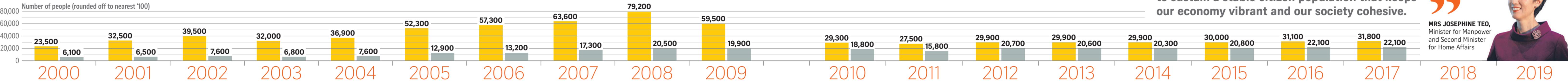


State of the population

■ New PR granted ■ New citizenship granted



At its heart, the aim of our immigration policy is to sustain a stable citizen population that keeps our economy vibrant and our society cohesive.



MRS JOSEPHINE TEO,
Minister for Manpower
and Second Minister
for Home Affairs



2004

- Then Home Affairs Minister Wong Kan Seng is appointed to oversee Singapore's population strategy after the birth rate falls to a record low.
- The assessment criteria for citizenship and PR applications are broadened to go beyond academic qualifications.

2005

- A record 12,900 foreign nationals take up citizenship, up from the 6,000 to 7,000 annually in the previous four years.

2006

- Rules are eased, including allowing foreign graduates to spend more time here looking for a job.
- Those already here will also be persuaded to get PR or citizenship.

2007

- In a rare development, the Government increases its long-term population estimate.
- For planning purposes, the projected population of 6.5 million will be used, up from the 2001 projection of 5.5 million.

2008

- The number of citizens and PRs hits a new record.
- Some express concern over a news report that said almost one in five HDB flats sold recently went to PRs – a twofold increase from 2007.

2009

- The National Integration Council is set up to help immigrants and citizens mix. Signalling a U-turn in the immigration policy, Mr Wong reveals in January 2011 that tighter immigration criteria to “better manage the inflow and quality of new immigrants” were implemented in the last quarter of 2009.

2010

- A Ministry of Finance report says that the Government will “keep the foreign share of the workforce at no higher than one-third over the long term”.

2011

- To encourage companies to hire locals, criteria to hire foreigners are tightened.
- Rules for PRs to buy landed property become stricter.
- At the General Election in May, the People's Action Party wins 60.1 per cent of the popular vote – its lowest share since independence.

2012

- It is revealed that about 300 naturalised citizens renounced their citizenship every year from 2007 to 2011, prompting some to question the commitment of immigrants.
- But renunciation rates for both naturalised citizens and Singapore-born citizens were low – at 0.1 per cent or less.

2013

- The controversial Population White Paper, which revealed that the Government is planning for a population parameter of 6.9 million, is released.
- It drew protests at the Speakers' Corner.
- A cap on the number of flats that can be sublet to foreigners in each Housing Board block is imposed to prevent the formation of foreigner enclaves.

2014

- In July, the Jobs Bank is launched under the Fair Consideration Framework.
- Employers must post vacancies on the portal for at least 14 days, before they can apply to hire a foreigner on an employment pass.

2016

- The Manpower Ministry announces that employers who have higher ratios of foreign professionals compared with their industry peers and do not have concrete plans to boost the ranks of Singaporean staff can have their work pass applications curbed.

2019

- Manpower Minister Josephine Teo, who now oversees population affairs, says that the Government remains “highly selective” in granting permanent residencies and citizenships, which is part of its population management strategy.