

# *Singapore Government*

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### **SPEECH BY MR MAH BOW TAN, MINISTER FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, AT THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF CHOA CHU KANG PARK ON SATURDAY, 11 NOV 2000 AT 9.00 AM**

Prof Leo Tan, Chairman, National Parks Board;  
Distinguished guests;  
Ladies and gentlemen:

National Archives of Singapore

It is my pleasure to be with all of you for the opening of Choa Chu Kang  
Park.

### **Provision of parks to meet recreational needs**

2. Parks are especially important to an urban city like Singapore. Apart from catering to a wide range of recreational needs, parks add to the overall quality of our living environment. Indeed, in a Garden City Perception survey carried out in 1997, over 85% of the public felt that our Garden City has enhanced their lives. In another park survey conducted that year, respondents were asked to rank a list of 10 public facilities they would like to have in their neighbourhoods. Parks were ranked second, ahead of such facilities as car parks, sports/swimming complexes

and cinemas. Only food centres were more popular than parks.

3. To ensure that the public has convenient access to our parks, a good mix of regional and neighbourhood parks are distributed across the island. So, whether you want to engage in active leisure activities, or simply enjoy a quiet retreat from the hustle and bustle of city life, you should be able to find a park space nearby.

4. To ensure that our parks continue to attract visitors, NParks, working with its key partners, organises a wide range of events and activities for the enjoyment of park users. NParks invites schools, community clubs and other organisations to provide park visitors with something extra to look out for during the weekends. In the past year, for instance, over 100 cultural activities and performances have been organised in our parks.

5. Our parks will continue to provide activities to promote family and community bonding. This is especially important in today's urbanised and fast-paced society, where we tend to be pre-occupied with more pragmatic and economic pursuits like work and studies. Parks provide an ideal venue for Singaporeans to spend quality time with friends and family.

6. Linking the many parks islandwide is a network of park connectors. Introduced nearly a decade ago, the park connectors make use of the drainage and road reserve to form a green corridor. NParks has been steadily expanding the network of park connectors, making our parks and nature areas even more accessible to the public. I understand that the park connectors are popular with joggers and cyclists. They also encourage more animal life, such as birds, to flourish. The green matrix formed by our parks, park connectors, other roadside greenery and landscaped gardens brings us closer towards realising NParks' vision of making Singapore a "City in a Garden".

### **Choa Chu Kang Park development**

7. Choa Chu Kang Park will provide residents in the northwest of Singapore with new and better facilities for recreation and community activities. Built at a cost of about \$2.8 million, this park is the result of consultation and community involvement. Grassroots leaders and park users were consulted on the park's design and development. The MP for Choa Chu Kang, Professor Low Seow Chay, personally contributed many good ideas. Indeed, it is fair to say that this park would not have been possible without the active involvement of grassroots leaders, community members and residents. I thank all of them, and especially Prof Low.

8. To forge closer ties with the community, NParks has also invited Chua Chu Kang, Regent and Unity Secondary Schools to participate in its Adopt-A-Park Scheme. This scheme aims to create a sense of ownership and stakeholding in our parks amongst the community. Through hands-on opportunities in designing and implementing landscape features, and in using Choa Chu Kang Park for their events and activities, it is hoped that the students and teachers from these schools will develop a “bonding” with the park as well as a love for greenery and nature. My congratulations to the three schools involved, and especially to the principals.

9. Ladies and gentlemen, in conclusion, let me assure you that even as Singapore becomes more and more urbanised, the importance of parks and green spaces will not be overlooked. The Government will make every effort to build and preserve a clean and green environment for Singaporeans to enjoy a healthy lifestyle and better quality of life. We will strive towards the goal of making Singapore a city in a garden.

10. Thank you.

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