

MEDIA RELEASE

LAUNCH OF OUR SG HERITAGE PLAN – SINGAPORE’S FIRST MASTER PLAN FOR THE HERITAGE AND MUSEUM SECTOR

As part of the plan, Singaporeans are invited to co-create Singapore’s intangible cultural heritage inventory

Singapore, 7 April 2018 – A new milestone was achieved for the heritage scene in Singapore today as Grace Fu, Minister for Culture, Community, and Youth, launched Our SG Heritage Plan, the first master plan for Singapore’s heritage and museum sector. \$66 million has been set aside for the implementation of the plan. Co-developed with the community, the long-term plan charts the strategies and initiatives to better safeguard and promote our heritage for future generations over the next five years (2018 to 2022), and beyond.

2 Our SG Heritage Plan was developed in response to the growing interest in heritage and museums among Singaporeans, and the increasing number of people who wish to play an active role in protecting and promoting our heritage. It was also formulated to deal with challenges facing heritage preservation in a globalised world with rapid changes to our social and economic environment.

3 The vision of Our SG Heritage Plan is:

Our rich and multicultural heritage anchors our Singaporean identity.

We aspire to create a cohesive society where we value and engage with our heritage.

This makes us proud of our nation and our connections to the world, and takes us confidently into the future.

Creating the Plan with Singaporeans

4 When developing Our SG Heritage Plan, the National Heritage Board (NHB) organised over 30 focus group sessions and consulted more than 730 participants from September 2016 to November 2017. Coming from diverse backgrounds, the participants included heritage experts, members of non-governmental organisations, academics, practitioners, museum-goers, volunteers, educators, youths and students. The input received was crucial in the formulation of the plan’s strategies, and helped to identify focus areas for the next few years.

5 The views from the wider public were also sought through the launch of a website in December 2017, oursgheritage.sg, and a roving exhibition, which travelled around Singapore in January and February 2018. 34,000 people visited the exhibition and website, and more than 7,300 provided their views and feedback.

Four Pillars of the Plan

6 Our SG Heritage Plan comprises four pillars, each covering a key area of Singapore's heritage:

- Our Places

Our Places refer to Singapore's historic buildings, structures, sites, landscapes and precincts. Our SG Heritage Plan sets out recommendations to further protect and promote Singapore's tangible heritage by improving research and planning efforts, and outlines efforts to encourage people to appreciate our past and the history of different places in Singapore.

- Our Cultures

Our Cultures cover Singapore's intangible cultural heritage, which comprises the traditions, rituals, crafts, expressions, knowledge and skills that we practise and pass on from generation to generation. Our SG Heritage Plan will seek to safeguard these practices, encourage the transmission of our intangible cultural heritage to future generations, and increase public awareness and appreciation of our intangible cultural heritage, while allowing it room to evolve and adapt to changes in our society.

- Our Treasures

Our Treasures refer to over 200,000 artworks and artefacts in the National Collection, and the museums and institutions which house these objects. Our SG Heritage Plan aims to safeguard Singapore's archaeological treasures, make our museums more accessible to Singaporeans, commemorate key milestones in our history, develop exhibitions that reach out to diverse communities, and transform our museums into inclusive spaces.

- Our Communities

Our Communities encompass the groups and individuals who protect, promote and celebrate Singapore's heritage. Our SG Heritage Plan will focus on extending and

enhancing our engagement efforts with these communities through the use of technology and digitalisation. It will also include efforts to encourage co-creation of content, empower partners, support more ground-up projects, as well as provide new platforms and volunteering opportunities for people to contribute to heritage causes.

Co-creating an Intangible Cultural Heritage Inventory with Singaporeans

7 Minister Grace Fu also announced the launch of the first batch of 50 elements for Singapore’s intangible cultural heritage inventory, which Singaporeans can contribute information to, or suggest additional elements for, via roots.sg (www.roots.sg/ICH) – NHB’s heritage resource portal.

8 Singapore’s intangible cultural heritage inventory stands guided by UNESCO’s definitions and five broad categories¹ for intangible cultural heritage. It will also include an additional sixth category on “Food Heritage”, dedicated to Singapore’s well-loved food culture. This is based on feedback gathered from stakeholders and Singaporeans during the public engagement phase of Our SG Heritage Plan. Please refer to **Annex A** for more information on the inventory.

9 The first batch of elements on Singapore’s intangible cultural heritage inventory has been selected to showcase a mix of representation across all ethnic communities, and across all categories of intangible cultural heritage. Other criteria for elements to be included in the inventory include how they have to be living heritage, show evidence of transmission, and be valued by the community. Please refer to **Annex B** for the first batch of elements in the inventory.

10 The establishment of the intangible cultural heritage inventory marks an important first step towards Singapore’s plans to nominate an element onto the UNESCO Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. The inventory serves to showcase and raise greater awareness of the diverse, multicultural elements of Singapore’s intangible cultural heritage. It is also an ongoing process, and more intangible cultural heritage elements will be added progressively.

¹ UNESCO’s 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage indicates five broad domains or categories in which, among others, intangible cultural heritage is manifested: (a) *Oral Traditions and Expressions*; (b) *Performing Arts*; (c) *Social Practices, Rituals and Festive Events*; (d) *Knowledge and Practices about Nature and Universe*; and (e) *Traditional Craftsmanship*.

Living Out the Plan Through the Singapore Heritage Festival 2018

11 *Our SG Heritage Plan* was launched at the opening of the *Singapore Heritage Festival (SHF) 2018*. *SHF 2018*, and its offerings between 6 and 22 April, will provide Singaporeans with opportunities to live out and experience the four pillars of the plan – *Our Places*, *Our Cultures*, *Our Treasures*, *Our Communities*. For example, the first weekend will see programmes centred on the Jurong Town Hall, a National Monument, as a nod to the stories and memories behind *Our Places*. At Chinatown, *Our Cultures* will be celebrated through food, performances and tours. And of course, *SHF*, a festival by the people, for the people, is one done together with *Our Communities*.

12 Ms Chang Hwee Nee, Chief Executive Officer of NHB, said: “Both *Our SG Heritage Plan* and *Singapore Heritage Festival* are done together with Singaporeans, and are testament to how heritage truly belongs to the community. Through our work, we have seen how heritage brings together and binds different generations of Singaporeans, as they gather to do their part for heritage. Such is the passing down of our heritage and legacy through generations in action, and will stand us in good stead as we move into the future. I would like to thank all partners who have contributed their ideas and feedback to the plan and festival, as well as supporters, such as the Singapore Tote Board, for their generous contributions in ensuring a bright future for our heritage.”

13 For more information on *Our SG Heritage Plan* and the full list of strategies and initiatives under its four key pillars, please visit www.oursgheritage.sg. For the full listing of events on *SHF 2018*, please visit www.heritagefestival.sg.

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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, 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.