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Chairman's Statement

It has been an exciting and progressive year for NParks as we joined the national effort to create the best environment we possibly can for Singaporeans and residents to live, work and play in. From the landscape professionals to the heartland hobbyist and the corporate leaders – the public, private and people sectors are now working more closely than ever to elevate Singapore's position as a global City in a Garden.

In FY2006, NParks continued to focus on our 3 pillars of progress: to grow our garden infrastructure, to cultivate Singapore as a premier horticulture hub and to ignite community passion and ownership for greenery.

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4,000 events organised in our parks, about 1,000 more than the previous year.

GROWING OUR GARDEN INFRASTRUCTURE

We successfully completed the development and upgrading of 10 parks and park connectors and commenced work on 46 other projects.

Playing Up Our Signature Parks

As extension works progressed at our flagship Singapore Botanic Gardens, visitorship continued to impress at 3.2 million in FY2006. Works on the 11.7ha site previously occupied by the Singapore Management University is targeted for completion in 2011. Visitors can look forward to new features like the Jacob Ballas Children's Garden and Healing Garden.

Work has also commenced at the much-anticipated Gardens by the Bay. The first phase is targeted for completion by 2010.

Connecting The Green Dots

Our park connector programme has reached new milestones with the addition of the Bedok and Khatib Bongsu Park Connectors. To date, a total of 74km of park connectors have been developed. By the end of 2007, 25km of connectors in the East will link popular parks including East Coast Park, Changi Beach Park and Pasir Ris Park. Our target is to have a total of 200km of park connectors linking people to green spaces throughout the island via the core network by 2012.

More Walks In The Parks

FY2006 saw some 4,000 events organised in our parks, about 1,000 more than the previous year. These included annual favourites like Ballet Under The Stars, WOMAD at Fort Canning Park, the PLAYing in the Park series and the NAC-ExxonMobil Concert in the Park series.

Our parks remained favourite venues for national sporting activities, celebrations and events such as the annual Standard Chartered Marathon, Sheares Bridge Run, River Hong Bao and National Healthy Lifestyle Campaign Launch.

NParks has been bringing new experiences to our parks to suit the increasingly sophisticated population of park goers. Horse-riding was introduced at Gallop Stable @ Pasir Ris Park. Aramsa – The Garden Spa in Bishan Park offers spa treatments in a garden setting. Ski 360° in East Coast Park is the first cable ski amenity in Singapore.

HortPark tops the list as an exciting new addition to the Singapore green scene. The 23ha one-stop hub is set to inspire and cultivate gardening as a lifestyle. HortPark will also be a platform to support the growth of the landscape and horticulture industry in Singapore. It will have a visitor centre, extensive landscape displays and theme gardens.

On-going park development projects such as Admiralty Park, Sengkang Fruit Park, and Jurong Central Park continue on track.

Greening The City In A Garden

Piloted in the previous year, the Streetscape Greenery Masterplan is being implemented to sustain and renew our roadside greenery. Some 165 roads have been planted with trees that give a distinctive layered and clustered feel to the urban landscape.

About 240,000 plants were propagated by the Nursery for streetscape, parks and other projects. To centralise the sourcing, acquisition and systematic assessment of all introduced plants, a plant information database was set up in April 2006.

Conservation & Biodiversity

NParks is Singapore's ambassador of biodiversity. Through our efforts in conservation, we aim to achieve a healthy balance between the nation's economic goals and the management of our natural treasures. An on-going survey of Singapore's marine and terrestrial sites is a noteworthy example. The survey locates and records rare plants and animals to enable effective planning for land use.

Our multi-pronged approach to sustain the environment extends to energy conservation. This year, energy-saving light bulbs

were installed at key parks islandwide. The exercise has projected savings of up to \$600,000 per annum. NParks is also exploring the use of solar energy to deliver power to remote areas. Solar tube daylight reflectors have been installed at Kallang Riverside Park to bring natural light into buildings. Motion sensors and usage regulators have been installed in restrooms to conserve water and energy. Our energy conservation efforts were recognised by Public Utilities Board by way of 8 Water Efficiency Building awards received to date.

CULTIVATING SINGAPORE AS A GREEN HUB

Based on an industry-wide survey in 2006, the landscape industry is expected to grow at a rate of close to 9% per year over the next 5 years.

To fuel this tremendous growth, NParks is spearheading various programmes to build the capabilities and capacities of the industry and position it to seize the growing market opportunities. These include building a strong corp of skilled local workforce, investing in mechanisation and automation to enhance productivity, and professionalising the industry through industry standards benchmarked regionally and internationally.

Singapore Garden Festival

Some 200,000 visitors from around the world attended Singapore's largest international garden and flower festival in December 2006. The first of its kind to bring together award-winning local and international landscape designers, the Festival is fertile ground for knowledge and inspirational exchanges. Nineteen show gardens and 14 floral displays by 34 designers and numerous orchid displays from 16 countries were featured. The annual Singapore Orchid Show was incorporated as a Festival highlight. Well-organised and well-received, the event has set a benchmark for future Festivals in Singapore and the region.

CUGE

NParks set up the Centre for Urban Greenery and Ecology (CUGE) as a regional platform to advance the knowledge and

expertise in urban greenery and ecology. CUGE offers a range of skills training and professional certification programmes to provide learning and upgrading opportunities for the workforce. The CUGE Seminar Series will bring together local and overseas professionals and practitioners to share best practices in specialist topics of interest for the landscape industry.

Grooming A Professional Workforce

NParks works with agencies like National Trades Union Congress and Singapore Work Development Agency to encourage more Singaporeans to join the industry through regular job placement exercises. To date, we have placed over 700 Singaporeans into the industry.

The implementation of the Workforce Skills Qualifications (WSQ) System in the industry provides a robust system of skills training and certification for the landscape workforce at all job levels.

The Certified Arborist Programme is another key standards marker. Accredited with the International Society of Arboriculture based in the US, there are currently 160 certified arborists in Singapore. CUGE runs skills training courses to enhance the professionalism of the arboriculture community and to keep arborists abreast with global standards.

Marketing The Garden City Brand To The World

One of the aims of NParks is to promote Singapore's botanical and horticultural expertise on the world stage.

Through Singapore Garden City Pte Ltd, NParks offers a full range of landscape consultancy, greenery masterplanning and park management services regionally.

We participate in global events to raise the Garden City brand to the world. During the year, the Botanic Gardens participated in several high-profile competitions that led to many accolades.

Our Pasir Panjang Nursery provided consultancy in streetscape enhancement during the International Monetary Fund and World Bank Conference in September 2006.

IGNITING COMMUNITY PASSION & OWNERSHIP

NParks works closely with the public, private and people sectors to inculcate community passion and ownership in turning Singapore into a global City in a Garden.

Garden City Fund

The Garden City Fund remains one of the most accessible ways for individuals and organisations to take an active role in the development of Singapore's landscape. To date, over 11 million dollars have been raised to support conservation, outreach, education, research and infrastructure development programmes.

Reaching Out

To promote nature appreciation to the public, NParks organises and runs outreach programmes with the help of more than 1,600 volunteers.

The Young Arborist Programme targeted at upper primary and lower secondary students was launched to inject fun into learning about trees.

Other programmes for the young this year included SUN Club which introduces nature to students with special needs, Nature Nurtures which boosts students' confidence through nature, and Young Naturalist Programme which lets young visitors explore the mangroves in Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve.

Community In Bloom

Set up to cultivate a gardening culture in residential estates, schools and organisations, Community in Bloom (CIB) continues to flourish with another 50 gardening community groups joining its programme, upping the total to 200.

NParks collaborated with IKEA to publicise CIB via the Friends of IKEA base and partnered National Library Board and People's Association's Senior Citizens Division to promote gardening to retirees, housewives and senior citizens.

Looking ahead in 2007, CIB will be launching a children's programme to encourage schools to use gardening as a platform for learning.

Clean & Green Week

Clean & Green Week in November 2006 was the culmination of nature activities that involved the community islandwide. A total of 57 constituencies and divisions participated in planting activities while 20 participated in community gardening.

IN GREAT COMPANY

An organisation is as good as its people. NParks ensures that our infrastructure and values are in place for our staff to thrive. In May, NParks attained the Singapore Innovation (I Class) certification as an affirmation of our commitment to our innovative journey. In March 2007, we successfully renewed our ISO 9001 certification.

The management continues to keep an open door policy offering many avenues for dialogue and collaboration with our staff to make NParks a great place to work.

In the area of career enhancement, NParks has sponsored 6 scholars for undergraduate degrees overseas. Three of our staff obtained the inaugural NParks Overseas Merit Awards co-sponsored by Loke Cheng-Kim Foundation.

Giving Back To The Community

As a socially responsible organisation, NParks encourages our staff to be active in organising charitable causes. This year, the Courtesy and Kindness Movement Sub-committee was involved in fund-raising drives for the President's Challenge and Yellow Ribbon Project.

One Of The Best Places To Work

Our Workplace Health Promotion programme is recognised as one of the best in Singapore. NParks was conferred the Singapore HEALTH (Helping Employees Achieve Life-Time Health) Platinum Award by the Health Promotion Board, securing

our position as one of the few organisations in Singapore recognised for our high standards in workplace health.

AN INVIGORATING & INSPIRING YEAR

Indeed, it has been an exciting year, albeit my final one in the capacity of Chairman. A lot has been done yet more lies ahead. I pass the baton of leadership to my successor Mrs Christina Ong with full confidence that her wealth of experience in marketing and the private sector will lead NParks to reach new levels of excellence.

My heartfelt thanks to everyone, from the Board of Directors and management to all levels of staff, our agency partners, business associates and volunteers for your support over the years.

I will still be active in my role as Chairman of the Garden City Fund Management Board and look forward to remaining in close contact with most of you and hearing more of NParks' achievements. Thank you and see you at the parks!

Prof Leo Tan
Chairman, National Parks Board
(till June 2007)



“Since 1960s, NParks has contributed significantly to Singapore’s success by transforming Singapore into one of the world’s best cities for living, playing, working and visiting. By actively integrating environmental development with urban and economic growth, NParks demonstrated the value of ‘sustainable development’ decades before the term gained common parlance. Our vision for Singapore as a City in a Garden goes even further, with greenery as an essential component of our entire urban infrastructure. To achieve this, **NParks must extend its role beyond guardianship over our parks and green spaces and also lead public engagement, spearhead nature conservation, and develop our landscape and horticultural industries. I look forward to working with NParks in all these endeavours.**”

Mrs Christina Ong
Chairman, National Parks Board
(from June 2007)