1947-2017: CELEBRATING 70 YEARS OF FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS IMPROVING ELECTORAL PROCESSES OVER THE YEARS



VOTER REGISTRATION

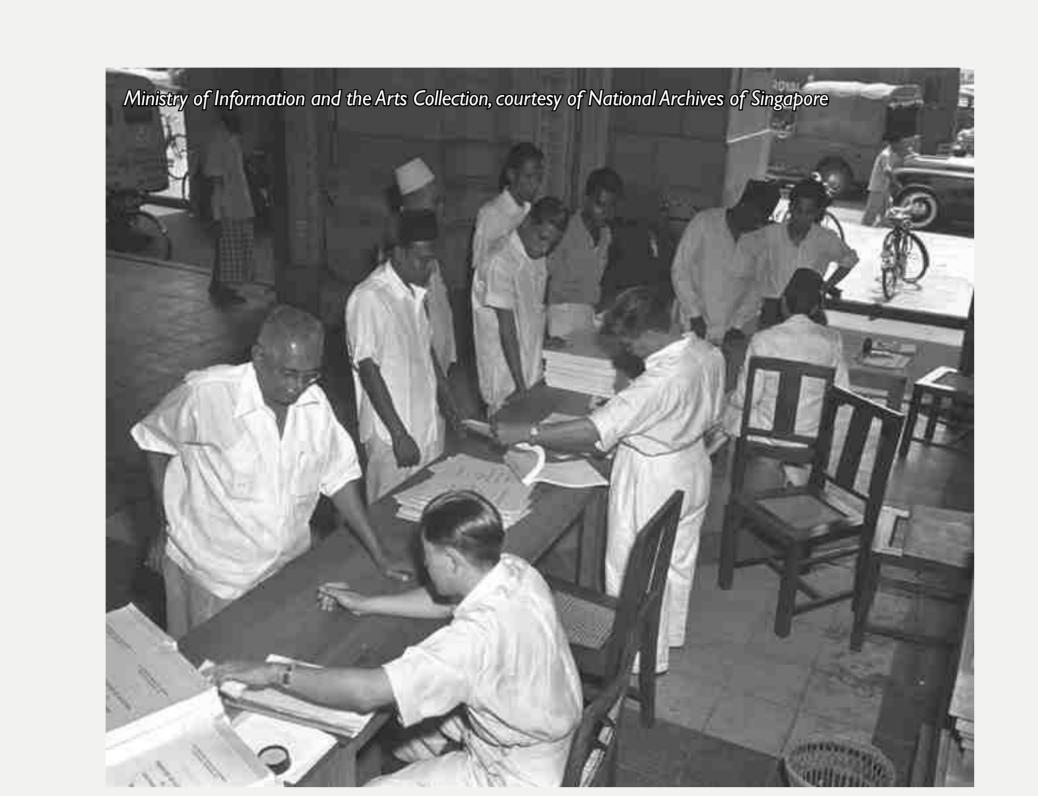


at an Electoral Registration Centre, 1950.

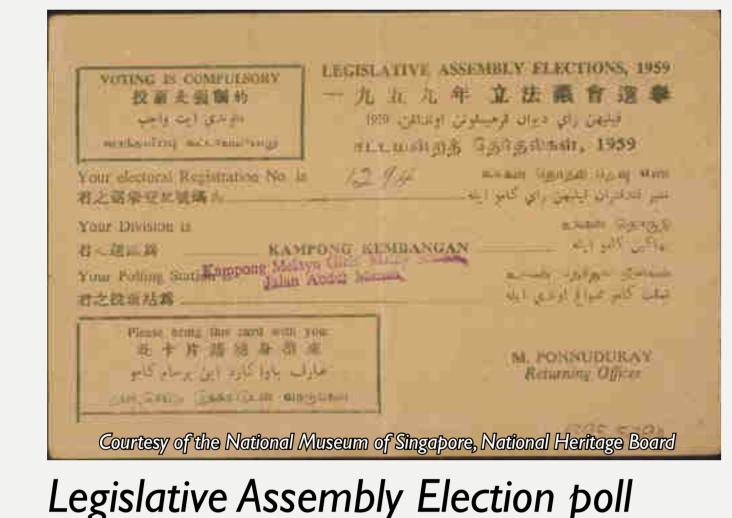
lections were first conducted in Singapore in 1948. Despite the introduction of elections, there were restrictions on eligibility to be included in the Electoral Roll. For instance, only British subjects, who had lived in Singapore for at least a year, were eligible to stand for election and to vote. In reality, many people were born outside Singapore. Thus, they were not Voters registering to be included in the Electoral Roll

British subjects and were not eligible.

Moreover, eligible voters are required to register themselves to vote in an election. Coupled with the lack of voter awareness and education, voter registration was low. The English-educated public tended to be more politically conscious of what was going on and were more likely to register as voters. This situation continued into the second Legislative Council election of 1951 which saw only 52% of the 48,155 eligible voters cast their ballots. This was despite concerted efforts by the Elections Department.



Members of the public checking the Electoral Roll at the General Post Office, 1954.



Legislative Assembly Election poll card for Kampong Kembangan,

In the case of Municipal Commission elections, only property owners were eligible to vote and this effectively disqualified many women even though they were British subjects. The property requirements for voting in the Municipal Commission Elections were dropped in 1950.

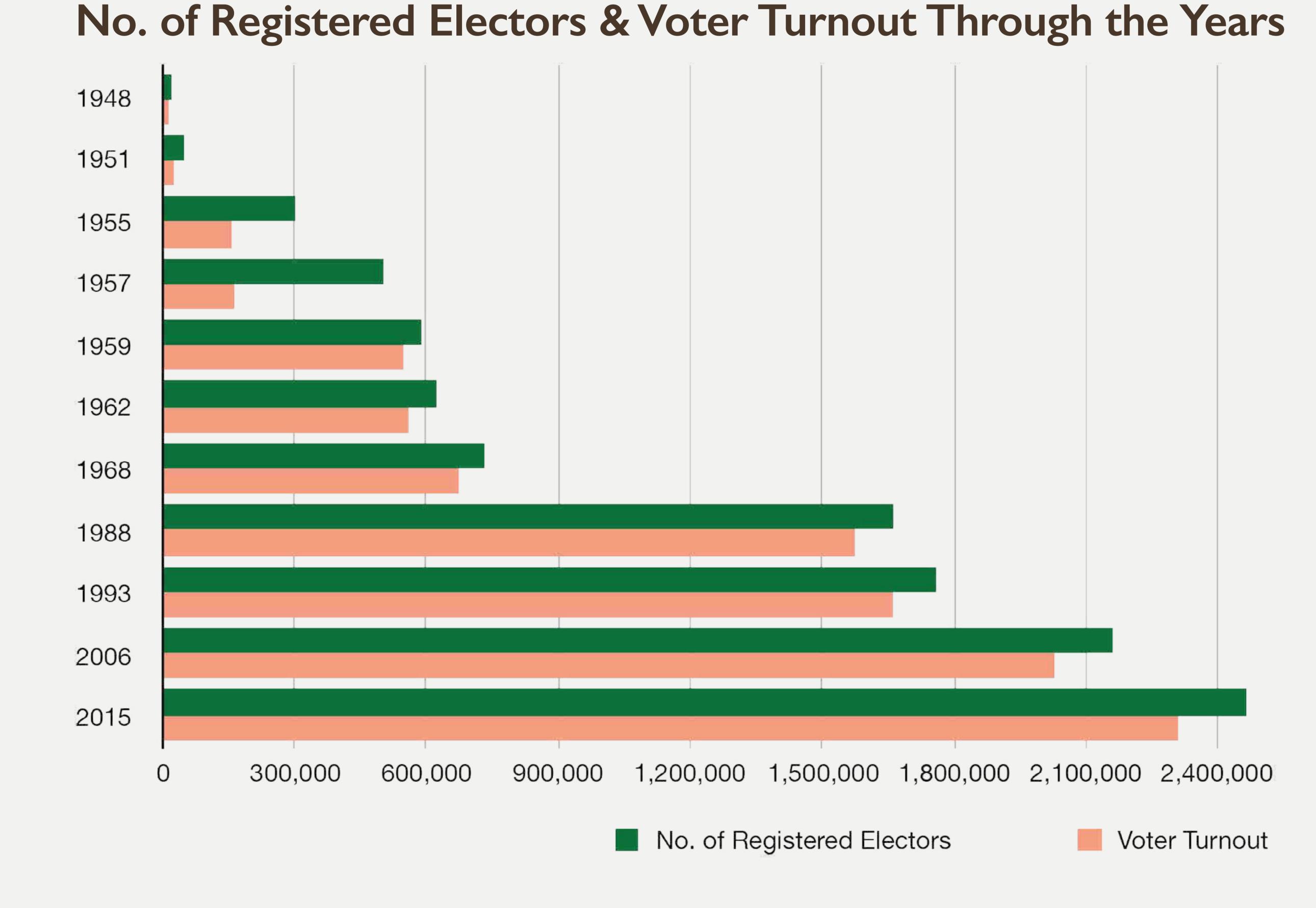
Poor voter registration and turnout were mitigated with the recommendation to introduce automatic registration in 1954.

Did you know?

Elections Department held several mock elections, Card. The Elections Department ensures that contacted people who had been struck off from depending on their place of residence. In the the Electoral Roll for failing to vote at a previous past, this required print-outs of registers to be election so that their names could be restored, for both Legislative and Municipal Council

With automatic registration, the Elections Department currently obtains its list of electors now a relic of the past. from the National Registry which is responsible

To increase voter turnout in the early years, the for issuing the National Registration Identity appealed to more people to register, kept their the voters are placed in the correct Registers of office open until midnight for voter registration, Electors which are organised by electoral divisions physically inspected at designated locations such as community centres. Today, Singaporeans can check their particulars and voting status online through the Elections Department's eServices at their convenience. The long queues of yesteryear are



NOMINATION

he process of an election begins with the issuance of the Writ of Election. The Writ will specify the Nomination Day and the place of Nomination.

On Nomination Day, candidates are required to present their nomination papers and relevant certificates i.e. Certificate of Eligibility, Candidates waiting to file their Nomination Papers community certificate and Political Donation Certificate.



If only one candidate or one group of candidates stands nominated at 12 noon of the Nomination Day, that candidate or group of candidates will be declared elected. If more than one candidate or group of candidates stands nominated at 12 noon of the Nomination Day, the election will be contested.

Candidates will also pay an election deposit which must be made before the close of nominations at 12 noon. For the convenience of candidates, the Elections Department deploys Commissioners for Oaths and Accountant-General Department cashiers. It also provides computer terminals for checking Registers of Electors at the Nomination

Since 1963, Nomination Centres have been decentralised to make the process of nomination more efficient.

Did you know?

The Elections Department has been providing the artwork for the voting symbols of independent candidates since 1948. Independent candidates can also submit their own symbols for the Returning Officer to approve for use in campaigning.



Members of the media looking at Nomination Papers of candidates displayed on the notice board outside the Nomination Place for General Election, 1988.



Voters queuing up to vote at the Legislative

Assembly Election, 1959.

Approved symbols for the 1955 Legislative Assembly Election. The symbols are

Example of a ballot paper used during the mock election, 1959. (Ministry of Information and the Arts Collection, courtesy of National Archives of Singapore)



Voter casting her vote during the Legislative Assembly Election, 1959.

Mark "X" next to your choice

在您的选择旁打"X"

Tandakan "X" di

உங்கள் தேர்வுக்குப் பக்கத்தில் "X" எனும் குறியை இடவும்

MEMBER - VOTING IS COMPULSORY; VOTING IS SECRET こ・投票是張制性的:投票是秘密的

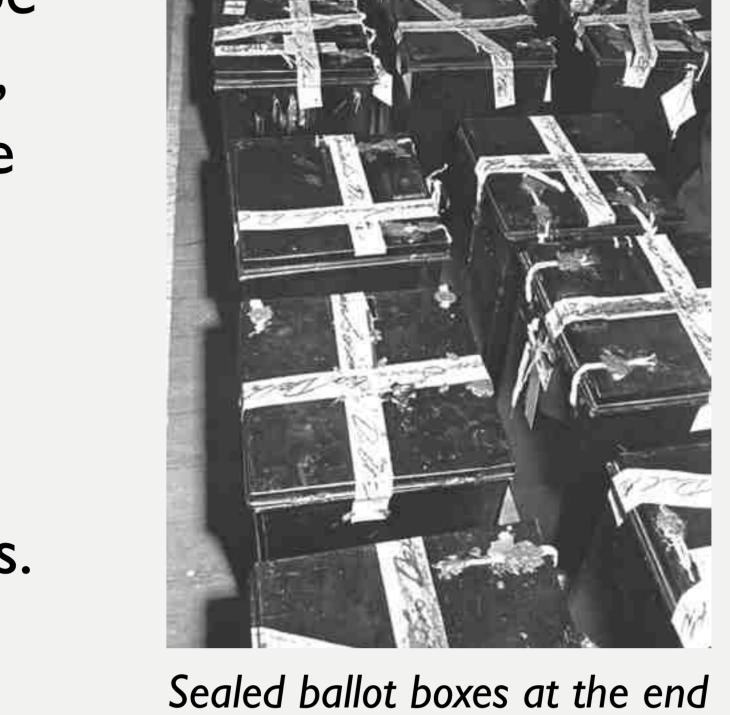
ballot papers into the ballot box, 2012

To ensure that no unauthorised ballot papers are cast, the Elections Department has, from its earliest days, ensured that security features are in place. For example, serial numbers are printed on individual ballot papers. The serial numbers allow the Elections Department to keep track of all ballot papers issued.

However, the serial numbers on the ballot papers have also led voters to worry that the Government can track their votes to them. This concern is unwarranted as all counted

ballot papers are placed in the depository boxes which are sealed after counting and announcement of results.

These sealed depository boxes are then brought under police escort to the vault at the Supreme Court where they would be kept for six months before being incinerated. In the meantime, only a High Court Judge can order the depository boxes to be opened when there is an Election Petition.



of the Legislative Assembly Election, 1963.

Candidates' photographs are now printed on

ballot papers for easier identification by voters.

Over the years, the Elections Department has introduced a number of improvements to the ballot boxes and ballot papers. During the 1997 General Election, new lightweight cardboard ballot boxes were introduced in place of the old wooden and metal boxes which allowed for easy storage and transportation.

Dropped your ballot paper into the ballot box?

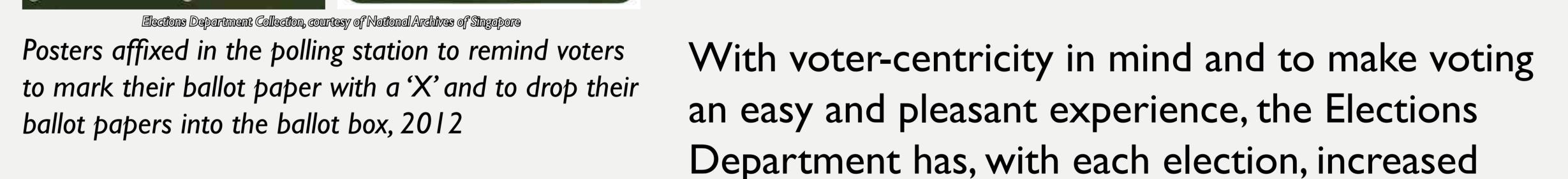
您把选票投入投票箱了吗?

udahkah anda masukkan kertas u

anda ke dalam kotak undi?

உங்கள் வாக்குச் சீட்டை வாக்குப் பெட்டிக்குள் போட்டீர்களா?

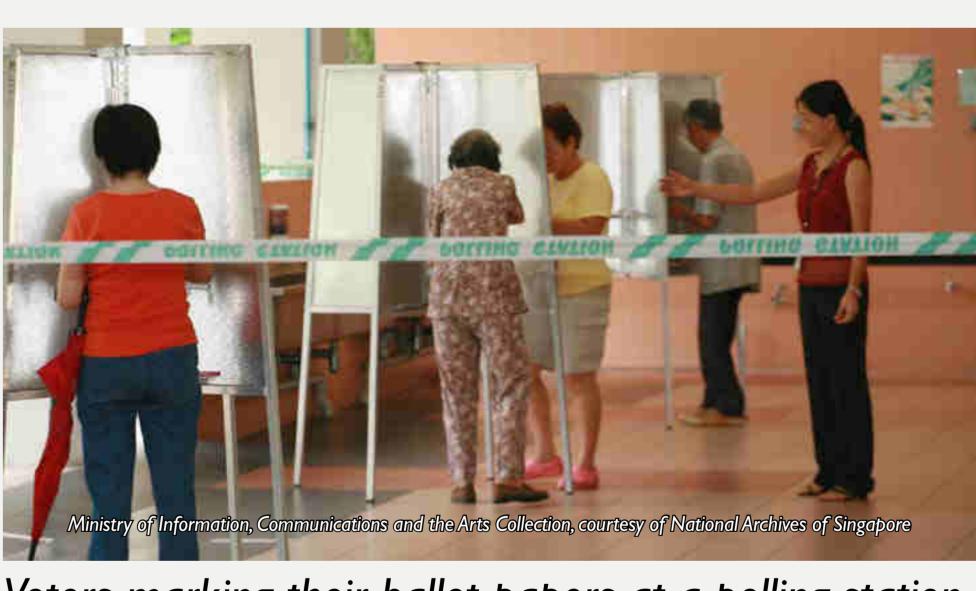
Ballot papers now have darkened backgrounds to provide clearer boxes for voters to mark their choice. Any marks made outside these boxes are considered invalid, and this facilitates adjudication of votes in cases where the voter's choice is



the number of polling stations, using schools and even HDB void decks and pavilions, to bring polling stations closer to voters and reduce queues. This has also been necessary due to growing population.

In the 2015 General Election, the Elections Department set up 832 polling stations throughout Singapore.

Overseas voting has been made available since 2006. Singaporeans living abroad can now vote at overseas polling stations in Canberra, London, Tokyo, San Francisco, Washington DC, New York, Beijing, Hong Kong, Shanghai and Dubai.



Voters marking their ballot papers at a polling station during General Election, 2006.

POLLING

ntegrity in polling depends on two safeguards. First, the assurance that only legitimate votes are counted and no unauthorised ballot papers are included in the count; and second, voting secrecy.

There is a secure chain of custody of the marked ballot papers dropped into the ballot boxes. This begins from the point that the ballot boxes are

sealed at the polling stations through their delivery to the counting centres, followed by storage for 6 months in the Supreme Court vault and finally to their destruction. All election officials, candidates

and agents involved in the electoral process are under oath to keep voters' choices secret even if they happen to be able to see how the voter had voted.

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Sealed ballot boxes arriving at a counting centre for General Election, 1988.

t the close of poll, Presiding Officers at the various polling stations seal the ballot boxes in the presence of candidates and their polling agents. Candidates may also place their own seals on the ballot boxes. The ballot boxes are then transported under police escort to the designated counting centre. The process of vote counting is decentralised for efficiency. In the 2015 General Election, the Elections Department set up 163 counting centres throughout Singapore.

Since the 2015 General Election, candidates or their polling agents are allowed to board the buses transporting the marked ballot papers to the counting centres. They are able to witness the safe custody of ballot boxes being transported between electoral premises.

At the counting centre, candidates and their counting agents may inspect all the ballot boxes again to ascertain that all ballot boxes are accounted for, that no extra ballot boxes are

present and that the seals on all the ballot boxes are intact and have not been tampered with. The seals are then broken and the ballot boxes opened. The ballot papers are poured out, mixed, sorted and counted.

Computers were deployed for the first time in the 1991 General Election to aid in the tabulation of election results.



Assembly Election, 1963.



Election officials pouring out ballot papers at counting centre for Legislative Assistant Returning Officer overseeing the counting process at his counting table during the General Election, 2011.



Returning Officer (1996 – 2010), Mr Tan Boon Huat, announcing the election result for

Since the 2015 General Election, the Elections Department released sample counts to give an early indication of the possible outcome on Counting Night, and helped to prevent speculation and misinformation from unofficial sources while counting was underway.

After the election results are announced by the Returning Officer, the ballot papers and other official documents are placed in depository boxes and sealed. This procedure is witnessed by the candidates and their counting agents. They are also invited to affix their seals on the depository boxes. The boxes are then brought under police escort to the Supreme Court where they would be kept for six months before being

DESTRUCTION OF MARKED BALLOT PAPERS

fter the election results have been announced, the ballot papers are placed In depository boxes, sealed and then transported under police escort to the Supreme Court where they would remain sealed for the next six months. During this time, the boxes may only be re-opened by a court order, and this will only be issued if the Court is satisfied that a vote has been fraudulently cast and the result of the election might, as a consequence, be affected.

At the end of six months, the Returning Officer will retrieve the sealed depository boxes from the Supreme Court and transport them to the incineration plant to be destroyed. This process is witnessed by candidates and their election agents.

With the use of cardboard depository boxes, voting secrecy is enhanced since there is no need to remove the ballot papers from the boxes before burning them. Now, the ballot papers are burned along with the sealed depository boxes.



ballot papers, 1992.

Preparing to destroy the ballot papers in the incinerator at Empress Place,



Election arriving at Tuas Refuse Incineration Plant.

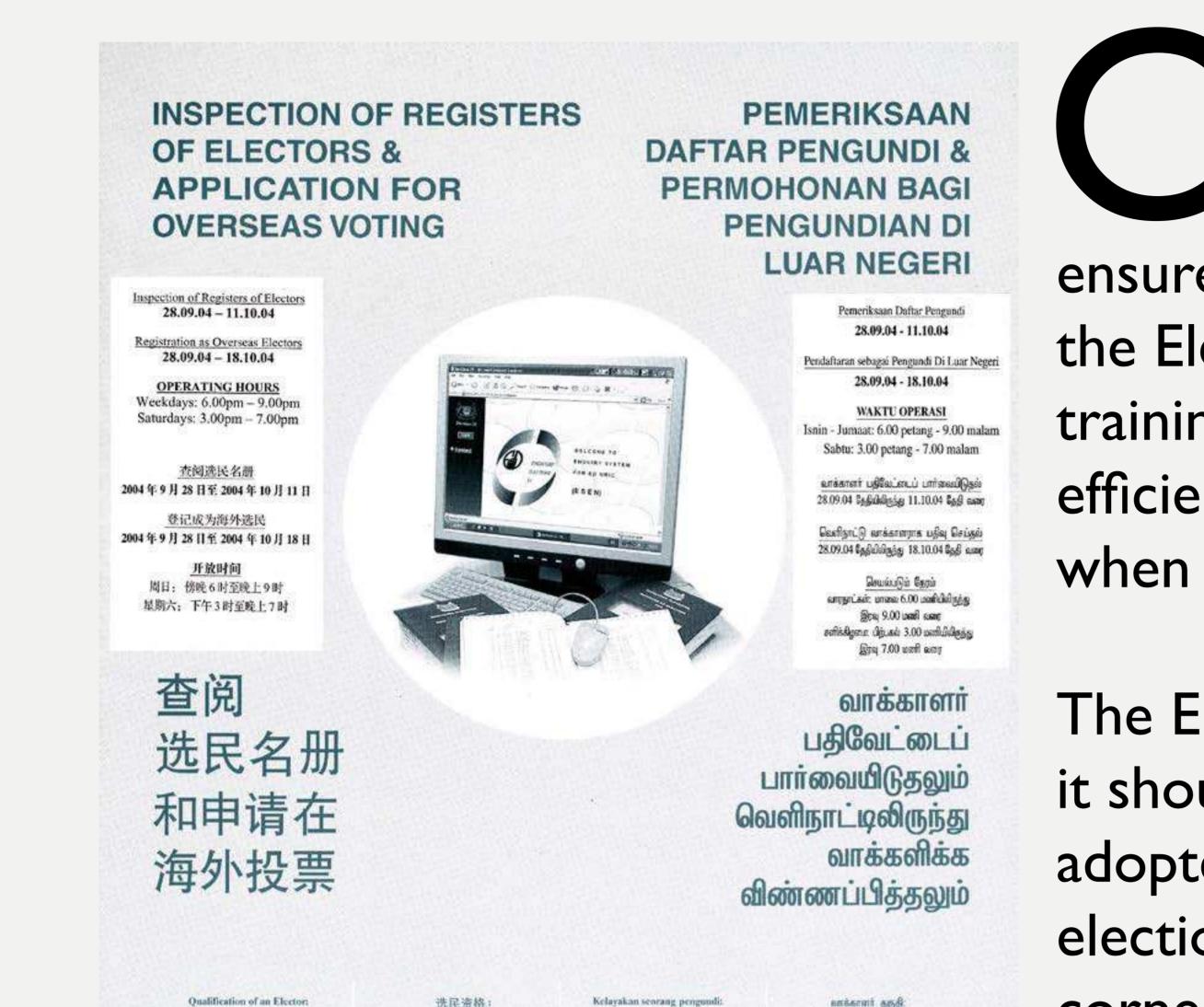
stored in the Supreme Court vault for 6 months, before the destruction of

Ballot papers and related documents used during the 1993 Presidential

Sealed depository box containing ballot papers from the 2016 Bukit Batok By-Election being tossed into the incinerator, 2016.



READINESS PREPARATION BETWEEN ELECTIONS



								election officials were trained
Qualification of an Elector: A person is qualified to be an elector if, on		选民资格: 选民必须符合下列条件,即于		Kelayakan seorang pengundi: Seorang itu layak menjadi seorang pengundi jika, pada		வாக்காளர் தகுதி வாக்களிக்கும் தகுதி பெறுவதற்கு, ஒருவர்		corner. Now, they receive elec
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Residence	: ordinarily resident in Singapore according to his NRIC, and	居留权	根据身份证,是 新加坡居民,及	Tempat Tinggal	 adalah seorang penduduk biasa di Singapura mengikut kad pengenalannya, dan 		oğo yan.urar gelaluğun, Akalıylık oyasınıs callıngıs yaşks	for effective command and
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Public education poster reminding Singaporeans to inspect the Registers of Electors and for overseas Singaporeans to apply to register as an overseas elector, 2004.



ne myth about the Elections Department is that it lies dormant between elections. Nothing can be further from the truth. The Elections Department works constantly to ensure that Registers of Electors are updated. At the same time, the Elections Department is responsible for the appointment and MAKTU OPERASI
Isnin-Jurnaat: 6.00 petang-9.00 malam
Sabtu: 3.00 petang-7.00 malam

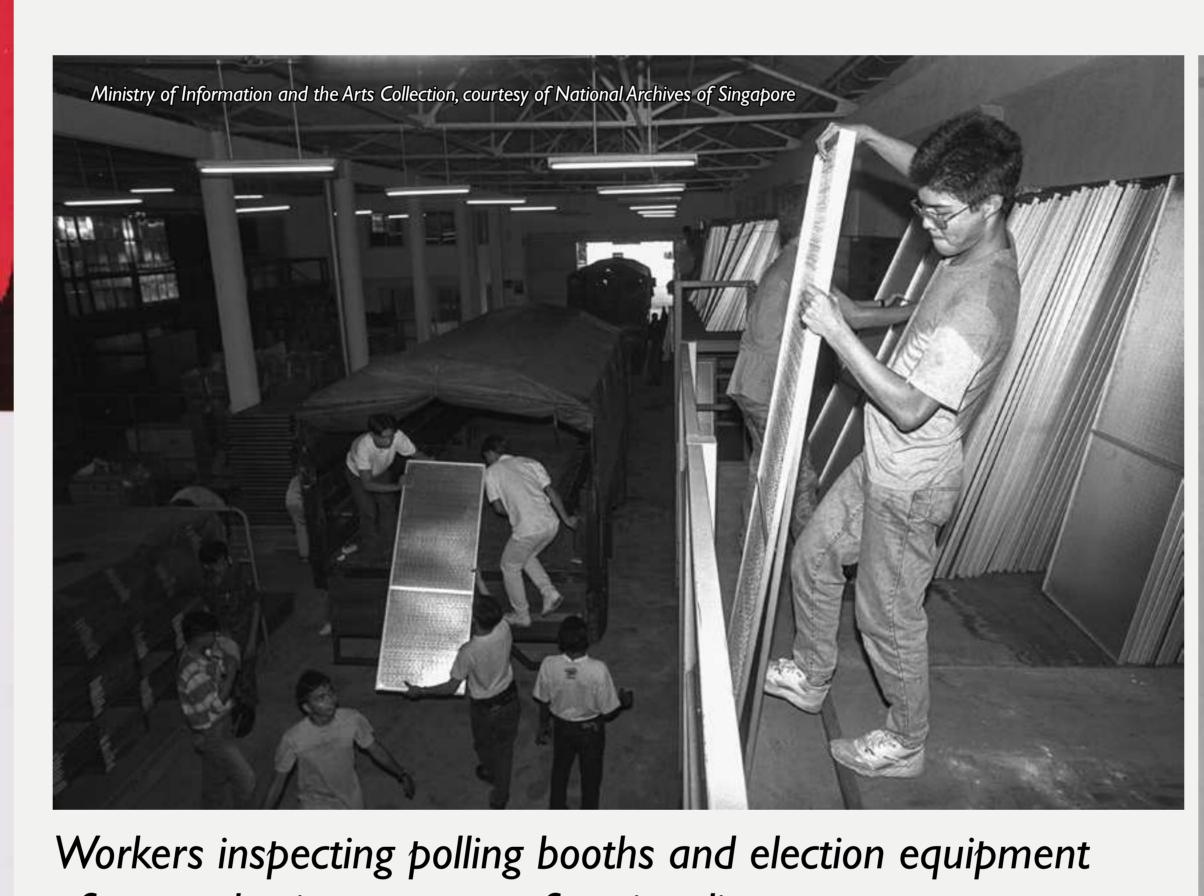
training of election officials, planning for electoral premises and efficient management of logistics to ensure operational readiness when elections are called.

The Elections Department, which used to operate on the basis that it should ready all its officers 'just in time' for an election, has since adopted the maxim that it should be ready 'all the time'. In the past, election officials were trained just when elections were round the corner. Now, they receive elections training throughout the year. The Department also set up the Group Assistant Returning Officer

> control of election operations. Senior public officers are appointed as GAROs to oversee polling and counting operations in constituencies under their charge.

Did you know?

In 2010 and in anticipation of the surge in public enquries, work started for an interactive voice response system to handle electionrelated queries from the public for the presidential and general elections. This is part and parcel of the Elections Department's ongoing work to maintain its readiness for the conduct of elections.





Singaporeans to apply to register as an overseas The Elections Department also undertakes reviews of the electoral processes after each major election, together with its partner

agencies to find ways to improve the system and processes, including proposing legislative changes. One innovation that the Elections Department will implement at future elections is eRegistration of voters. Instead of requiring an election official to manually search for

and strike off the voter's name in the hard-copy Registers of Electors, voters only need to scan their NRIC electronically to register, thereby shortening the waiting time for voters and reducing election manpower at the polling stations.

Elections Department Training Centre where election officials are trained in preparation



Public education posters depicting the process for eRegistration which will be implemented at future elections.

