

Singapore Government **MEDIA RELEASE**

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SPEECH BY RADM(NS) LUI TUCK YEW, SENIOR MINISTER OF STATE FOR EDUCATION, AND INFORMATION, COMMUNICATIONS AND THE ARTS, AT THE LAUNCH OF THE HERITAGE INDUSTRY INCENTIVE PROGRAMME (Hi2P) AT *THE BUSINESS OF HERITAGE* CONFERENCE, ON 29 SEPTEMBER 2008 (MONDAY), 10.40 AM, AT THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF SINGAPORE, GALLERY THEATRE

Mr Michael Koh, CEO of NHB,

Dr Seddon Bennington, CEO of the Museum of New Zealand, Te Papa,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am pleased to join you this morning for *The Business of Heritage* conference. This is the first time that NHB has organised a conference of this scale and scope for the heritage industry and its professionals.

Singapore's Heritage Landscape

2 We have made encouraging progress in our vision to build a global city for culture and the arts. Today, one in three Singaporeans participates in at least one arts and cultural event a year, as compared to one in seven in 1999. Annual visitorship to Singapore's national museums in 2007 was about 1.86 million visitors for FY 2007, compared to over 822,000 visitors in FY 2004. Loans and donations to NHB totalled \$180 million for 2004 to 2006. More recently, we witnessed the donation of Chinese artist, Wu Guanzhong's 113 artworks worth about \$66 million to the Singapore Art Museum.

3 For a relatively young nation such as Singapore, our heritage is an important and valued part of our national identity. It serves as a unifying force for Singaporeans in our multi-cultural and multi-racial society. The Government has therefore focused its efforts to promote both tangible and intangible heritage. For

example, our promotion of the ethnic arts plays a key role in maintaining racial harmony and provides us with cultural ballast and inspiration for modern interpretation of works. Events such as the NHB's annual Heritage Festival, which has enjoyed increasing support from our people over the years, help Singaporeans enjoy our shared, multi-ethnic heritage.

4 Our community heritage institutions, such as the Malay Heritage Centre, the Sun Yat Sen Nanyang Memorial Hall and the proposed Indian Heritage Centre, also play a vital role. The government will provide enhanced support to develop them into focal points for specific Asian diasporas to highlight Singapore's links with the larger Malay, Chinese and Indian cultures. These heritage institutions will then be better able to engage and draw our local communities, as well as tourists, foreign talent, new migrants and distinguished foreign visitors.

A Growing Heritage Ecosystem

5 Singapore's heritage ecosystem has also grown significantly. Today, we have 52 museums and heritage galleries. Known collectively as members of the 'Museum Roundtable', they drew more than 5.2 million visitors last year. By all accounts, this is an extremely encouraging development for a young modestly-sized nation like Singapore. Covering diverse themes like history, defence, science, art, culture, healthcare, community, water and even toys, these Museum Roundtable members give visitors the choice of visiting a different museum each week for an entire year!

6 Beyond museums and galleries, other players in Singapore's heritage scene include conservators, exhibition fabricators, curators, collectors, art logistic handlers, historians, researchers and other related businesses. If we cast the net wider, the list encompasses publishing firms, media companies, travel agencies, retailers, and even restaurants. Our 55 national monuments are also important components of the heritage scene. Collectively, this interconnected web of people, private and public organisations make up our vibrant, diverse and unique heritage ecosystem.

7 Looking ahead, the future looks promising for the heritage sector. The opening of the two Integrated Resorts, the National Art Gallery as well as new private and public museum galleries will propel Singapore closer towards becoming

a global city for culture and the arts. Singapore will also be the staging ground for major blockbuster exhibitions and shows hailing from around the world.

Launch of Heritage Industry Incentive Programme (Hi2P)

8 Today, I am pleased to launch the Heritage Industry Incentive Programme or Hi2P (pronounced as 'Hip') for short. Funded by the third phase of the Renaissance City Plan by the Ministry of Information, Communications and the Arts, Hi2P seeks to catalyse the transformation of the museum and heritage sector in Singapore. A total of \$8 million will be allocated over the next five years to seed new private museum and heritage ventures, upgrade museum galleries, expand markets and strengthen product development. These private and people-sector led projects will add greater vibrancy and dynamism to our cultural scene.

9 By seeding the development of private entrepreneurial endeavours, we hope to encourage a greater sense of heritage ownership among business players. Through Hi2P, NHB will incubate, nurture and groom promising heritage enterprises to become market leaders in Singapore and abroad. This will help strengthen Singapore's heritage brand, and position the nation as a regional centre of excellence for museums and heritage over time. We also hope to attract high net worth individuals with noteworthy collections to set up private museums of distinction in Singapore.

10 I hope that the Hi2P will spur the emergence of refreshing heritage and museum-inspired ideas. These can take the form of new heritage tours and the production of mass-appeal products such as board games. The possibilities are endless.

11 In fact we have already taken our first steps towards achieving this vision. Last year, NHB successfully piloted a total of 10 projects under Hi2P with a seed funding of \$500,000. One of the recipients is award-winning author, Adeline Foo. NHB's support enabled her to produce four children's storybooks centred on the Peranakan culture with tie-ins to the recently launched Peranakan Museum. Two of these books – *The Kitchen God* and *Beaded Slippers* – have already been published and are on sale. The books have not only been well received, but will also be

making their world debut at the Singapore Pavilion of the Frankfurt Book fair in Germany next month. By giving heritage entrepreneurs such as Adeline a leg up, we hope to inject new energy and enthusiasm into the sector. You can hear more about the recipients' inspiring stories at the conference.

Conclusion

12 Today's *The Business of Heritage* conference promises a sterling line-up of speakers and panelists who will share their experiences as heritage entrepreneurs. You will have the opportunity to network with like-minded business partners and explore innovative heritage inspired products and services at the *Ideas Marketplace*. Hopefully, this can galvanise more heritage entrepreneurs to come on board the Hi2P.

13 On this note, I now declare the *Business of Heritage* Conference open. Thank you.