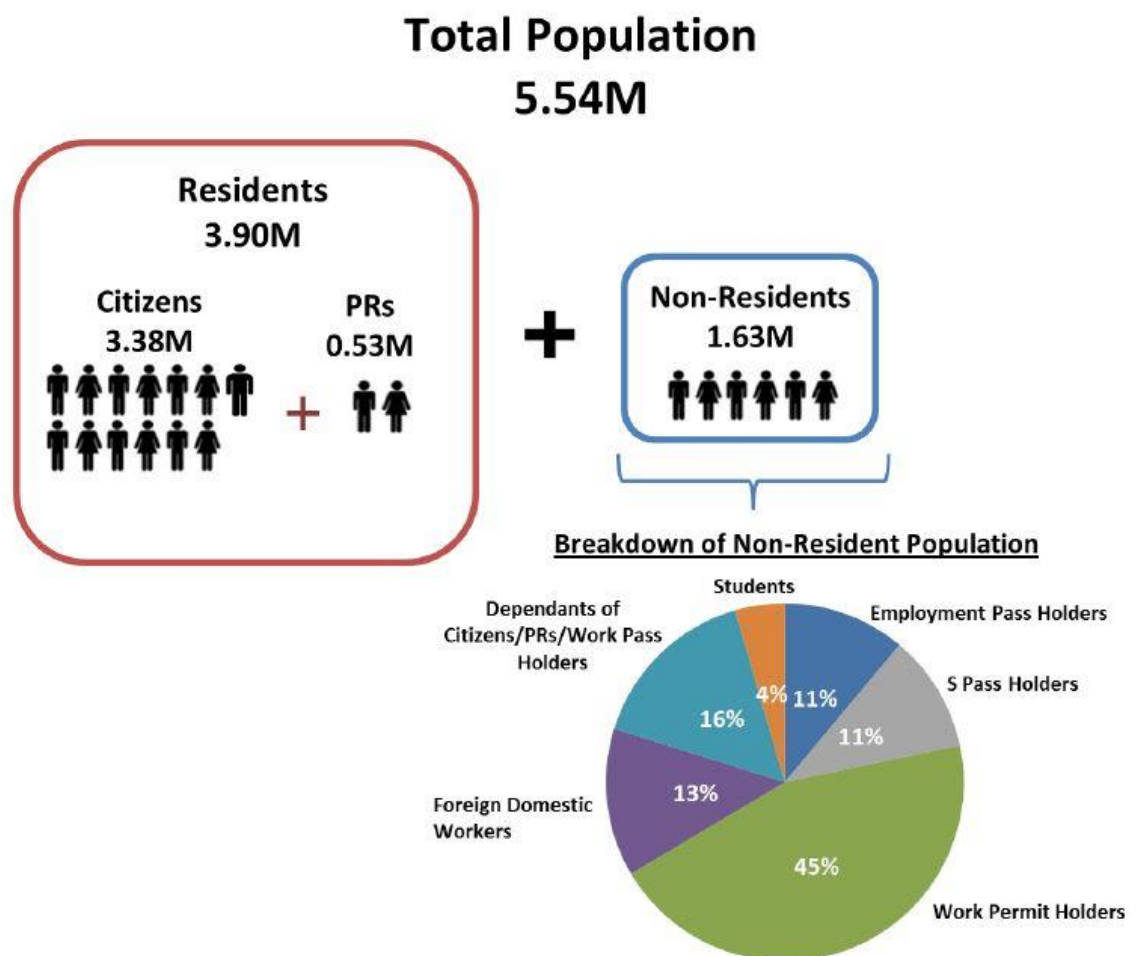


**Singapore population hits 5.54m but growth slowest in a decade**  
 The Republic's population grew 1.2 per cent between June 2014 and 2015, the slowest growth in 10 years, according to statistics released by the National Population and Talent Division.

*Channel NewsAsia*, 30 September 2015

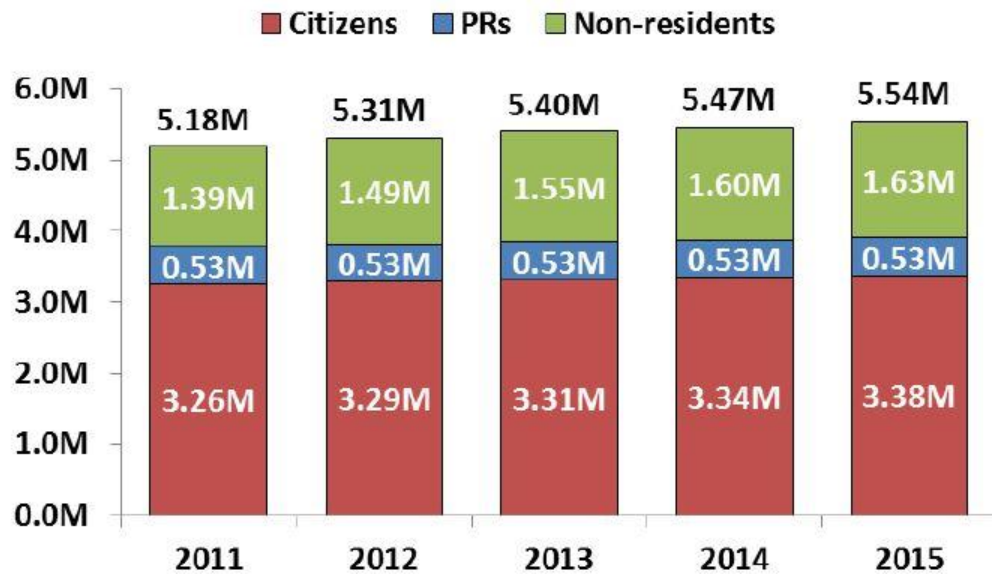
Even as more Singaporeans are getting married and having babies, the Republic's population grew at its slowest in a decade, rising 1.2 per cent to reach 5.54 million in June.

The statistics, released on Wednesday (Sep 30) by the National Population and Talent Division (NPTD) in its annual Population in Brief report, also showed that the number of citizens rose to 3.38 million, through births and immigration.



*Source: Department of Statistics, Ministry of Manpower*  
 Numbers may not sum due to rounding.

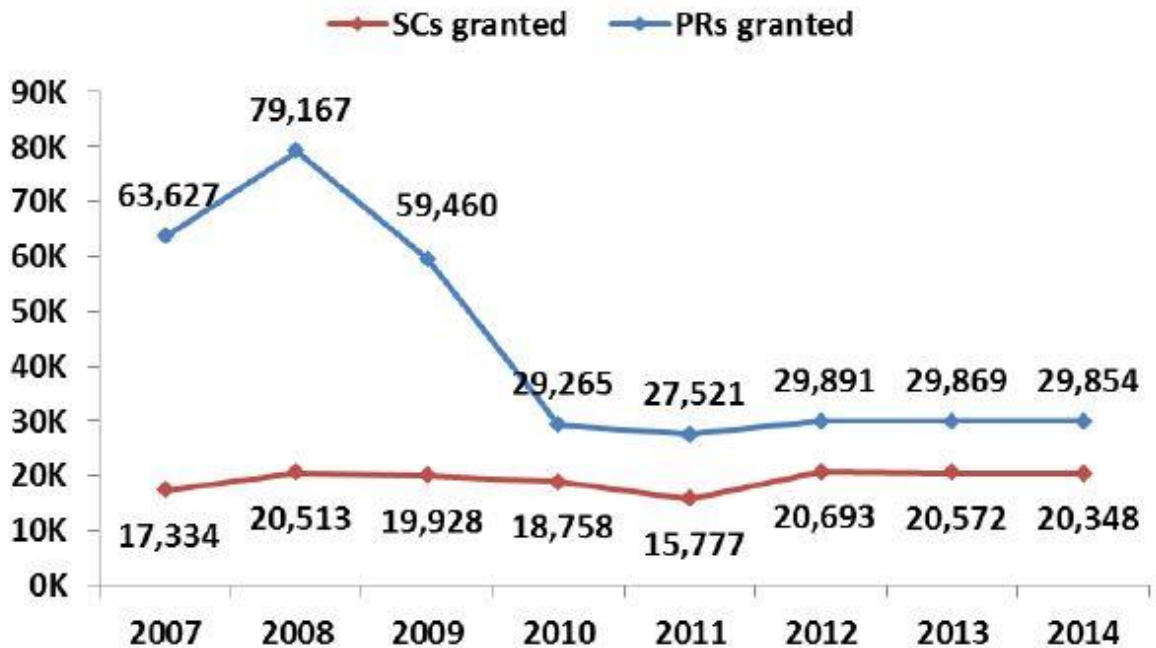
**Chart 1: Total population by residency status, as of June**



Source: Department of Statistics  
 Numbers may not sum due to rounding.

There were about 20,000 new citizens last year, with 37.5 per cent of them aged 20 and below, 27.9 per cent of them aged between 31 and 40, and 19.6 per cent above 40 years old. The Government plans to continue taking in between 15,000 and 25,000 new citizens each year to prevent the citizen population from shrinking, the report said.

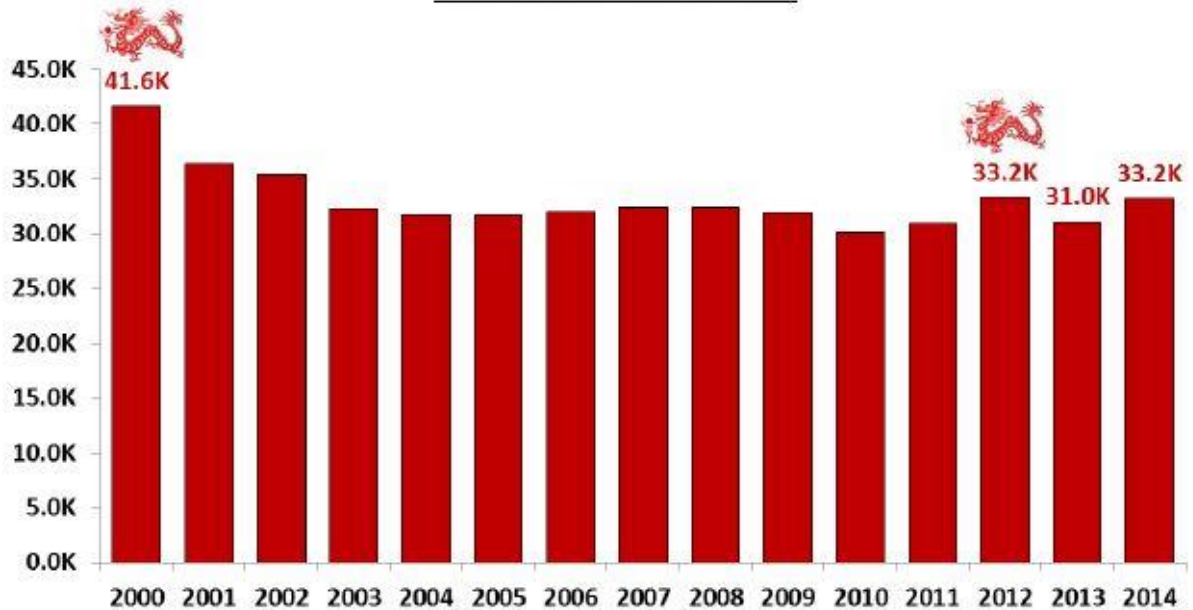
**Chart 11: Number of SCs and PRs granted**



Source: Immigration & Checkpoints Authority

The number of permanent residents remained stable at 0.53 million. The Government will grant about 30,000 PRs each year to keep the PR population stable and to ensure a pool of suitable candidates for citizenship, the NPTD said.

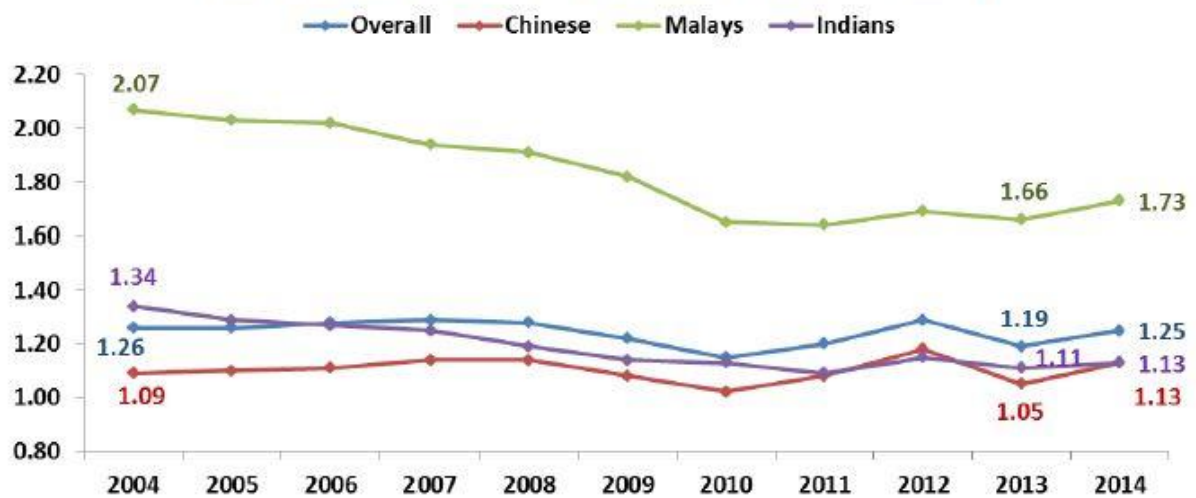
**Chart 8: Citizen births**



Source: Immigration & Checkpoints Authority

The number of Singaporeans getting married reached a 17-year high last year, with 24,037 citizen marriages registered. There were more than 33,000 citizen births, which tied with 2012 - a Dragon year - for the highest number of citizen births in the last 10 years.

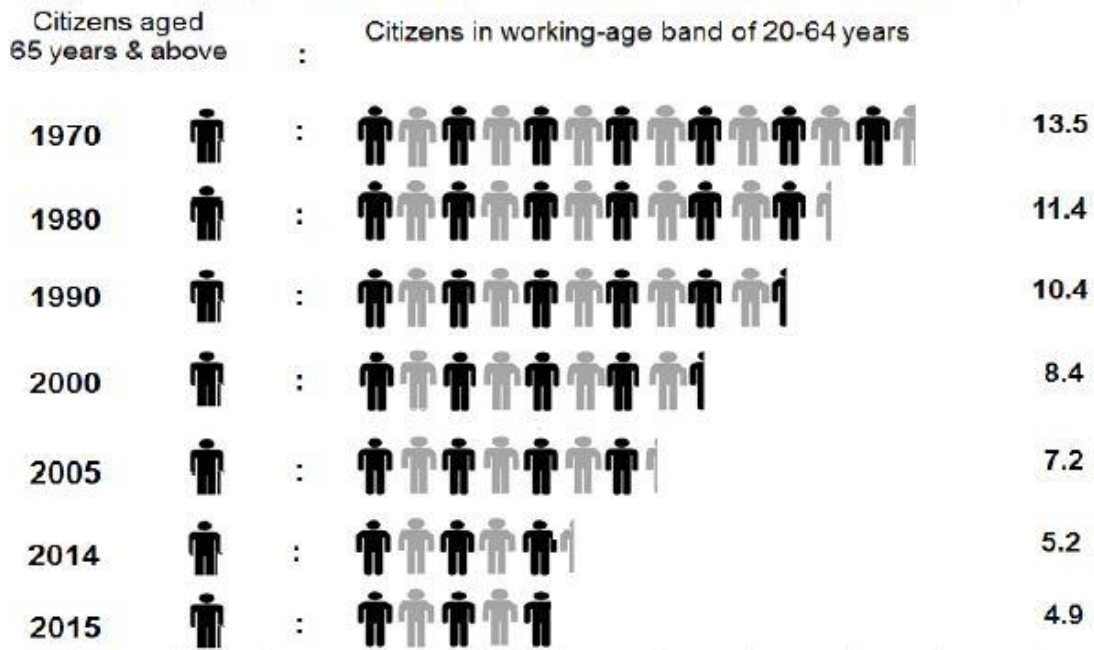
**Chart 9: Resident TFR by ethnic group (per female)**



Source: Department of Statistics

The resident total fertility rate (TFR) increased from 1.19 in 2013 to 1.25 in 2014, with the increase seen across all ethnic groups, NPTD said.

**Chart 5: Citizen old-age support ratio, 1970-2015**

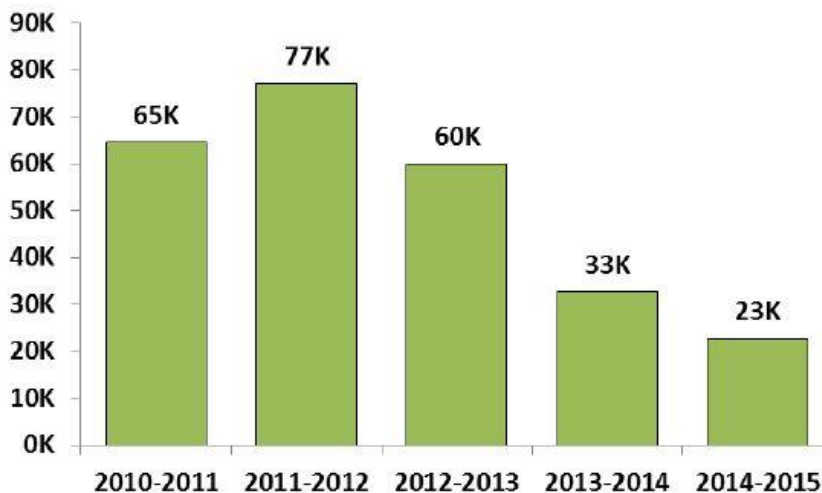


Source: Department of Statistics

The proportion of citizens aged 65 and above increased from 12.4 per cent last year to 13.1 per cent this year. The median age of Singapore citizens also rose from 40.4 years to 40.7 years. Currently, there are 4.9 citizens in the working age band of 20 to 64 years for each citizen aged 65 and above, down from 7.2 a decade ago.

The number of non-residents - largely comprised of foreigners working here and their families, as well as students - rose by 2.1 per cent to 1.63 million, slower than the 2.9 per cent growth the previous year. This was mainly due to a slowdown in the number of foreign workers arriving in Singapore, the report said.

**Chart 2: Foreign employment growth<sup>4</sup>, as of June**



Source: Ministry of Manpower

Measures taken by the Government to mitigate the inflow of foreigners saw foreign employment growth - excluding maids - slowing after reaching a high of 77,000 in 2011-2012. It fell to 60,000 in 2012-2013, then declined further to 33,000 a year later and to 23,000 in 2014-2015.

The NPTD noted in its report that businesses will continue to face a tight labour market. "The Government will support businesses to shift towards skills- and capital-intensive ways to grow, so that businesses can continue to grow and succeed here, to create quality jobs for Singaporeans," it said.

### **Factors Influencing Population Growth**

Experts said Government policies like the Marriage and Parenthood package, which has quadrupled from S\$500 million since 2001 to S\$2 billion in 2013, act as an incentive for couples to have children.

Other factors, such as the stable economic and manpower outlook last year, might have also influenced their decision to do so.

"The past couple of years have also not shaken us to the point whereby we start to rethink long-term investment, and growing a family is a long-term investment," said Associate Professor Paulin Straughan from the Department of Sociology at the National University of Singapore. "If we are very uncertain about holding down jobs, for example, then very few would dare to venture into expanding a family."

Experts also said that the consistent inflow of immigrants over the years, who later became citizens, has helped the Singaporean base to grow. This in turn might have led to more citizen births.

"The other important aspect that we need to look at is when a Singaporean marries a non-Singaporean because then the Singaporean brings home another warm body," said Assoc Prof Straughan. "And when they get married here, and again sink roots and grow their children here, that contributed to our birth figures as well."

However, Singapore continues to see an ageing population.

Mr Christopher Gee, a research fellow at the Institute of Policy Studies, said: "The old-age support ratio, if left unchecked and not addressed, will become a problem ultimately. It is not something you can feel overnight. It is something that creeps up on you."

"It will take effect in respect to maybe lower productivity ... It might be seen as lowered vitality or dynamism in the economy. So, all of these things can compound over many years."