



CHAIRMAN'S REVIEW

The past year has been a very challenging year for National Heritage Board (NHB). Our mettle was severely tested by trials such as SARS, the Iraq War and fewer tourists. These trials have not weakened our spirits – on the contrary, they have made us stronger and better prepared for the road ahead. On a brighter note, the year 2003/04 brought us a harvest of some of the most valuable donations to NHB. We have also managed to establish new partnerships with our friends from the tourism and community sectors.

For the year ahead, we will focus on five key areas:

Creating Stronger Brand Identities for Our Museums

First, we will create stronger brands for our museums. Our public's perception of our museums is still coloured by their past experiences with the old National Museum. We need to update the public and to show them that the old national museum has evolved. We now have not one but four museums and three institutions.

To help us crystallise and shape our museum brands, we have engaged a branding consultant and established a Marketing Task Force. These initiatives will help us to create clearer, more coherent and effective branding and marketing strategies for each of our museums. They will underpin our efforts to better understand who our target audiences are, carve out differentiated brand identities, and adopt appropriate marketing strategies.

Nurturing Cultural Philanthropy

Second, we will nurture our relationships with our benefactors and donors. Despite the adverse economic conditions of the past year, we were delighted to receive several important donations of artworks and cash. Foremost among them was the donation of more than 1,000 artworks by the family of the recently departed pioneer artist Liu Kang. Valued at more than

S\$18 million, they represent the single largest donation of artworks to the Singapore Art Museum (SAM). We are also grateful to Lim Tze Peng, who, together with his friend and patron, Koh Seow Chuan, donated a significant part of his lifetime's work to SAM. The family of the late Tan Tsze Chor has also donated their father's large art collection to the Asian Civilisations Museum.

I am also grateful to Hong Leong Group for their generous donation of S\$200,000 which will help to restore the old Ford Motor Factory Building.

Spearheading Psychological Defence and National Education

Third, we have been tasked with a larger role in psychological defence and national education. In August 2003, the Historic Sites Unit merged with the Education and Outreach Department to form the Public Education (PE) Department. The new department will take on these additional responsibilities.

Through strategic collaborations with schools, community clubs and private sector organisations, NHB will devise creative and innovative programmes to reach Singaporeans at all levels of society. We will seek to carry out our task in a manner which is effective and free of propaganda.

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Forging Ahead with New Groundbreaking Developments

Fourth, we will be embarking on exciting new developments for two of our institutions in the next few years.

For the first time in its 116 year history, the Singapore History Museum (SHM) is undergoing a complete makeover. An extension block behind the current national monument will increase the floor area by two and a half times. To attract the young, the new SHM will have thematic lifestyle galleries including themes like film, photography and fashion. There will also be new facilities like an auditorium, resource centre, cafes and restaurants. When the SHM re-opens in 2006, it will sparkle like a jewel on historic Fort Canning.

The Ford Factory Building will be restored. On 15 February 1942, the British had surrendered Singapore to the invading Japanese army in the board room of the Ford Motor Factory Building. This is therefore a historically significant building. On the same site, we will also build an archival repository to house our growing archival collections.

Extending Our Reach to the Region and Beyond

Fifth, we will forge stronger links with our regional and international counterparts. A new International Relations Section has been established in NHB to provide more focus to our exchanges both within the ASEAN region and beyond. We will step up efforts to invite and host foreign cultural guests, as well as organise cultural visits to our neighbours in the region. After all, Singapore's destiny will always lie with Southeast Asia. At the same time, we will strengthen our cultural links with China, India, the Islamic world and the West.

Leadership Change at NHB

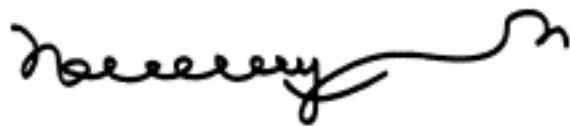
2003/04 saw a leadership change at NHB. Mr Lim Siam Kim retired on 5 July 2003 after a solid decade at the helm as CEO of NHB. Under his able leadership, NHB has grown from 80 employees in the National Archives and National Museum, to the present seven heritage institutions with some 300 staff. Siam Kim also pioneered innovative outreach activities to

bring heritage to the people. They include *Heritage On The Move*, a mobile exhibition in a bus, the *Heritage Festival* and *Museum Fest*, and *Museum@Woodlands* (a fusion museum-in-a-library concept).

Although Siam Kim has retired, we have conscripted him to continue to serve NHB as the Chairman of the Asian Civilisations Museum. We wish him good health and happiness in his golden years. I am also happy to welcome on board Mrs Lim Siok Peng as the new CEO of NHB. Siok Peng is no stranger to NHB, having served as the Deputy CEO prior to her current appointment. She is a worthy successor to Siam Kim and enjoys the strong support of the Board.

A More Optimistic Year Ahead

NHB will continue to set the pace as a leader in heritage, museum and cultural matters. The year ahead augurs well for us with a more buoyant economy and greater confidence in our tourism sector. I am confident that we can achieve our goal of one million museum visitors and two million outreach visitors by the year 2007.



Professor Tommy Koh
Chairman
National Heritage Board