



# stitching together excellence

The achievement of excellence is a patient, labour-intensive process that requires vision, careful planning and passionate execution. Whether it is cultivating a robust and vibrant landscaping industry or showcasing our expertise to the region, the creation of excellence in the weaving of a world-class Garden City happens meticulously and diligently – stitch by stitch, day by day.

### **Achieving Landscape Excellence**

A well-developed landscape industry is vital to underpin our effort to build a City in a Garden. To this end, NParks through close partnership with the industry, has initiated a range of programmes focused on raising skills standards through certification, job redesign, job re-creation and other programmes.

The National Skills Recognition System (NSRS) was set up in 2003 to establish work performance standards, identify job competencies and certify skills acquisitions for the landscape industry. As the Approved Training Centre and Assessment Centre for NSRS (horticultural modules), we have put in place 12 NSRS modules to facilitate the upgrading of skills for the industry. As at 31 March 2006, there are 840 NSRS-certified workers and 477 certified technicians in the industry.

At the same time, NParks also works in partnership with NTUC JobLink and the Work Development Agency (WDA) to place Singaporeans into the industry. The job placement exercise, which commenced in December 2004, has seen the placement of 285 Singaporeans into the Landscape Industry as at March 2006. NParks also collaborates with the Singapore Corporation of Rehabilitative Enterprises (SCORE) to conduct job placement exercises to place ex-offenders into the Landscape Industry through the Green Beacon Project. As at March 2006, 48 ex-offenders have been placed into the industry.

During the year, NParks continued to benchmark and develop arboriculture expertise through the Certified Arborist Programme accredited with the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) based in the United States. As at December 2005, 108 arborists in the industry have been certified. Additionally, we conducted two arboriculture workshops by Dr James Urban and Professor Francis Schewarze as part of our efforts to enhance the knowledge base of arborists in the industry. Dr Urban is a landscape architect with over 30 years of experience in the field of urban development and the planting of trees in urban sites while Prof Schewarze is a leading expert renowned for his work and experience in wood decay fungi.

*NParks' vision is to transform Singapore into a City in a Garden.*





*Garden display designed by award-winning garden designer, Jim Fogarty, at the preview of Singapore Garden Festival.*

NParks was also instrumental in forming the Singapore Landscape Industry Council (SLIC) in partnership with WDA. SLIC aims to bring together industry players to cohesively promote quality, productivity and excellence in landscape-related professional training and development, services and advocacy. It is also focused on the strategic challenges within the landscape industry, and seeks to formulate strategies and plans to address them.

Work is currently ongoing in the planning of the first biennial Singapore Garden Festival which will be held in December 2006. The largest international garden and flower show to be held in Singapore, the Festival will bring together top award-winning landscape designers from garden shows around the world and local designers. Comprising five focus areas such as garden exhibits, flower and foliage arrangements, orchid displays, a garden-related market place, and a garden-inspired lifestyle section, the show has been conceptualised to capture the interest of the man-in-the-street as well as the serious gardener. To give Singapore residents a special preview of what they can expect at the Festival, Mr Lim Swee Say<sup>3</sup>, Minister in the Prime Minister's Office, unveiled a special garden display on 3 September 2005.

### **Marketing the Garden City Brand Abroad**

Set up in May 2003, Singapore Garden City Pte Ltd has, to date, leveraged on Singapore's horticultural and landscaping expertise to secure overseas projects. Offering a full range of landscape consultancy services, greenery masterplanning and park management, the company has completed several design projects – with more ongoing projects in China and United Arab Emirates in its order book. These include park consultancy services to the Guangzhou Nansha Development Zone, a hotel rooftop garden design in Dubai and greenery masterplanning for the development of two townships in Abu Dhabi. The company is also currently working towards forming strategic partnerships with other agencies and local industry players to springboard and maximise business opportunities in the region.

**“You can hike above the tropical rainforest in the morning, kayak in the warm ocean waters at lunch and walk through the botanical gardens at midnight without having to be afraid you will get mugged.”**

**Christian Kubsch,**  
General Manager of Singapore Studio,  
Lucasfilm Animation,  
Newsweek 16 January 2006<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Then Second Minister for National Development

<sup>4</sup> In the Newsweek article, “Taking Back the Waterfront”, Singapore was credited as a leader in the region with regards to seeing the value in being green.