



## Report of the Founders' Memorial Committee



Findings of Public Engagements from 2015 to 2017



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# Background

**F**ollowing the passing of Mr Lee Kuan Yew on 23 March 2015, PM gave a Parliamentary Statement on 13 April 2015 to affirm the value of having a memorial to honour independent Singapore's founding generation of leaders, strengthen Singaporeans' sense of solidarity and educate future generations on the ideals and values upon which our nation is built.



*"We want to engage Singaporeans ... to tap their ideas to conceptualise a memorial that will best reflect the founding ideals and values that will continue to inspire us all, including generations of Singaporeans to come."*

Mr. Lee Tzu Yang  
Chairman, Founders' Memorial Committee  
30 June 2015

A 15-member Founders' Memorial Committee was thus formed in June 2015 to gather views from the public, and conceptualise a memorial for our founding fathers if the idea found resonance amongst Singaporeans. Members of the Committee were drawn from diverse backgrounds representing the heritage, architecture, education, academic research and community engagement sectors. In total, the Committee reached out to more than 32,000 people who contributed their thoughts, ideas and vision for the memorial.

The Committee completed its public engagements over three distinct phases from October 2015 to April 2017, and presents its findings and recommendations through this report.



# Phase 1 and 2 Engagements



In Phase 1 of the engagements, the Committee explored public response to the idea of a memorial and the focus thereof. It reached out to more than 400 Singaporeans through face-to-face dialogues, including sessions for all age groups and vernacular languages, all of which were open to public sign up.

It also sought feedback from stakeholder groups and values-based organisations as potential users of a memorial. The findings from these sessions showed that most of the participants agreed that the memorial should commemorate the values and ideals of Mr Lee Kuan Yew and his team who founded independent Singapore.

*“A memorial is important to pass down and instill the values and ideals of the community. It’s always a work in progress, but I think that is what I love about Singapore.”*

Peh Chin Sin  
Participant in Phase 1 and 2



In addition, the Committee also conducted online and door-to-door surveys of about 1,500 Singaporeans, establishing that over 80% of participants supported the idea of a Founders’ Memorial to remember the values and ideals Singapore was built on.

Building on this consensus, the Committee distilled the values that were repeatedly mentioned in the public consultations into a memorial narrative and recommended developing a memorial that is values-centred and forward-looking to inspire future generations.

The Committee’s Phase 2 engagements focused on establishing consensus for the location of the memorial. Working with the Singapore University of Technology and Design (SUTD), the Committee designed a workshop process allowing the public to prototype their vision for the memorial and to ascertain the most appropriate setting for the memorial. The process also aimed to elucidate more in-depth views on the proposed visitor experience, programmes, and physical features of the Founders’ Memorial.



*“Participants came as strangers, but left as friends. This building of social capital, I believe, is key to building social resilience as a nation.”*

Ms Druga Rajendran,  
Founders’ Memorial Committee Member

From these workshops, the concept of the memorial that began to emerge was one that not only honours the past, but also inspires the future; is sited in a park or garden setting; is sited near water, reflecting Singapore’s story; is sited in an open space, with possibilities of future growth; and is accessible for all Singaporeans to visit with family and friends. 72% of over 700 Phase 2 workshop participants also expressed support for Bay East Garden as the site for the memorial.

# Phase 3 Engagements

Phase 3 engagements took the form of a public showcase that was held over seven weeks from 13 March to 30 April 2017.

## Bringing the Process of Engagements to a Wider Audience

Entitled “Remembering Our Founders: The Making of a Memorial”, the showcase aimed to raise public awareness on the Founders’ Memorial project and the process of engagements thus far, and to share with Singaporeans the values and ideals upon which our founding leaders built our nation. It also sought to validate its previous findings on the preferred site of the memorial and seek more views on the physical features and visitor experience of the memorial.



*“My vision for the memorial is to remember our forefathers who helped build the Singapore we call home today”*

Hidayah and Riduan  
Visitors to the Founders’ Memorial Showcase

An abridged version of the showcase also travelled to our regional and public libraries in Woodlands, Serangoon, Jurong and Tampines from May to August 2017, as well as the National Museum Singapore during the Children’s season from May to July 2017.



## Opportunities for Public Input

Through the showcase, the Committee demonstrated the in-depth workshop process that a representative group of Singaporeans had gone through to arrive at their preference for a particular site for the memorial. The showcase also provided an environment for visitors to consider the visitor experience, programmes and physical features they preferred for the memorial.

It showed examples of a variety of memorials around the world, and allowed visitors to provide input via interactive technology platforms on their desired features for the memorial not only in English but also in vernacular languages (Chinese, Malay, and Tamil). The showcase also displayed the various prototypes contributed by participants and visitors to instil a sense of ownership and pride in people when they saw their own design projected.

The interactive features at the showcase, namely the Word Cloud station, Semantic Inquiry stations, and Virtual Site Mapping stations, were visitors’ favourite part of the Showcase. The interactive Word Cloud station received more than 17,000 entries. Based on a list of 15 adjectives derived from Phase 2 engagement sessions, visitors converged on the top ten attributes of: **Values-led, Educational, Timeless, Forward-looking, Meaningful, Nostalgic, Inspirational, Engaging, Iconic, and Stories.**



*“The maze includes different levels of difficulty to represent the hardships faced by our founding leaders, and offers visitors a chance to be part of that experience.”*

Chua Wei Qiang & Cynthia Lim  
Creators of the prototype



*“My vision for the memorial is to be impactful towards all regardless of race, language or religion. Memories aren’t only to be remembered but to be learnt.”*

Ellyne Yeo  
Visitor to Founders’ Memorial Showcase



More than 13,000 visitors also contributed their views on the possible design features and visitor experiences of the future memorial through the Semantic Inquiry stations in the showcase. Using a 5-point scale, visitors provided their responses to the following questions:

- (1) Should the memorial be a Gallery, Park or both?
- (2) Should the memorial be Forward-Looking, Historical or both?
- (3) Should the memorial be Recreational, Commemorative or both?
- (4) Should the memorial cater for Large-Scale Programmes & Events, Individual & Reflective Spaces or both?
- (5) Should the memorial have Outdoor, Indoor spaces or both
- (6) Should the memorial be Personal, Formal or both?

While a majority of contributors indicated a preference for both elements for all six questions, there was a noticeable preference for a more park-like, historically-based, commemorative, yet personal memorial.

Visitors also gave their inputs that while the core of the memorial should be more commemorative in nature, there could be spaces for recreation, programmes and events within a wider park to encourage repeated visits to the memorial. To help visitors visualise the different possibilities for a memorial, examples of different styles of memorials studied were featured at the showcase.

Following the Word Cloud and Semantic Inquiry interactive stations, 80% of more than 2,200 visitors who continued to the Virtual Site Mapping stations selected Bay East Garden as the location for their memorial designs, with (i) picnic areas, (ii) trails, and (iii) gardens as the top features they wanted to incorporate.

This preference for Bay East Garden was strongly corroborated by feedback from the showcase guides that a large majority of visitors preferred Bay East Garden as the site for the memorial. Visitors who chose Bay East Garden cited its location as the reason for their choice. They felt that Bay East Garden, and the surrounding Marina Bay area, having been reclaimed from the sea, reflects the growth of Singapore that was made possible by the vision and dedication of the founding leaders over many years.



Left: The Virtual Site Mapping stations were a hit with visitors across various age groups.



Right: Visuals contrasting what the Marina Bay area looked like in 1986 and in 2015

One of the most popular static displays was the set of visuals contrasting what the Marina Bay area looked like in 1986 and in 2015. Older visitors often lingered around the visuals, reflecting on how Singapore had changed over the years and recounting their personal experiences living through such changes to both the guides and other visitors. Younger visitors were visibly awed when they realised Singapore today was very different from the past, and when they heard others share how the entire Marina Bay development was transformed over the years, and how, with each generation building on the efforts of past generations, what used to be the sea is now the Marina Reservoir. Such displays thus provided a priceless connection point, and a conversation starter, between different groups of visitors.



## Presentation of Values and Founders

The showcase focused on how the public participated in the conceptualisation of the Founders' Memorial and presented, in the participants' words, the values and ideals that were composed into the memorial narrative. In recounting the engagements of Phase 1 and 2, pictures, videos and infographics illustrated how the process was designed and carried out through a variety of methods and technologies to elicit participants' views. Visitors showed great interest in and appreciation of the variety of groups engaged and the refreshing methods used in the engagements.

In its presentation of the memorial narrative, the Committee took the opportunity to test out appropriate curatorial approaches on treatment of the founders. The founding values and ideals that were presented based on the Phase 1 engagements were Building a Multiracial Nation, Boldness & Diligence, Resilience & Adaptability, Integrity & Incorruptibility, Humility & Teamwork, as well as the values of the National Pledge. These values, as articulated by participants, were interspersed with quotes from the founding leaders, to show the origins of these founding values and ideals and reinforce that these values have stood the test of time.

The approach sought to feature the founding generation of leaders while demonstrating how their values continue to resonate with the present generation. The featuring of quotes from Singaporeans past and present in the narrative portion was well-received by visitors. Singaporeans of various ethnicities showed a sense of affinity with the selection of a multi-racial team of leaders such as Mr Othman Wok, Mr E.W. Barker and Mr S. Rajaratnam, as well as participants such as Mdm Sharifah Mohamed.

Beyond presentation, the idea of creating a values-centric narrative for the memorial struck a chord with many visitors, who drew inspiration from the quotes and highlighted the unifying and timeless nature of the values, especially the ones recited in the national pledge.



*"In the exhibition, I see our core values being highlighted – "Hard work", "Integrity", "Resilience", and "Multicultural". These are truly a trademark of Singapore and should continue to be. I hope the memorial can preserve and drive these characteristics of Singapore for future generations."*

Tan Eng Han  
Visitor to Founders' Memorial Showcase



# A N A R R A T I V E

We are an unexpected nation.

But against all odds,  
we found our way forward.

Though the fears were real  
and the threats were clear,  
our nation survived and thrived  
through every challenge because  
our pioneers honoured their promises.

Inspired by our founding  
Prime Minister and his team:

We pledge to stay one united people,  
regardless of race and religion.

We commit to build a democratic  
society, based on justice and equality.

We vow to help one another achieve  
happiness, prosperity and progress.

In the stories of our past  
lie the seeds of our future.

Boldness. Diligence. The courage  
to pioneer and progress.

Resilience. Adaptability. The determination  
to turn challenges into opportunities.

Incorruptibility. Integrity. The humility  
to work together as one.

This is the Singapore spirit.

Our shared legacy and  
common inheritance.

Let's honour it, live it and  
forge our future together.

# I N S P I R E D



Located opposite Bay East Garden, the Room offered a view of the Marina Bay waterfront and Bay East Garden, allowing visitors to see the proposed site for the Founders' Memorial.

### Showcase Location

As a majority of participants in the Committee's Phase 2 engagements had expressed support for Gardens by the Bay's Bay East Garden as the site for the memorial, the public showcase was held at the Waterview Room overlooking Bay East Garden, so as to raise awareness as many Singaporeans may not be familiar with the site. The feedback drawn from the Showcase's presentation of Bay East Garden was that visitors across all ages perceived Bay East Garden as a more welcoming location that would attract a larger number of visitors.

One particular advantage of locating the showcase at Waterview Room was the on-site cruiser tour to Bay East Garden that gave visitors a more immersive experience. Those who joined the cruiser tours were inspired by the view of the city skyline from Bay East Garden and expressed that it was emblematic of the strong progress Singapore has made as a country since independence. Another advantage of locating the Showcase at Gardens by the Bay was that it attracted families, a promising aspect for the future memorial. In particular, the showcase was popular with multi-generational families who felt that it offered a variety of experiences for different members of the family to appreciate and enjoy.

### Visitorship and Outreach

The main showcase received a total of 30,000 visitors over seven weeks and attracted people of various ages and ethnicities, with more than 10,000 visitors hosted on guided tours. Besides the guided tour of the showcase, visitors were also offered a garden cruiser tour of Bay East Garden, the preferred site of the memorial for the majority of Phase 2 workshop participants. Altogether, over 450 cruiser tours were conducted for members of the public and organised groups during the duration of the main showcase.

To ensure wide outreach, the Committee used a targeted approach to reach stakeholders across society through organised tours. The Committee also partnered GROs to provide guided tours for residents from all constituencies.

In total, more than 170 organised groups from the people, public, and private sectors participated in guided tours of the showcase. These tours were also conducted in vernacular languages where required. The Committee also collaborated with editors and journalists from the vernacular papers – Lianhe Wanbao, Berita Harian and Tamil Murasu – to engage vernacular language groups in guided tours of the showcase.



## Emerging Concept of the Memorial

3,724 respondents, including 2,730 Singaporeans and 176 PRs, took part in the showcase's final survey. About 90% affirmed the Committee's proposed concept of the memorial derived from Phase 2, with Singaporeans expressing support that the memorial should:

- ✓ **Not only honour the past, but inspire the future**
- ✓ **Be in a park setting, amidst greenery**
- ✓ **Be located near water, reflecting Singapore's story**
- ✓ **Be sited in an open space, with possibilities for future growth**
- ✓ **Be accessible for all Singaporeans to visit with family and friends**
- ✓ **Stand the test of time and be relevant for current and future generations and;**
- ✓ **Incorporate an indoor gallery for education and programming.**



At the final survey, respondents also left behind their "Visions for the Memorial". Overall, 97% of visitors surveyed agreed that Singaporeans' views had been sought for the making of the Founders' Memorial. 99% considered it a success in terms of accessibility; 98% for tours; 97% for guides; 96% for design; 92% for interactivity and 81% for content. 78% felt positive or very positive about the exhibition and 67% were likely or very likely to recommend the exhibition to others. Door to door surveys showed that media [est 19 million views] and digital engagements [311,767 online engagements] also helped to significantly raise general public awareness of the Founders' Memorial from 28% before the exhibition to 38% after the exhibition, though there is scope to further raise awareness in the coming years in the build up to the eventual memorial.

## Overall Findings and Recommendations

Through 3 phases of engagements over 2 years, reaching out to over 32,000 people, the Committee has validated that:

**Singaporeans support the idea of developing a Founders' Memorial to honour independent Singapore's founding generation of leaders, and that such a memorial should be values-centred and inspire future generations.**

There was overwhelming consensus that the memorial should foster a sense of unity amongst Singaporeans, evoke pride and gratitude in what Singapore has achieved, and inspire visitors to think ahead and imbue hope to continue the legacy of the founders into the future.

Values regarded by Singaporeans as important to commemorate in the memorial were distilled into the Narrative derived from Phase 1 engagements. The engagements affirmed the founding values of Building a Multiracial Nation, Boldness & Diligence, Resilience & Adaptability, Integrity & Incorruptibility, Humility & Teamwork, as well as the values of the National Pledge. These values need to be contextualised in the founders' deeds and achievements in order to relate them to the nation. The memorial should bring these values to life and make them relevant.

Phase 1 through 3 engagement sessions also show a general consensus on the framing of the founding leaders as a team led by Mr Lee Kuan Yew, whose members included Dr Goh Keng Swee, Mr S. Rajaratnam, Mr E.W. Barker, and Mr Othman Wok. However, it was acknowledged that this was a non-exhaustive selection, and that there were others who contributed to independent Singapore's development. Significantly, all findings from public and private engagements show strong support that the memorial reflect our multiracial diversity.



**The memorial should be sited in a park setting and near water, reflecting Singapore's story; sited in an open space, with possibilities of future growth; and be accessible for all Singaporeans to visit with family and friends. An overwhelming majority of Singaporeans expressed support for Bay East Garden as the appropriate setting for the memorial.**

There was unanimous recognition that siting the memorial in a park setting and near water reflects our status as a 'Garden City' / 'City in a Garden', and recalls the water resource challenges we had to overcome as a nation.

Many Singaporeans were also pragmatic in considering the need for open space and future growth, as well as emphasising accessibility of the memorial via public transport, and disability-friendly access within the memorial. Through both Phase 2 Engagements and the Phase 3 Showcase, Singaporeans thus expressed support for Bay East Garden as the memorial site, with 80% of more than 2,200 Showcase visitors selecting Bay East Garden as the desired location for their memorial designs at the Virtual Site Mapping stations.

However, some highlighted that it is relatively inaccessible at present via public transport and emphasised that this should be taken into account in the memorial development. This point was also the most important factor for visitors who completed the final survey, with over 97% affirming that the memorial should be accessible for all to visit.

**While the memorial could be located in a park setting, there is value as well as public support for an indoor gallery component.**

The need for an interpretive gallery arose out of Phase 1 and 2 public engagements which showed a consensus that the Founders' Memorial should educate Singaporeans about the values exemplified in the founding generation of leaders. The final survey at the Phase 3 Showcase also confirmed this consensus, with over 92% of Singaporean respondents agreeing that the memorial should incorporate an indoor gallery for education and programming.



*Content and artefacts.* The content of the gallery should primarily reflect Singapore's founding values and how they were put into practice in the founders' work/lives. There could also be content regarding the making of the memorial itself, to highlight Singaporeans' ownership of the process and outcome of the project. Participants in engagement sessions and stakeholder interviews have expressed the view that the memorial should not be too heavy on content or replicate what is already in other museums, although it should be linked to the family of heritage institutions.

*Features of the gallery.* Including space for a changing gallery alongside the permanent gallery would enable the memorial to expand its scope of content and allow for public participation. All phases of public engagement indicated interest in recognising individuals who may not be part of the founding team of leaders, but who nevertheless contributed to independent Singapore's development in diverse ways and exemplified the same values and ideals. Participants in Phase 1 and 2 had also highlighted a desire for some form of interaction through technology at the memorial, and the interactive stations at the showcase in Phase 3 validated the merit of featuring such activities.

**Programming and links to heritage institutions, partnership with user groups, outreach to wider community should be integral parts of the memorial's activities.**

Public feedback revealed that the memorial should leverage the ecology of our heritage institutions and partner various user groups and the wider community in its programme offerings.

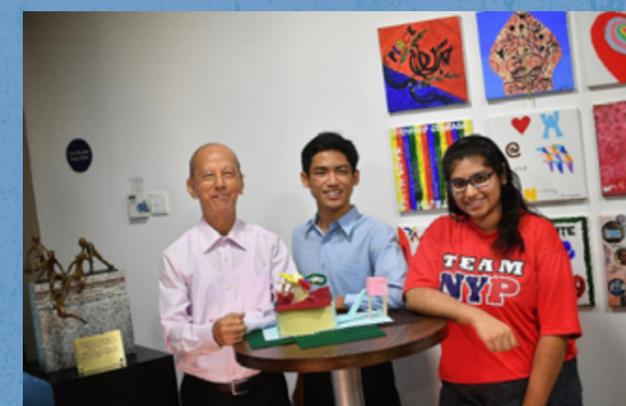
Partnership with user groups and engaging wider community. The memorial should also explore partnerships with various user groups and outreach to the wider community, through which the public can be informed and can participate to refresh their memories and understanding. The objective is to allow the memorial to be a 'living memorial' that will be relevant for generations to come and energise the various groups and communities. While the memorial is a physical space, it is important that its intangible aspects, including the values and ideals which it commemorates, permeate through society.

Programming and links to heritage institutions. Programmes surrounding the memorial are essential for sustaining visitorship, linking the memorial to other heritage sites/ institutions, and providing the experience of a journey that many Singaporeans desire. They could take the form of talks, discussion forums, or cultural performances that are aligned to the memorial's themes. Depending on the type of programmes, appropriate gathering spaces and performance spaces would be required at the memorial.

Suggestions were raised that the programmes associated with the memorial should be well-scoped and targeted, to avoid diluting the message of the memorial. As learned from the experience of conducting Phase 3, it is crucial that the calendar of programmes dovetail with significant national events (Total Defence Day, National Day, etc) and take into account important anniversaries or commemorations. It could climax in a Founders' Day or Founders' Week that would involve partners, stakeholders, and the general public coming together to celebrate or commemorate the founders' legacies.

**While it was understood that time and great care should be taken in developing such a nationally significant memorial, Singaporeans would like to see the memorial developed sooner rather than later.**

Many visitors were also keen to know the timeline for the completion of the Founders' Memorial. There was also a deep sentiment amongst the elderly for the memorial to be completed within their lifetimes, so that they could visit it before they passed on. A possible timeframe for the completion of the memorial could be in 2025, the 60<sup>th</sup> year of our independence, so as to capture public enthusiasm and hopes for the memorial whilst providing time necessary for the development of content and physical construction.



(From left to right) Low Foo Yong, Nur Hazeem Abdul Nasser, and Nattasha Nina Alvinur  
Participants in Phase 2

*“My hope for the Founders' Memorial is that whenever and wherever it does get built, it stands for unity across divides. Many people referred repeatedly to the National Pledge penned by our founders as still the best representation of the story they wanted Singapore to live out. In a world of growing divisiveness, this founding story we've been telling ourselves - that we could live 'as one united people' - has become more fragile, and yet, more meaningful than ever.”*

Ms Kuik Shiao Yin  
Founders Memorial Committee Member  
15 February 2017



Our Two Princesses  
with Mr & Mrs  
Lee Kuan Yew

20<sup>th</sup> October 1991  
(Sunday)  
Marina South

*“The Founders’ Memorial showcase reminds me of a special day many years ago in 1991. My husband, our two daughters and I were on a walk at this very location in Marina South. Guess who we met on our walk – Mr. and Mrs. Lee Kuan Yew.*”

*Our daughters ran to Mr. and Mrs. Lee and they embraced my daughters like their grandchildren. This photo captures our fond memory of that day.”*

Eleen Seow

## **Singaporeans hope for the memorial to reflect our national identity, and the values we stand for as one people.**

In articulating what they wished for the memorial, Singaporeans engaged were in fact sharing what it means to be Singaporean, as well as expressing their hopes and aspirations for the next generation and future generations to come – that they will remember how far we have come, be proud of our country, and continue to build a Singapore worth striving for.



The two-year engagement journey went beyond gathering feedback to capturing the emotions and sentiments of Singaporeans, and in the process, brought people of different backgrounds and interests together for a project that evoked heartfelt responses and a sense of unity and purpose in wanting to leave something behind for future generations.

By participating in the journey, we became part of the ‘nation building moment’. It is the sincere hope of the Committee that both the process of bringing the memorial to fruition and the memorial itself will be unifying for generations to come.

*Founders’ Memorial Committee  
June 2017*

## *Founders' Memorial Committee*

Mr. Lee Tzu Yang, Chairman, The Esplanade Co. Ltd.

Mr. Sidek bin Saniff, Former Senior Minister of State for Education and Environment

Mr. Gopinath Pillai, Ambassador-at-large, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Mr. Tan Aik Hock, Chairman, Singapore Lam Ann Association

Mr. Timothy James de Souza, Member, Presidential Council for Minority Rights and People's Association Board

Mdm. Par Bee Gek, Dolly, BBM, Chairperson, Senja-Cashew Community Club Management Committee

Professor Lily Kong, Provost & Lee Kong Chian Chair Professor of Social Sciences, Singapore Management University

Mr. Tai Lee Siang, Chairman, World Green Building Council

Mr. Ong Keau, Director (Administration), National Trades Union Congress

Ms. Lee Huay Leng, Head, Chinese Media Group, Singapore Press Holdings

Ms. Kuik Shiao-Yin, Co-Founder, The Thought Collective

Mdm. Haslinda Bte Zamani, Superintendent West 2, Ministry of Education

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