

Legislative Council Panel on Constitutional Affairs

Voter Registration in 2014

PURPOSE

The Registration and Electoral Office (“REO”) has launched the 2014 Voter Registration (“VR”) campaign in the first half of March to encourage eligible persons to register as electors and remind registered electors to provide the REO with their updated registration particulars in a timely manner. This paper briefs Members on the work being undertaken by the REO in the 2014 VR campaign and the related publicity efforts.

TIMETABLE FOR THE 2014 VR CAMPAIGN

2. According to the relevant electoral laws, eligible persons who would like to register as electors but have yet to do so must submit their applications on or before 16 May 2014 so that their registration particulars can be included in the Final Register to be published in late July 2014. As for registered electors, if there is any change in their registration particulars, such as residential address, they should report the change to the REO on or before 29 June.

3. Following the commencement of the 2014 VR campaign this month, the publicity exercise appealing to eligible persons who have yet to register as electors will continue until 16 May, i.e., the statutory deadline for new registrations in this VR cycle. Meanwhile, the publicity exercise to remind electors to update their registration particulars with the REO will last till 29 June, i.e., the statutory deadline for electors to report any change of registered particulars in this VR cycle. The whole exercise will last for about four months.

MAIN FEATURES OF THE 2014 VR CAMPAIGN

4. The main features of the 2014 VR campaign include –
- (a) encouraging eligible persons particularly young people to register as electors;

- (b) reminding registered electors to fulfil their civic responsibility to take the initiative to notify the REO of any change in their residential addresses;
- (c) encouraging registered electors and persons who would like to register as electors to protect the environment by providing or updating their email addresses for receiving electoral messages; and
- (d) reminding those electors who have received REO's inquiry letters to update or confirm their registered addresses and provide the required information by the prescribed deadline so as to ensure that they will not lose their eligibility as electors.

PUBLICITY MEASURES UNDER THE 2014 VR CAMPAIGN

5. The above messages are to be disseminated to members of the public through a variety of publicity measures and different media. Extensive publicity will be sustained throughout the campaign to arouse public awareness of the messages. The publicity efforts for the current exercise include –

- (a) broadcasting of Announcements of Public Interest on television, radio and the internet appealing for new registrations; and reminding registered electors to notify the REO of any change of residential addresses and to provide or update their email addresses;
- (b) placing advertisements in newspapers, popular websites and mobile applications to encourage new registrations and timely updating of registered particulars by electors;
- (c) setting up registration counters at Registration of Persons Offices of the Immigration Department to encourage and facilitate young people applying for or collecting adult identity cards at those Offices as well as other eligible persons to register as electors;
- (d) displaying posters in universities, tertiary institutions and secondary schools to appeal to students who have reached the age of 18 to register as electors;

- (e) issuing appeal letters to households which have moved into newly developed private residential buildings and public housing estates to remind them to update their addresses or register as electors; and
- (f) displaying posters at the advertising light boxes of bus stops over the territory and displaying posters and distributing VR forms at district offices, public housing estate management offices, government departments and social services institutions.

6. To encourage young people to come forward to register, we shall reach out and disseminate VR information to young people through various media in addition to the traditional ones and look for other suitable channels to launch focused publicity campaign. Late last year, we set up VR counters at the venue of a large scale recruitment examination organised by the Civil Service Bureau to appeal to and assist the candidates (mainly young people) to register as electors. The REO is now working with other government departments to identify large scale programmes with participation of young people. VR counters will be set up at the venues to distribute VR forms, encourage and assist young participants to register as electors. Besides, the REO will also approach tertiary institutions to arrange for visits in events like open days to appeal to eligible students to register. For secondary school students, the REO will continue the school visit programme to brief senior secondary students on VR and election regimes in Hong Kong and appeal to them to register as electors once they reach 18. Since young people will continue to be a target group in the VR campaign, sustained and focused efforts will be made to encourage more young people to register as electors in the coming VR cycles.

7. With the publicity measures mentioned above, we wish to raise the awareness of eligible persons in particular young people of the VR arrangements and enhance electors' awareness of the importance of timely updating of their registration particulars (especially residential address). These promotion efforts are expected to boost registration rate and enhance the accuracy of registration particulars in the registers.

PUBLICITY EXPENDITURE

8. The REO has earmarked \$5.77 million to meet the expenses of the abovementioned publicity measures in the 2014 VR cycle, representing an increase of about 14% as compared with the expenditure of \$5.04 million in the last VR cycle in a non-election year.

WAY FORWARD

9. The REO will continue to strengthen publicity efforts to encourage the public to register as electors and to update their registered particulars in a timely manner. The Administration will regularly review the publicity work and adjust the efforts in the light of outcome and public feedback.

**Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau
Registration and Electoral Office
March 2014**