

## **EBRC formation: When could GE2025 be held and how might electoral boundaries be redrawn?**

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SINGAPORE - The [formation of the Electoral Boundaries Review Committee \(EBRC\) on Jan 22](#) kicked off the election process for Singapore.

The Straits Times spoke to analysts on when the election could take place, and what boundary changes to expect.

### **1. When will GE2025 be held?**

The next general election must be held by November 2025. In the past four elections, the time between the electoral boundaries committee's formation and Polling Day has ranged from four to 11 months.

Most political observers who spoke to ST – including former People's Action Party MP Inderjit Singh and former Nominated MP Zulkifli Baharudin – believe Singaporeans will head to the polls around May, after the [Budget announcement on Feb 18](#).

May is more likely than June, when many Singaporeans will be overseas because of the school holidays, said Associate Professor Bilveer Singh, who is deputy head of NUS' department of political science. He also thinks the election will be held before the Shangri-La Dialogue from May 30 to June 1.

“So it will be some time in early May, with Parliament being dissolved in the second or third week of April, as happened in the 2011 election,” he said.

Singapore Management University (SMU) Associate Professor of Law Eugene Tan, a former Nominated MP, expects the election to be held as early as the second half of April, after Parliament passes the Budget.

“May is another possibility. I anticipate the GE to be conducted in the first half of this year.”

He added: “July is too close to the SG60 National Day celebrations. It is unlikely that the current 14th Parliament will complete its entire five-year term which ends on 23 August 2025, which means a GE after August is very unlikely.”

He added: “With the convening of the EBRC, the EBRC can wrap up its work within two to three months, which will also segue to April or May 2025 being one window for GE2025.”

However, NUS Associate Professor of Political Science Chong Ja Ian said the EBRC historically takes three to eight months to do its work, so the earliest an election could take place may be around June 2025.

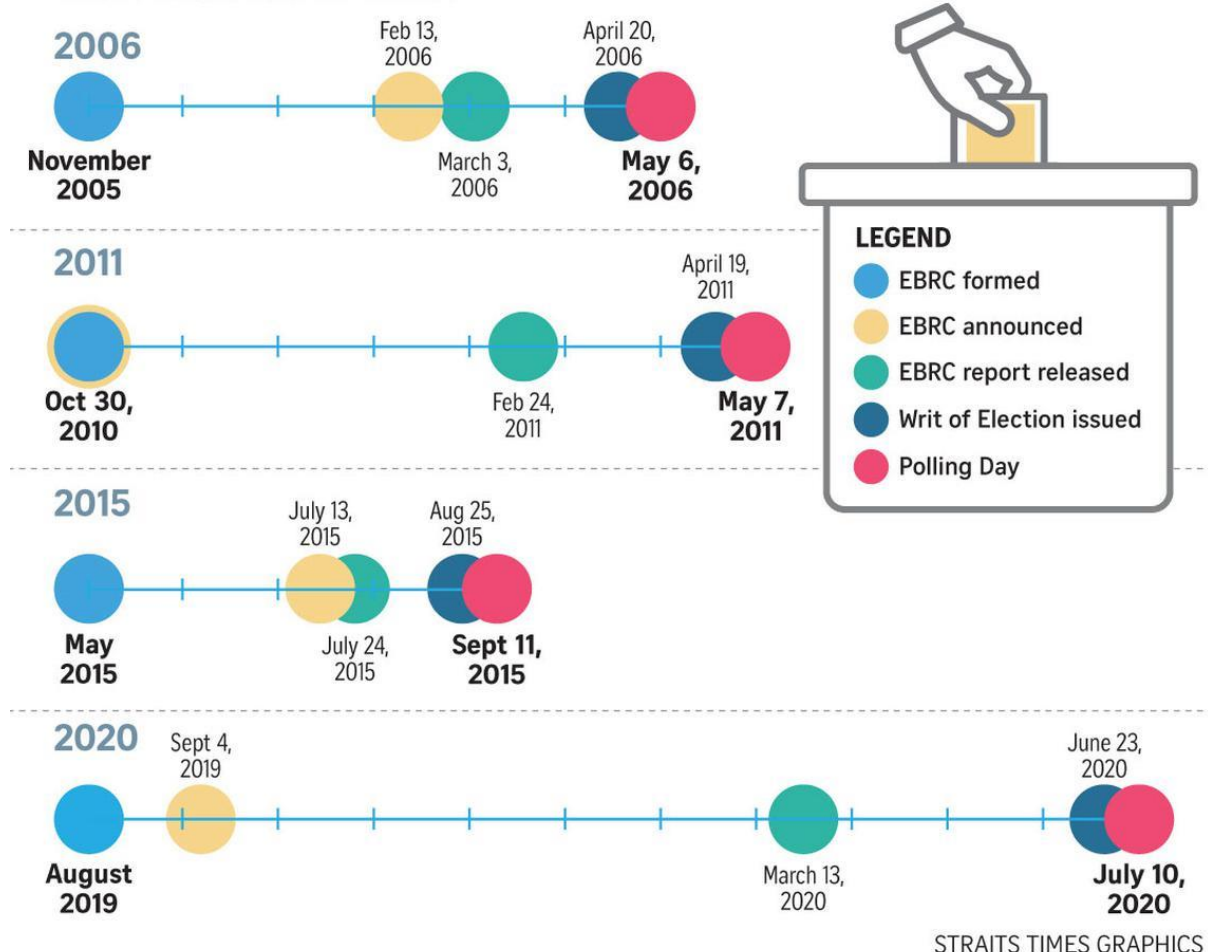
“Since school holidays are a common time to hold elections, given the use of school premises as polling centres and the mobilisation of teachers to provide staffing, June, September or

mid-November could all be possibilities,” he said. “However, none of this should rule out other times.”

# EBRC formed: When will S'pore hold its GE?



Here's a look at the timelines for past general elections after the Electoral Boundaries Review Committee was formed.



## 2. How might the boundaries be redrawn based on the terms of reference?

As has typically been the case, the committee has been asked to take into consideration significant changes in voter numbers due to population shifts and housing developments.

But unlike previous committees formed ahead of general elections from 2011 to 2020, it has not been asked to create smaller group representation constituencies or to ensure a particular minimum number of single-member constituencies.

Instead, it has been asked to “keep the average size of GRCs, the proportion of MPs elected from SMCs, and the average ratio of electors to elected MPs, all at about the same as that in the last general election”.

The terms are phrased differently than before, but maintain the key parameters of having smaller GRCs and more SMCs, said Institute of Policy Studies senior research fellow Gillian Koh.

SMU's Prof Tan said the terms indicate that any necessary redrawing of electoral boundaries should not result in the average size of GRCs, proportion of MPs from SMCs, and ratio of MPs to voters deviating too significantly from the last election. That is, there is unlikely to be a significant redrawing of the electoral map.

Based on the [latest update to the voter rolls in July 2024](#), the number of electors has gone up to 2,715,187, from 2,651,435 at the 2020 General Election.

So if the average ratio of MPs to electors is to be maintained at the 1 to 27,900 ratio at GE2020, the number of elected seats could increase, he said.

That means new constituencies could be created, he added.

In the 2020 General Election, [Sengkang GRC was created](#), while three SMCs were taken off the map and four new SMCs were introduced. This resulted in 93 seats, comprising 14 from SMCs and 79 from GRCs. The average number of MPs per GRC then was 4.65.

Meanwhile, IPS Social Lab adjunct principal research fellow and academic adviser Tan Ern Ser believes any adjustments to the boundaries will likely be to accommodate the increase in voters, the distribution of young and new voters, as well as the emergence of new housing developments.

"This may involve some redrawing of boundaries, rather than the creation of new wards, but I'd expect the changes to be minimal," he added.

He reckons that "opposition constituencies" – Hougang, Aljunied GRC and Sengkang GRC, which are held by the Workers' Party – will likely remain intact.

### **3. Where are we likely to see the most changes?**

Boundary changes are most likely to occur in areas where new flats have been built, said the analysts.

Over the past five years, the Housing Board [has completed 92 pandemic-delayed housing projects](#), comprising some 75,800 new flats.

Dr Koh said that with new developments in Punggol, Tengah, Bidadari and Yishun, there would have been significant shifts in the population since the last election, and boundaries are likely to be redrawn in the constituencies in those areas to reflect the increase in voter numbers.

Citing population changes in the west, Mr Singh said West Coast GRC and Jurong GRC could also see changes, with neighbouring Hong Kah North having ballooned in size since the last election due to residents [moving into Tengah estate](#).

As at July 2024, Hong Kah North had 38,883 voters, a 65.33 per cent increase from 23,519 in 2020.

Potong Pasir, next to Marine Parade GRC, had also registered a 68.38 per cent increase from 18,551 to 31,236 voters as at July 2024, largely due to the influx of residents [moving into Bidadari estate](#).

Meanwhile, Prof Chong, noting population changes in the Pasir Ris area, said this could mean changes to the boundaries of Pasir Ris-Punggol GRC, and the neighbouring GRCs of Tampines and East Coast.

Pasir Ris-Punggol is the second largest GRC, with 180,185 voters as at July 2024.

#### **4. Will three-member GRCs make a comeback?**

The average size of GRCs has fallen over the years, from 5.3 MPs per GRC in 2006 to 4.65 MPs per GRC in 2020.

By the 2020 election, [all six-member GRCs had also been done away with](#).

Analysts were split on whether there will be a return to three-member GRCs, which last made an appearance on the electoral map in 1988 when the GRC system was introduced.

Some, like Mr Singh, feel that introducing three-member GRCs would make it harder to keep to the terms of reference to keep the average size of GRCs, as well as the proportion of MPs elected from SMCs, at about the same as GE2020.

He added that three-member GRCs would disadvantage the incumbents, as it would be easier for challengers to put up a team to contest the seats.

Prof Chong said smaller GRCs may allow constituents to connect more directly with their team of MPs, but could also make it harder for MPs to spread work around.

Unlike Mr Singh, he felt that smaller GRCs may benefit the incumbent, as losing a single GRC will mean fewer MPs lose their seats. He added that more smaller GRCs could also create more strain on smaller political parties, given their more limited resources and personnel.

Mr Zulkifli said smaller GRCs might make a comeback some day. He noted that GRCs were introduced to ensure minority representation, and to this end, having smaller GRCs would translate into better representation, since it could mean more minority MPs entering Parliament for each majority MP.

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