

MEDIA RELEASE

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NEW PILOT HERITAGE BUSINESS SCHEME TO BOOST CONSUMER AWARENESS AND UPLIFT BUSINESS CAPABILITIES OF LOCAL HERITAGE BUSINESSES

*Singaporeans can now nominate exemplary heritage businesses for recognition from 20 March 2025 to
18 May 2025*

Singapore, 19 March 2025 – Did you recently buy a confectionary from a decades-old bakery, or visited a traditional medicine hall? If you did, you might just have supported a heritage business – a local enterprise that has been operating for more than a generation, offering traditional trades, goods or services that are integral to Singapore’s cultural landscape.

2 As living embodiments of Singapore’s rich and diverse heritage, heritage businesses provide us a glimpse into our collective history, passing down skills, crafts and customs across generations. Whether it’s a family-owned *kueh* shop, a garland-maker or a rattan furniture craftsman, heritage businesses are much more than just commercial enterprises. They are community anchors, fostering a sense of connection and identity among Singaporeans, while contributing to the cultural identity of the precincts and neighbourhoods they are in. Encouraging the sustainability of these businesses is crucial for the protection and transmission of our living heritage.

3 From 20 March 2025, the National Heritage Board (NHB) will be launching an open call for the new pilot ***SG Heritage Business Scheme***, which aims to recognise, drive awareness and inspire a greater appreciation for local heritage businesses. For a start, the scheme will be open to eligible business in the Central Area (*please refer to Annex B*), with NHB working towards including more areas in the future. The *SG Heritage Business Scheme*, recognises and supports exemplar time-honoured heritage businesses, and joins the array of existing initiatives that encourage the sustainability of heritage businesses in Singapore as outlined in NHB’s *Our SG Heritage Plan 2.0*, such as the *Organisation Transformation Grant* and *Craft X Design*.

4 Designated businesses will enjoy various incentives that aim to increase consumer awareness, and uplift business capabilities. These may include the following:

- **Brand visibility to increase consumer awareness** — A specially designed **SG Heritage Business mark** will be introduced to help the public easily identify and support designated heritage businesses. These businesses can leverage the mark across marketing channels including product packaging, in-store and digital displays, or social media posts. They will also be featured in a directory hosted on NHB’s heritage portal [Roots.gov.sg](https://roots.gov.sg), enhancing their visibility and making it easier for Singaporeans to discover and support them. Designated businesses will also be featured as part of placemaking efforts, such as NHB’s *Singapore Night Festival* at the Bras Basah.Bugis precinct, as well as cultural offerings such as *Singapore HeritageFest* and programmes of the heritage institutions such as the Indian Heritage Centre, where relevant.
- **Business consultancy support to aid transformation efforts** — The scheme may also offer designated businesses tailored consultancy support to undertake development or transformation efforts, with the goal of making their businesses more sustainable. Depending on each businesses’ specific gaps or needs, this may include engaging businesses to better understand their needs, identifying new business opportunities or projects, and connecting them with relevant forms of support.

Why a Heritage Business Designation Scheme

5 Heritage businesses are vital to Singapore’s cultural landscape, shaping the character of our neighbourhoods, enriching our city’s vibrancy and deepening our connection to Singapore. This is reflected in the findings of the *Heritage Awareness Survey 2024*¹, which revealed that:

- 75% of respondents agreed that heritage businesses play an important role in shaping neighbourhood identity
- 84% of respondents agreed that heritage businesses contribute to Singapore’s vibrancy as a city

¹ The Heritage Awareness Survey is a regular study conducted by NHB to assess the level of interest, awareness, participation and attitudes towards heritage among Singapore Citizens and Permanent Residents. In 2024, the survey was conducted with 2,018 respondents (aged 15 years and above). The survey sample collected was representative of population distribution.

- 87% of respondents agreed that heritage businesses play an important role in promoting an appreciation of Singapore's history, heritage and culture.

6 This shows that Singaporeans believe in and appreciate the value of heritage businesses. However, based on the *Heritage Business Feasibility Study*² commissioned by NHB in 2023, it was found that only 46% regularly purchase from such businesses. In addition, it was found that the low consumer support could be due to factors such as limited awareness of heritage goods and services.

7 The findings suggest a gap in the perceived value of heritage businesses and actual consumer behaviour. NHB hopes to bridge some of these gaps through the *SG Heritage Business Scheme*, by recognising businesses that exemplify outstanding heritage qualities, increasing consumer awareness of these businesses and their goods or services, and uplifting their business capabilities.

Eligibility Criteria for the SG Heritage Business Scheme

8 The scheme, in its pilot phase, is open to heritage businesses that meet the following eligibility criteria:

- Registered and operating in Singapore for at least 30 years;
- At least 30% local equity held by Singapore citizens or permanent residents;
- Continuous operation without a break exceeding two years; and,
- Located within Singapore's Central Area, namely Chinatown (Kreta Ayer, Bukit Pasoh, Neil Road), Kampong Gelam, Little India, the Civic District, Bras Basah, Bugis precinct, and Orchard area³.

9 The call for nominations will launch on 20 March 2025, and the nomination cycle will run until 18 May 2025. Singaporeans can play a role in supporting heritage business by submitting nominations on their behalf through an online form, subject to the business' eligibility for the

²The Heritage Business Feasibility Study was commissioned by NHB in 2023, which surveyed 751 Singaporeans and PRs to better understand the landscape of heritage businesses, and public consumption patterns of such goods/services of heritage businesses.

³ This refers to the Central Area as set out by the Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA), and encompasses our major cultural, lifestyle and business precincts. Please refer to NHB's website for more information.



scheme. Members of the public are encouraged to inform the businesses of their intent to submit a nomination, and engage them in order to submit a compelling nomination that expresses the business' full significance. Eligible businesses can also nominate themselves or other businesses in the spirit of supporting the wider heritage business community. All nominations will be evaluated by NHB and an appointed evaluation panel, and the awardees will be announced in Q3 2025.

Safeguarding Singapore's Living Heritage

10 The *SG Heritage Business Scheme* is one of the initiatives supported under the [recently announced Inter-Agency Task Force for Heritage Business, Traditional Activities and Cultural Life](#). The Task Force, led and co-chaired by Senior Minister of State (Culture, Community and Youth) Low Yen Ling and Minister of State (National Development) Muhammad Faishal Ibrahim, is a multi-agency effort to bring together key agencies, community partners and heritage businesses to grow and sustain business and activities that are crucial in ensuring the vibrancy of Singapore's heritage areas.

11 Ms Low Yen Ling, Senior Minister of State for Culture, Community and Youth, said "Heritage businesses play a significant role in Singapore's vibrant multicultural identity, ensuring that our unique traditions, skills, and stories continue to thrive. The *SG Heritage Business Scheme* celebrates these uniquely Singaporean businesses, and supports their efforts to innovate while staying true to their roots. We encourage Singaporeans to rally behind these truly SG businesses with their patronage and celebrate our collective heritage."

12 Ms Melissa Tan, Director (Heritage Policy and Research), NHB, said: "Heritage businesses are a vital part of Singapore's cultural identity and living heritage, reflecting time-honoured traditions and contributing to the rich tapestry of our diverse communities. They are also community anchors that serve as a marker of familiarity and connection across generations. From our engagements and research, the low public awareness of these heritage businesses and their value is a significant hurdle for businesses, amongst other myriad challenges. It is thus timely that we are launching the *SG Heritage Business Scheme* to draw greater attention to heritage businesses and help them garner more support from Singaporeans. The safeguarding of our living heritage is a collective effort. Alongside efforts by the government and those by the Inter-Agency

Task Force, it is crucial for Singaporeans to support and patronise these businesses so that they may continue to thrive for generations to come.”

13 Mr Jeshier Loi, Director (Branding and Market Development), Ya Kun International Pte Ltd; Member, SBF SME Committee; and an evaluation panel member of the *SG Heritage Business Scheme*, said: “Every heritage business has a unique journey, story and craft and through the *SG Heritage Business Scheme*, we want to build a community of craftsmen, stories and legacy for future Singaporeans.”

14 For further details on the scheme including the online application form, please visit NHB's website at: <https://go.gov.sg/sgheritagebusiness>. Please refer to:

- **Annex A** for a description of heritage businesses,
- **Annex B** for map demarcating Singapore's Central Area
- **Annex C** for more information on the *SG Heritage Business Scheme* evaluation panel,
- **Annex D** for more information on existing grants and schemes for heritage businesses implemented by NHB.

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For media enquiries, please contact:

Gabrielle Lee
Tate Anzur
9040 4813
gabrielle.lee@tateanzur.com

Jia Xuan Seah
Tate Anzur
9617 4343
jiaxuan.seah@tateanzur.com

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.

What are Heritage Businesses?

Heritage businesses may be understood as:

1. **Longstanding businesses** that have been passed down through and/or have been in existence for one generation.
2. **Community anchors** or businesses which **contribute to the communal and place identity** of cultural precincts and heartlands.
3. Purveyors of **traditional food, crafts and/or services** that provide cultural and/or community value to those living in and visiting the precinct/area.
4. Are involved in the **transmission of skills and knowledge** related to intangible cultural heritage practices (e.g. jewellery-, effigy-, and kebaya-making).

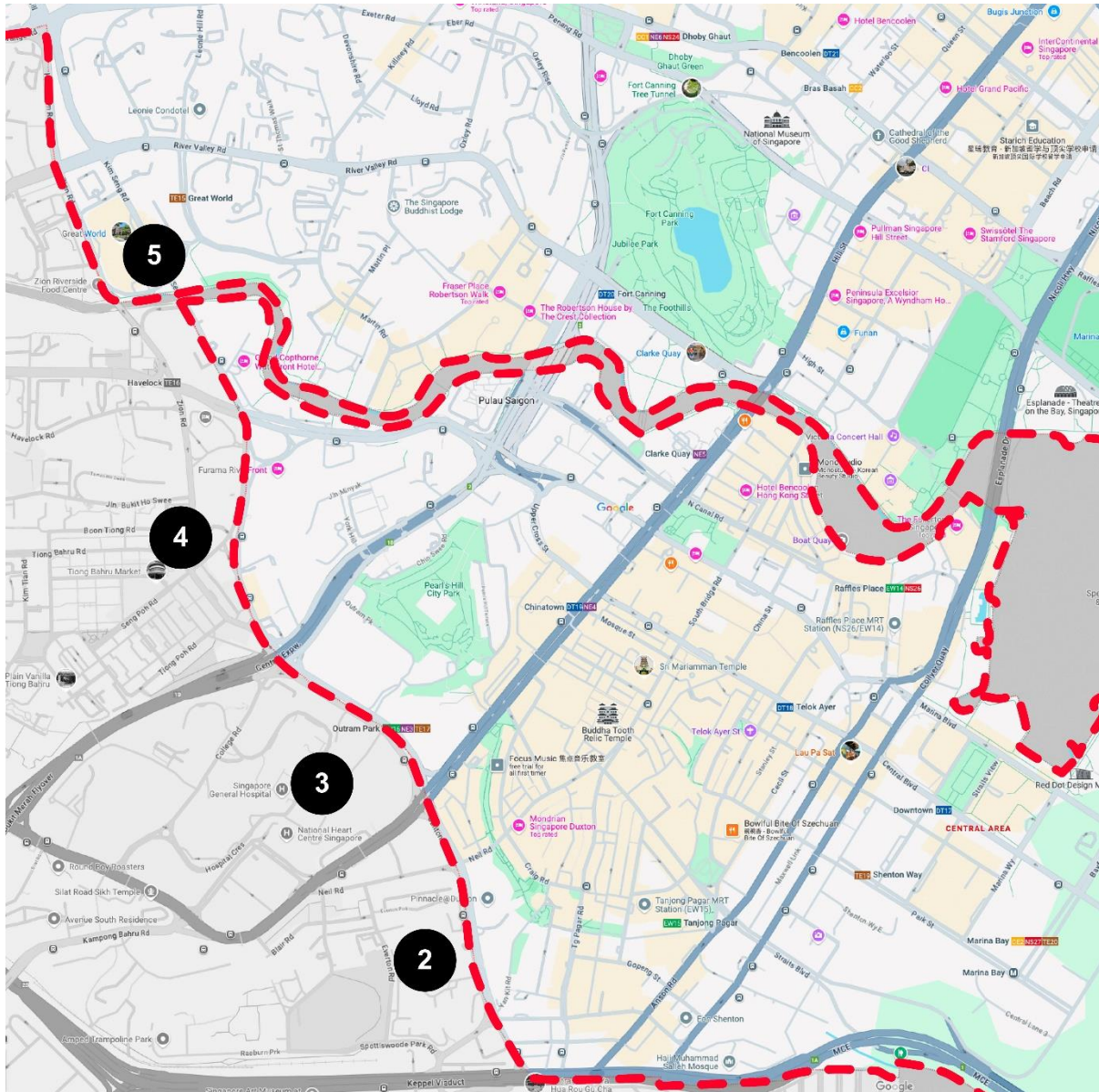
Map demarcating Singapore's Central Area



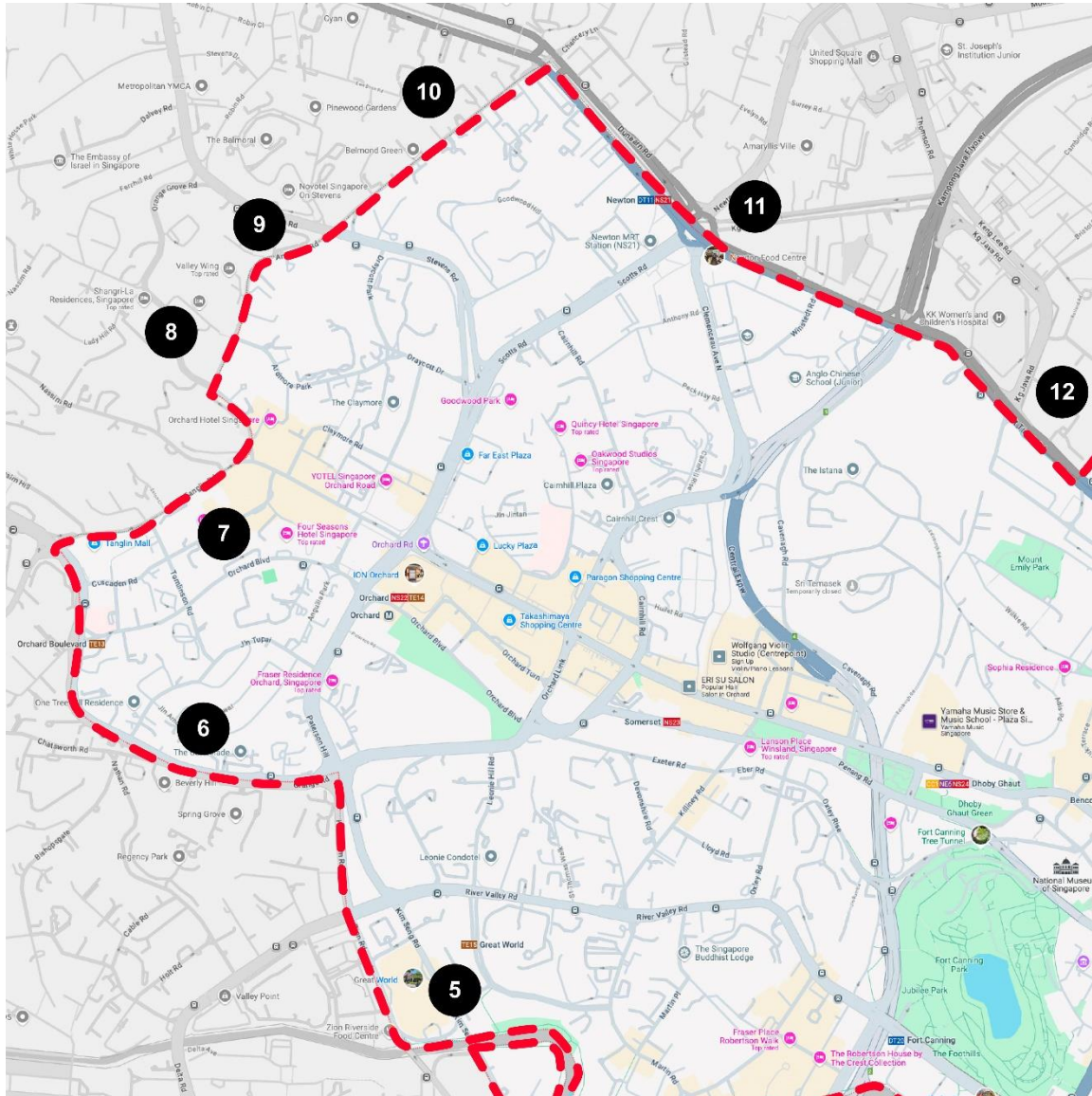
Legend

1	Keppel Viaduct	10	Balmoral Road
2	Cantonment Road	11	Bukit Timah Road
3	Outram Road	12	Tekka Lane
4	Kim Seng Road	13	Rangoon Road
5	Zion Road	14	Serangoon Road
6	Grange Road	15	Syed Alwi Road
7	Tanglin Road	16	Jalan Sultan
8	Orange Grove Road	17	Beach Road
9	Anderson Road	18	Ophir Road

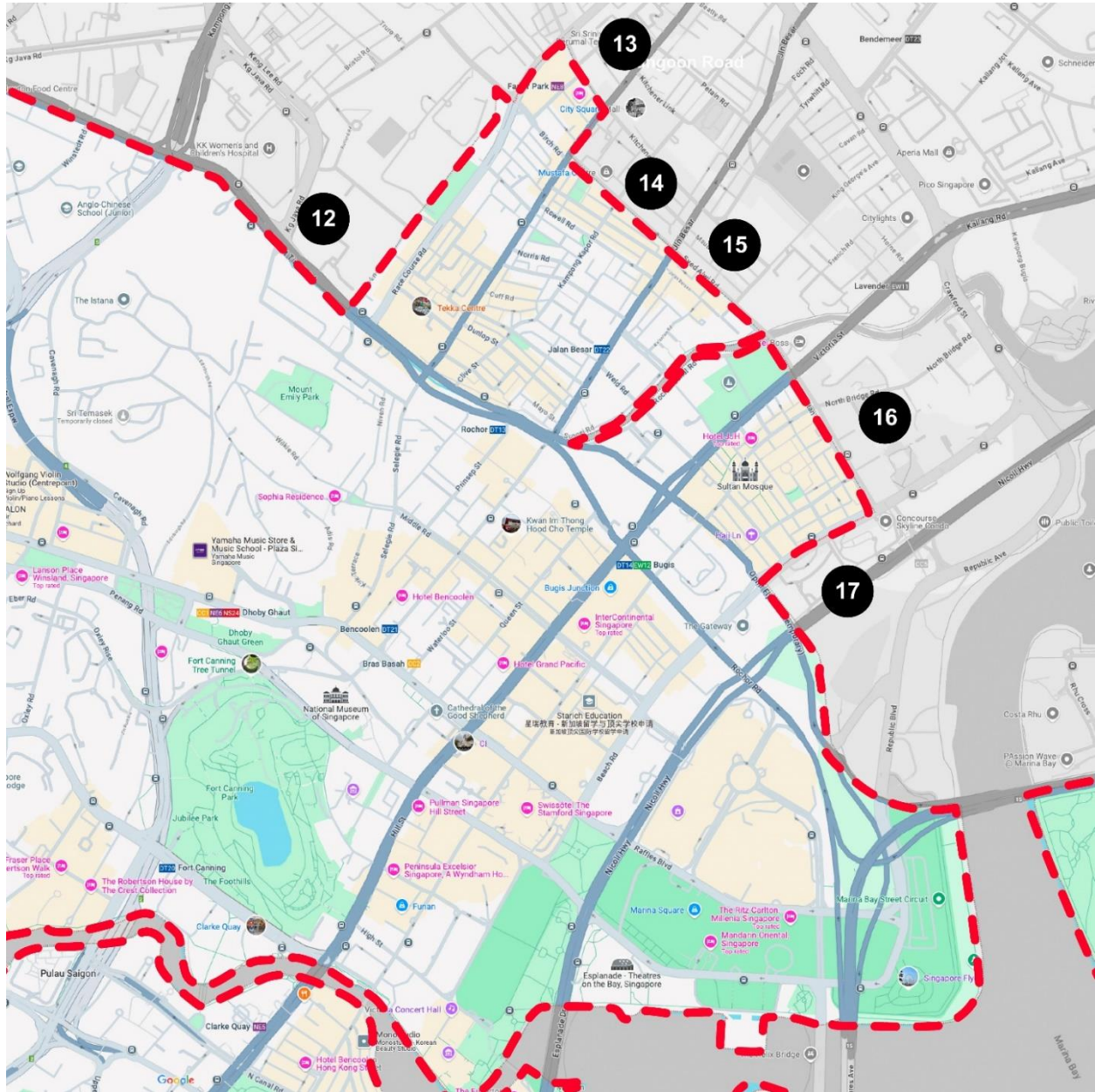
Close-up diagram of Chinatown, Civic District and River Valley area



Close-up diagram of Orchard area



Close-up diagram of Bugis, Kampong Gelam and Little India areas



SG Heritage Business Scheme Evaluation Panel

1. Mr Abdul Malik Hassan
Vice President II, Singapore Malay Chamber of Commerce & Industry (SMCCI); Owner, Selera Rasa Nasi Lemak Pte Ltd
2. Professor Brenda Yeoh
Professor of Social Sciences, Department of Geography, National University of Singapore; Member of the National Museum of Singapore's Board, and Heritage Advisory Panel
3. Ms Carmen Low
Co-Founder, Afterglow
4. Ms Chang Hwee Nee
Chief Executive Officer, National Heritage Board
5. Ms Chew Lee Ching
Managing Director, Mandate Communications; Vice-President, Awards and Projects, Association of Small and Medium Enterprises (ASME)
6. Ms Guo Teyi
Director (Leisure Events), Singapore Tourism Board
7. Mr Jason Lim
Director (Services and Heartland Enterprises), Enterprise Singapore
8. Mr Jeshier Loi
Director (Branding and Market Development), Ya Kun International Pte Ltd; Member, SBF SME Committee
9. Mr Kelvin Ang
Director (Conservation Management), Urban Redevelopment Authority
10. Mr Khir Johari
Director, Chersonese Capital Ltd; Member of the Asian Civilisations Museum's Board
11. Mr Mark Lee
Chief Executive Officer, Sing Lun Holdings Pte Ltd
12. Mr Rajakumar s/o Chandra
Vice Chairman, Singapore Indian Chamber of Commerce & Industry (SICCI); Director of Jothi Holdings Pte Ltd (Jothi Store & Flower Shop); member of Stewards of Intangible Cultural Heritage Award evaluation panel

NHB Grants and Schemes for Heritage Businesses

Name	Details
<p>Organisation Transformation Grant</p>	<p>The <i>Organisation Transformation Grant</i> (OTG) aims to encourage and support heritage businesses and organisations to adopt transformative and/or innovative projects that will contribute to the sustainability and long-term viability of their business.</p> <p>The grant provides up to \$40,000 for transformation efforts projects which can address the unique challenges faced by individual businesses.</p> <p>More information on OTG is available here.</p>
<p>Craft x Design</p>	<p><i>Craft X Design</i> pairs traditional craft practitioners with local designers and/or studios to reimagine traditional crafts into innovative and modern products that express and embody Singapore's rich and diverse cultural heritage.</p> <p>This project is part of NHB's efforts to promote greater awareness of intangible cultural heritage (ICH), raise the profile of local traditional craftsmanship, and increase access of local traditional craft practitioners to new markets, networks and designs.</p> <p>As the pilot edition of NHB's <i>Craft X Design</i> programme, an Open Call was launched in 2021 to invite local designers to submit a proposal for the co-creation of contemporary products for the local market, in collaboration with traditional craft practitioners in Singapore. A second edition is underway, and more details will be shared closer to date.</p> <p>More information on <i>Craft x Design</i> is available here.</p>