Composition of Singapore’s Total Population

As at December 2011, we had 3.27 million Singapore Citizens (SCs), and 0.54 million Permanent Residents (PRs). Together, they made up the resident population of 3.81 million. We also had a non-resident population of 1.46 million who are working, studying or living in Singapore on a non-permanent basis. Singapore’s total population was 5.26 million.
Immigrants are individuals who are granted PR (Permanent Residence) or SC (Singapore Citizenship) and are counted as part of our resident population.

Each PR (Permanent Residence) and SC (Singapore Citizenship) application is evaluated holistically on a set of criteria which includes the individual's family ties to Singaporeans, economic contributions, qualifications, age and family profile to assess the applicant's ability to contribute to Singapore and integrate into society, and his/her commitment to sinking roots.

From 2007-2011, 48% of PRs (Permanent Residents) were granted to working individuals, and the remaining were dependants (spouses and children) of SCs (Singapore Citizens) and PRs (Permanent Residents). 63% of all PRs (Permanent Residents) granted were under 30 years old, and they help to mitigate our ageing population. Most new PRs (Permanent Residents) also have good educational qualifications. Of those aged 20 and above, 74% had a diploma or higher qualification.

From 2007-2011, 38% of new SCs (Singapore Citizens) were granted to working individuals, while 62% were dependants. Like new PRs (Permanent Residents), new SCs (Singapore Citizens) are generally young and have good educational qualifications. 53% of new SCs (Singapore Citizens) were under 30 years old, and of those over 20 years old, 61% had a diploma or higher qualification.

FOREIGNERS

Our non-resident population is made up of foreigners who are in Singapore on a non-permanent basis. They are a diverse group.
21% of our non-resident population are family members of our residents or employment pass holders, and international students. Family members hold either dependant's or long-term visit passes.

There is also an increasing number of international marriages in Singapore — about 40% of citizen marriages in recent years were to non-citizen spouses. Foreigners married to Singaporeans are usually issued with a long-term visit pass, and many eventually naturalise as PRs (Permanent Residents) and SCs (Singapore Citizens). As the number of international marriages rises, we can expect more foreign-born spouses in our population.

14% of the non-resident population are foreign domestic workers (FDWs). They live in our homes, and do not require additional provision for housing or transportation during the workday. By helping with the housework, or looking after children or the elderly, they allow more Singaporeans, especially women, to be in the workforce.

The remaining 66% of our non-resident population are in the workforce and hold work passes:

- 46% of the non-resident population are lower-/semi-skilled workers on Work Permits. They are mainly in sectors which face difficulties hiring Singaporean workers (e.g. construction and marine sectors).

- 8% of the non-resident population are mid-level skilled foreigners (e.g. technicians), who supplement our local workforce. They are typically S Pass holders who support the economic and social needs of Singaporeans. They work in sectors such as retail, food and beverage, manufacturing (e.g. electronics) and healthcare services (e.g. as nurses or allied healthcare workers), as well as in our social services and voluntary welfare sectors where they care for our aged and disabled.

- The remaining 12% of the non-resident population are higher-skilled foreigners such as professionals, managers, executives and specialists who hold Employment Passes (EP). These higher-skilled foreigners enhance the competitiveness of Singapore-based companies by complementing our limited Singaporean workforce or by providing skills and expertise that we do not yet possess, and by helping our companies expand into regional and international markets. This helps Singapore attract global investments and build strong Singapore-based companies to compete internationally, which in turn generates diverse opportunities and creates good jobs for Singaporeans. Sectors that have benefitted from the capabilities brought in by foreigners include financial services, aerospace engineering, and research and development.