

MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release

STRONG INTEREST AND PRIDE IN SINGAPORE'S HERITAGE, WITH SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN YOUTHS ENGAGING WITH HERITAGE

Singapore's heritage remains a key pillar of Singaporean identity alongside a growing recognition of intangible cultural heritage, according to survey

Singapore, 4 April 2025 – 93% of respondents expressed pride in Singapore's heritage and culture based on the findings from the National Heritage Board (NHB)'s ***Heritage Awareness Survey 2024***. This strong sentiment reflects a deep sense of cultural identity and highlights the importance of preserving and celebrating Singapore's rich and diverse heritage. In addition, the survey reflected a high level of interest in heritage from youths (ages 15 to 34). Notably, youth participation increased by 8 percentage-points to 66%. It also reflected greater participation in Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) among youths, with an increase in 10 percentage-points to 56% in 2024.

2 The *Heritage Awareness Survey* is a biennial study that assesses the level of interest, participation and attitudes towards heritage among Singaporeans. The survey was carried out from 12 January to 31 March 2024 and involved 2,018 Singapore Citizens and Permanent Residents aged 15 years old and above, from a representative sample of the population.

3 Ms Loo Ya Lee, Director, Strategic Planning & Data Management division, NHB, said: "Since the launch of *Our SG Heritage Plan 2.0* and the roll out of initiatives under the four building blocks of *Identity, Community, Industry* and *Innovation*, we have seen increased interest, participation and engagement in heritage-related activities among Singaporeans. These include a growing appreciation for ICH-related experiences and the practitioners involved in safeguarding our living heritage. The data from the *Heritage Awareness Survey 2024* reaffirms the work we do at NHB, showing that heritage is a pillar of our Singaporean identity, as we chart the way forward for the sector."

4 Key findings and analyses from the *Heritage Awareness Survey 2024* include:

A. Heritage fosters a shared connection to Singapore and enriches the lives of Singaporeans

Findings

- a. 93% of respondents agreed that it is important for all Singaporeans to know Singapore's history and heritage.
- b. Among those who participated in heritage activities, 93% agreed that these activities increased their awareness of Singapore's history and heritage, up from 90% in 2022, and 92% felt that it had helped them gain new knowledge and/or ideas.
- c. 84% of respondents agreed that a better understanding and appreciation of Singapore's heritage and culture will increase their sense of belonging to Singapore.

Analysis

Under *Our SG Heritage Plan 2.0*, NHB has rolled out a number of initiatives aimed at raising awareness and understanding of Singapore's history and heritage, including the various communities that make up Singapore's social fabric, and how this shared heritage anchors and shapes the collective identity of Singaporeans.

These initiatives include annual festivals such as the *Singapore HeritageFest* and *Singapore Night Festival*; community-focused offerings including *Heritage Trails* and *Street Corner Heritage Galleries* that spotlight the heritage of different neighbourhoods and precincts, and exhibitions delving into different aspects of Singapore's history and multicultural identity.

B. Heritage and cultural practices, including that of ICH, garner strong support from Singaporeans

Findings

- a. 76% of respondents are interested to learn about their family or community's cultural practices and 70% take an active interest in understanding the cultural practices of other ethnic or racial groups in Singapore.
- b. 50% of respondents engaged in ICH activities, such as participating in community heritage events, religious festivals, rituals and/or practices. This marked an increase in 6 percentage-points from 2022 to 2024. In addition, 78% of respondents would support ICH practitioners.

Analysis

Guided by the plan, NHB has continued to raise awareness of the practices, beliefs and histories of the diverse communities in Singapore, in partnership with Singaporeans and the community. For example, in 2024, NHB launched the *Heritage Activation Nodes*, which empowers and engages Singaporeans to jointly create heritage-related content and projects, and grow the community's interest and stake in heritage.

In addition, the recognition of practitioners through the *Stewards of Intangible Cultural Heritage Award* and efforts to expand Singapore's representation on the UNESCO Representative List of the ICH of Humanity have raised awareness of ICH practices and the need to safeguard and transmit them. Strong support for heritage is also evident in volunteerism: in mid-2023, NHB launched its first-ever *Impact of Volunteering Survey* which aims to ascertain the motivations for volunteering and assess the impact of regular volunteering on the well-being of volunteers.

C. Youth engagement with heritage has significantly increased; youths appreciate and support diverse aspects of heritage – and want to do more

Findings

- a. Among youth respondents, participation in heritage-related activities stands at 66%, a 8 percentage-points increase from the previous survey. This trend is also complemented with the finding that youths form the bulk of museum visitors at 46%.

- b. There has also been greater participation in ICH among youths, with an increase of 10 percentage-points to 56% in 2024, as more have participated in community heritage activities, amongst other ICH activities.
- c. There are continual calls from youths to preserve heritage both tangible and intangible (92%), and willingness to support practitioners of ICH (81%).
- d. Among those surveyed, it was found that youths are more likely to identify elements beyond just history. For example, youths are more likely to associate lesser-known aspects such as archaeology, maritime history, vernacular languages, artworks and artefacts with heritage. They are also more likely to associate facets of ICH such as traditional performing arts, sports, trades and craftsmanship with heritage.

Analysis

Under *Our SG Heritage Plan 2.0*, NHB emphasises deepening engagement with youths and empowering them with more opportunities to contribute to heritage-related causes. One of the key platforms is the NHB Youth Panel, which created and launched Singapore's first-ever *Youth Heritage Blueprint* in 2024. The blueprint survey findings led to the launch of the *Young ChangeMakers – Youth Heritage Kickstarter Fund* together with the National Youth Council to support projects developed and led by youths that spotlight Singapore's heritage.

Upcoming initiatives to deepen youth engagement in heritage include the newly-launched *Outstanding Youth in ICH Award*, which will highlight the active contribution of youths in sustaining and transmitting our living heritage, and enable them to grow their skills and capabilities. Youths can also leverage the SG Culture Pass to explore a wide range of heritage exhibitions and activities.

The broadening of perspectives on heritage ensures its relevance and resonance across generations. This could be a reflection of NHB's efforts to promote and increase awareness of the diverse aspects of heritage, which have widened from the museums and artefacts, to areas such as ICH.

D. Our museums promote our understanding of heritage and Singaporeans continue to appreciate the valuable roles that museums play

Findings

- a. 94% of respondents agree that museums promote understanding of Singapore's history, heritage and culture. The same percentage agree that museums are welcoming to people from all walks of life.
- b. 91% of respondents agree that museums help to develop a better understanding of Singapore's connection to the Asian region and the world.

Analysis

NHB's museums and heritage institutions will continue to offer engaging experiences for visitors to learn about new aspects of heritage. These build on the positive reception garnered from exhibitions such as *Manila Galleon: From Asia to the Americas* exhibition by the Asian Civilisations Museum (ACM), and the National Museum of Singapore's travel-themed exhibition *Now Boarding: Experiencing Singapore Through Travel, 1800s – 2000s*.

The opening of *Reunion* at the National Museum as the first purpose-built social space for seniors in a local museum reflects the museum's continued commitment to accessibility and inclusivity. Programmes in the pipeline are aimed at supporting the health and well-being of seniors, such as *Makan With Seniors*, an intergenerational activity that encourages conversations between youth and the elderly over meals, as well as monthly workshops and facilitated tours held in *Reunion*. In addition, NHB continues to organise a suite of accessibility and inclusivity initiatives at its museums and as outreach programmes, such as *Up Close with ACM*.

5 These findings reaffirm *Our SG Heritage Plan 2.0* which was launched in 2023, and serves as the roadmap for Singapore's heritage and museum sector till 2027.

6 Please refer to **Annex A** for the infographic of key findings from the *Heritage Awareness Survey 2024*.

- END -

For media enquiries, please contact:

Say Hua Lee

Mobile: 9668 4605

Email: sayhua.lee@tateanzur.com

Jiaxuan Seah

Mobile: 9617 4343

Email: jiaxuan.seah@tateanzur.com

About the 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.

INFOGRAPHIC OF KEY FINDINGS FROM THE *HERITAGE AWARENESS SURVEY 2024*

