

# Chairman's Message



This year, we celebrated the 150th anniversary of our parks' *grand-dame*, the Singapore Botanic Gardens. The Gardens' development from an ornamental garden to a world-class botanical and horticultural research institution reflects our aspiration for NParks as a whole.

Every year, NParks strives to raise the benchmark on how urban parks cater to the lifestyle needs of its users, while providing leadership on environmental best practice. This year was no exception.

For the people who used our parks this year, the NParks' commitment to offer "A Park for Everyone" rang true. To our increasingly diverse, sophisticated and cosmopolitan population, NParks now offers a wide range of nature-based recreational options, from idyllic green spaces to spa and dining retreats, from children's playgrounds to extreme sports.

2009 saw the development of parks with stronger thematic identities to further address the evolving interests of our population. HortPark, aiming to strengthen an appreciation for gardening, was completed with active contributions from the horticulture industry and the community. In Pulau Ubin, we built the Ketam Mountain Bike Park to provide the first world-class mountain bike park for Singapore's growing group of mountain biking enthusiasts. Families were delighted with the Jurong Central Park, with its life-sized models of favourite board-games like Snakes and Ladders and Ludo. Sengkang Riverside Park provided residents in the north with a regional park rich in water-based activities.

We also worked to maximise the experience of Singapore as a City in a Garden with our park connectors. The Southern Ridges now boast iconic bridges linking the hills of Mount Faber Park, Telok Blangah Hill Park and Kent Ridge Park. The ongoing Park Connector Network project integrates green spaces throughout the island and

promises to transform the landscape of the city when it is fully completed in 2015.

In addition to creating better lifestyle options for our population, NParks must also lead, educate and raise awareness in good environmental practices. In collaboration with the Building and Construction Authority (BCA), we have developed the Green Mark for Parks, a certification programme that evaluates new and existing parks for environmental sustainability. To date, nine of our parks have been awarded the mark and the programme is poised to set benchmarks for better park design and management in Singapore and abroad.

Although our work is national in practice, we must be global in perspective. Environmental degradation and species loss can only be managed through concerted international efforts. For this reason, while we actively conserve biodiversity within and outside our nature reserves, we are also working with the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) to formulate a City Biodiversity Index (CBI). This Index will help cities benchmark their efforts in biodiversity conservation. Several cities worldwide are currently testing the draft Index. Our intention is to have the member states of the CBD formally adopt the Index in 2010.

FY2008 was another wonderful and fruitful year for NParks. My sincere thanks to all NParks staff and volunteers who have worked tirelessly to define and realise our vision of Singapore as a City in a Garden.

Mrs Christina Ong  
Chairman  
National Parks Board