over the past few years, MOE has progressively stepped up our enforcement measures to track and ensure that these scholars fulfil their bond obligations. For example, we have enhanced our data interfaces with partner agencies such as MOM and ICA from 2014, to better allow us to ascertain the employment status of our scholars.

The proportion of defaulters is about 1%. We are also in the process of contacting another 4% to determine their bond service status. The rest – 95% – are serving their bonds, have applied for deferment, or are unable to serve their bond obligations due to reasons like illnesses.

While MOE works closely with the universities and other agencies to track the bond obligations of our international scholars, the default rate might fluctuate slightly due to a number of factors, including economic climate.

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## **ROLE OF PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES' MANAGEMENT IN ADMINISTERING FRESHMEN ORIENTATION CAMPS**

35 **Mr Ang Wei Neng** asked the Acting Minister for Education (Higher Education and Skills) (a) what is the role of the universities' management in administering their freshmen orientation camps; (b) from 2014 to 2016, what is the number of freshmen orientation camps organised by the students in each of the public universities; (c) of these, how many of these camps have had their activity programmes amended as a result of the intervention by the respective universities' management; and (d) what are the measures the public universities will take to prevent inappropriate activities from occurring again during orientation camps.

**Mr Ong Ye Kung:** Each year, the autonomous universities hold approximately 120 student-organised freshmen orientation camps (FOCs) – these include camps organised by the faculties, halls, and other student groups. The proposals for these camps are vetted by both staff

advisors and the Offices of Student Affairs at the universities. This process takes several months, and any inappropriate or unsafe activities are revised or removed during this process.

NUS is currently conducting a review of its orientation processes in consultation with the NUS community, which is expected to take some time. NTU has recently completed a comprehensive overview of its orientation programmes to make them more inclusive.

More generally, measures are in place to prevent the recurrence of recent activities. Student leaders and facilitators are carefully selected and briefed, and university staff are also on hand to ensure that activities are run in line with plans, and with students' safety and interests in mind. In addition, all students are governed by the respective universities' Student Codes of Conduct, where banned activities and their concomitant penalties are explicitly stated.

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### **NON-FULFILMENT OF SCHOLARSHIP BONDS BY FOREIGN STUDENTS GRADUATING FROM NUS AND NTU**

36 **Mr Ang Wei Neng** asked the Acting Minister for Education (Higher Education and Skills) (a) in the past 10 years, how many foreign students did not complete their scholarship bonds after graduating from NUS and NTU; (b) how do the two universities follow up on the scholars who fail to serve their bonds; and (c) how much damages have not been collected due to non-fulfilment of scholarship bonds.

**Mr Ong Ye Kung:** The proportion of defaulters is about 1%. We are also in the process of contacting another 4% to determine their bond service status. The rest – 95% – are serving their bonds, have applied for deferment, or are unable to serve their bonds due to reasons like illnesses.

As part of the enforcement process, scholars who are identified to be not serving their bond will be contacted and reminded by the universities of their obligations. Some may get back to the universities and inform that they are in between jobs and need more time. For scholars who continue to not serve their bond obligations, the universities will then proceed to recover liquidated damages from scholars and their sureties, failing which, defaulters will not be able to work or reside in Singapore.

MOE will continue to work closely with all the universities to tighten and enhance the processes in monitoring and enforcing the scholarship bonds.

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