

MEDIA RELEASE

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**NATIONAL HERITAGE BOARD AND ITS YOUTH PANEL
LAUNCH FIRST-EVER YOUTH HERITAGE BLUEPRINT TO GUIDE
MUSEUMS AND HERITAGE ORGANISATIONS ON YOUTH ENGAGEMENT**

Singapore, 29 May 2024 – The National Heritage Board (NHB) and its inaugural Youth Panel have launched Singapore’s first-ever ***Youth Heritage Blueprint***, which serves to connect youths with and through heritage, and captures their perspectives, insights and recommendations for more in-depth engagement and participation in Singapore’s heritage and museum landscape.

2. In tandem with the release of the blueprint, NHB collaborated with the Youth Panel to celebrate youth culture through the launch of the ***My First Love*** travelling exhibition. The exhibition invited Singaporeans to reminisce and share about a topic close to their hearts – their first love as a youth (both past and present), be it a person, place or an activity, demonstrating a fresh approach to making heritage relevant and compelling for young people.

3. Mr Alvin Tan, Deputy Chief Executive (Policy & Community) at NHB, shared: “Through the ***Youth Heritage Blueprint***, we hope to harness youth ideas and energy, and show museums and heritage organisations how to hook youths with museum and heritage content that appeal to them. We also hope to change the way youths perceive our museums and heritage, connect them to Singapore’s heritage, empower them to make a change, and cultivate lifelong heritage advocates.”

Launch of *Youth Heritage Blueprint*

4. Spearheaded by NHB’s Youth Panel, the blueprint represents a critical step forward in bridging the gap between heritage and youth, and fostering a sense of ownership and connection to our shared past among the younger generation. It offers insights into the preferences of Singapore youths, as well as recommendations on how to strengthen and sustain youth interest and involvement in the heritage and museum sector, across the five focus areas of (a) museums and programmes; (b) physical touchpoints and digital content; (c) marketing and communications; (d) access and participation; and (e) collaborations and partnerships.

5. The *Youth Heritage Blueprint* was informed by an online survey and several focus group discussions led by the Youth Panel, reaching out to more than 1,000 fellow youths to gather their feedback on and ideas for the heritage and museum sector. The broad key insights on what resonates well with youth include:

- **Relevance:** Youths value and connect better with heritage and museum experiences that they can relate to on a personal level.
- **Authenticity:** Youths are drawn to offerings that present lesser-known histories, generate empathy and inspire them to take action for community causes (e.g. interacting with seniors, underserved communities).
- **Accessibility:** Youths prioritise offerings that are easy to access (such as in their neighbourhoods), affordable, and/or seamlessly woven into their everyday routines.

(Please refer to **Annex B** for the detailed insights relating to each of the five focus areas.)

6. Guided by youth perceptions about museums and heritage, as well as deeper insights into their habits and preferences, the Youth Panel put forth various approaches and actions in the *Youth Heritage Blueprint*. Some of the key recommendations include:

- a. Incorporating social experiences and platforms which allow for youths to interact and socialise, such as the National Museum of Singapore's interactive exhibition in 2022, *Off / On: Everyday Technology that Changed Our Lives, 1970s-2000s*;
- b. Involving youths for marketing efforts to promote heritage and museums, such as the *This is Not Your History Class* podcast on NHB's social media channels;
- c. Providing meaningful volunteering opportunities which also facilitate personal engagement, for example involving youths in citizen engagement projects to document intangible cultural heritage; and
- d. Creating platforms and opportunities for inter-generational conversations through avenues such as the *Student Archivist Project*.

7. The survey findings have also led to the creation of the *Young ChangeMakers – Youth Heritage Kickstarter Fund (YCM – YHKF)* by NHB together with the National Youth Council, as part of the council's Young ChangeMakers grant, in October last year. The fund supports projects developed and led by youths that spotlight Singapore's heritage. Since its launch, the *YCM – YHKF* has successfully supported five youth-led projects, encompassing heritage trails, galleries and programmes.

8. More importantly, the blueprint serves as a guide for both NHB and the wider heritage and museum sector to develop and enhance youth-focused programmes and outreach efforts. Museums and heritage organisations can leverage the blueprint's recommendations to do a stocktake of existing efforts, refine existing programmes based on suggested approaches from youths, and develop new initiatives to deepen engagement with the youth demographic. On our part, NHB will review the Youth Panel's set of recommendations, and assess how to best adopt them.

9. Ms Nurul Aqilah Binte Mohd Khirashid, Sub-Committee Co-Lead for Access and Participation, NHB Youth Panel, said: "While working together on the *Youth Heritage Blueprint*, I've met an expansive community of youths in Singapore who are deeply passionate about keeping Singapore's heritage scene alive amidst our increasingly modernised landscape. As the co-lead of the Access and Participation Committee, I'm honoured to have witnessed firsthand the transformative power of youth involvement. The youths of today give me hope that the future of our heritage scene is not lost."

My First Love Travelling Exhibition

10. From 29 May 2024, NHB's and the Youth Panel's *My First Love* travelling exhibition invites members of the public to reminisce and share stories about their first love. The exhibition features photos and stories submitted by Singaporean youths both past and present, sharing their personal experiences and memories of the people, places and activities that they love. The exhibition demonstrates how heritage can connect with young people's personal narratives and contemporary experiences, which is one of the recommendations in the blueprint. The travelling exhibition will kick off at Punggol Regional Library and travel to various locations around Singapore thereafter.

11. According to Mr Alvin Tan: "The journey of developing the *Youth Heritage Blueprint* has been an eye-opening and inspiring one, and we hope that the blueprint will prove to be an indispensable youth resource to museums and heritage organisations. With the launch of *My First Love* travelling exhibition and *Young ChangeMakers – Youth Heritage Kickstarter Fund*, NHB has started to respond to the recommendations in the blueprint, and we hope that the blueprint will inspire more museums and heritage organisations to kick-start and/or support more youth-related collaborations in the years to come."

12. For more information, please refer to:



- [NHB's website](#): For the *Youth Heritage Blueprint*
- [Annex A](#): About the NHB Youth Panel
- [Annex B](#): Key findings of *Youth Heritage Blueprint*
- [Annex C](#): Timeline of developing the *Youth Heritage Blueprint*
- [Annex D](#): *My First Love* Travelling Exhibition Schedule

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About National Heritage Board

The National Heritage Board (NHB) was formed on 1 August 1993. As the custodian of Singapore's heritage, NHB is responsible for telling the Singapore story, sharing the Singaporean experience and imparting our Singapore spirit.

NHB's mission is to preserve and celebrate the shared heritage of our diverse communities, for the purpose of education, nation-building and cultural understanding. It manages the national museums and heritage institutions, safeguards and promotes intangible cultural heritage, and sets policies relating to heritage sites, monuments and the national collection. Through the national collection, NHB curates heritage programmes and presents exhibitions to connect the past, present and future generations of Singaporeans. NHB is a statutory board under the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth. Please visit www.nhb.gov.sg for more information.

About the NHB Youth Panel

Under *Our SG Heritage Plan 2.0*, NHB is committed to nurturing a love of heritage amongst youths, encouraging youth volunteerism and participation, and reaching out to a diverse range of youths.

As part of NHB's efforts to better engage youths, a Youth Panel was set up in December 2021 to provide inputs and give feedback on the exhibitions, programmes, and marketing direction of NHB's divisions, museums, and institutions. Comprising 36 young individuals, NHB's Youth Panel includes a diverse mix of students and young working adults.

The Terms of Reference of the National Heritage Board's Youth Panel are as follows:

- I. To develop and/or contribute to Singapore's **first *Youth Heritage Blueprint***;
- II. To **review and advise** on NHB museums and divisions' exhibitions and signature festivals in order to make them more youth-friendly;
- III. To **offer advice** on NHB museums and divisions' marketing strategies and initiatives for the above-mentioned special exhibitions and signature festivals;
- IV. To **interpret** the NHB museums and divisions' collections and programmes, and **contribute content** on the institutions' social media platforms; and
- V. To work with NHB museums and divisions on **youth-led projects** as and when the opportunity arises.

Key Findings of Youth Heritage Blueprint

- (a) **Museums and Programmes:** Youths view museums as spaces both for deepening knowledge and having exciting experiences. They associate each museum with a particular atmosphere or ambience, and at least 8 in 10 youths surveyed spent more than 1 hour per museum visit. Youths also seek interactivity as well as unique and immersive experiences that offer different and unconventional ways of experiencing the museum.
- (b) **Physical Touchpoints and Digital Content:** Youths find greater resonance with heritage experiences that are anchored in personal stories and narratives. Contemporary interpretations of heritage, such as using current trends and ideas as analogies to explain the past, help bridge their own experiences with our shared heritage. Despite their digital savviness and appreciation for innovative digital experiences, youths equally value physical touchpoints because they offer a tangible and immersive way to connect with history.
- (c) **Marketing and Communications:** Youths are more receptive to marketing messages which are creative and humorous, and are more likely to act on recommendations about heritage and museum offerings when it comes from fellow youths. While youths are highly active on social media, they also recognise the value and importance of traditional marketing channels for creating lasting impressions.
- (d) **Access and Participation:** Youths are keen and eager to be active contributors and champions of heritage. They value volunteering opportunities that are flexible and have a clear sense of impact on community, as well as offer a chance to connect with other like-minded youths.
- (e) **Collaborations and Partnerships:** Youths value and are more engaged by collaborations and partnerships that appeal to popular interests and/or relate to social causes, such as health and well-being. Youths are interested in more co-creation opportunities between youth organisations and heritage and museum institutions.

Development Timeline of Youth Heritage Blueprint

- **Jan - Jun 2023: Exposure and Brainstorming**

- The Youth Panel embarked on the journey of developing the blueprint. The panel organised themselves into five committees, each focusing on one of the blueprint's key areas. They engaged with various teams in NHB, and explored different museums to enhance their understanding of existing youth engagement efforts across diverse domains, and to share their perspectives and preliminary ideas.

- **Jul 2023 - Jan 2024: Engagement with Fellow Youths**

- In coming up with the recommendations, the Youth Panel reached out to over 1,000 fellow youths to grasp wider youth attitudes and sentiments towards Singapore's heritage and museum landscape.
- This involved conducting an online survey from July to August 2023, as well as focus group discussions in January 2024, where they heard from a range of youth voices about their experiences, perceptions, and suggestions.
- The Youth Panel also organised regular meetings both collectively and within their own committees. These sessions provided opportunities for panel members to share perspectives, brainstorm ideas and critically review and reflect on the findings of the survey and focus group discussions.

My First Love Travelling Exhibition Schedule
From 29 May 2024, Various locations

My First Love is a travelling exhibition that aims to document and celebrate youth culture, and represents the diverse and varied stories of what it was like growing up as a youth in Singapore in the past or is like growing up as a youth today. The exhibition aims to encourage more youths and Singaporeans to share their stories and contribute to NHB's Youth Panel's future programmes, and most importantly, to not forget our first loves and how they made us feel.

Travelling Exhibition Schedule	
Location	Dates
Punggol Regional Library	29 May - 26 June 2024
Ang Mo Kio Public Library	1 - 31 July 2024 (exact dates tbc)
Jurong Regional Library	1 - 31 August 2024 (exact dates tbc)
Heritage Activation Node @ Clementi	September 2024