

**SPEECH BY DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER WONG KAN SENG AT THE  
SINGAPORE DAY DINNER ON  
4 OCTOBER 2008 IN MELBOURNE**

Distinguished Guests,  
Fellow Singaporeans,  
Friends,  
A very good evening to all of you.

**INTRODUCTION**

The Overseas Singaporean Unit (OSU) held the first-ever Singapore Day in New York last year. The event was an overwhelming success, drawing about 6,000 Singaporeans and friends. In planning for the event, the Overseas Singaporean Unit (OSU) had initially targeted only 1,000 attendees. This year, having learnt from the experience in New York, the OSU raised its planning parameter to 5,000 for Singapore Day 2008 in Melbourne. I am told that the final count for the number of attendees today was 11,000! Clearly there seems to be more Singaporeans overseas than we estimated. However, we are glad that we got one thing right – most of our OS are keen to stay connected and engaged with home. And Singapore Day is proving to be an excellent platform for them to do so.

**SINGAPORE DAY 2008**

2. There are an estimated 150,000 OS spread across the globe. Singapore Day is the OSU's signature event in its suite of activities and programmes to help our OS stay connected with home. It is the Unit's biggest undertaking each year and its success owes much to the support that it receives from various quarters. Singapore Day is a collaborative effort, involving various government agencies, corporate partners and you, our OS. This year, we are also grateful for the assistance and facilitation of the Australian authorities, in particular the office of the Lord Mayor of Melbourne.

3. Among our partners and supporters from Singapore, I can only highlight a few, or you will have a late dinner! My apologies to the many partners that have contributed to the success of the event that I will not be able to mention specifically – but I assure you that the support and contributions of each and every volunteer, performer, technician, chef, hawker, corporate partner and government official is noted and deeply appreciated. Let me now mention a few:

- **Food Republic** for the authentic hawker fare;
- **MediaCorp** who put together the day and evening performances;
- **Yeo Hiap Seng** whose drinks kept us all refreshed throughout the day;

- **SIA** for flying the entire team up;
- **Stamford Hotels and Resorts** for its kind hospitality;
- **SingTel** for its communications support;
- **Neptune Orient Lines** for shipping all our Singapore-sourced items to Melbourne – in four 40-ft containers;
- **Asia Pacific Breweries** who put the Tiger in your beer tonight;
- **Dr Ernie Goh** who contributed the wines for this evening from his own vineyard in Adelaide; and last but certainly not least,
- **Mr Dick Lee** our Creative Director

4. Like I said earlier, the list is not exhaustive. You will see behind me, the names of all our corporate partners and supporters. Thank you for helping to make Singapore Day in Melbourne a tremendous success.

## STAYING CONNECTED

5. Aside from Singapore Day, there are a number of other programmes and initiatives to help our OS stay connected with home. Last year in New York, I mooted the idea of a Singapore Club for Singaporeans to gather and network while overseas. I am pleased to say that over the past year, we have launched eight<sup>1</sup> OS Clubs, housed in Singaporean-owned hotels, in Australia, China and the UK. We expect to launch at least as many<sup>2</sup> in the year ahead, in major cities in the US as well as in the Asia Pacific region. In fact, the first two OS Clubs in the world were launched in Australia – Stamford Plaza Melbourne and Sir Stamford at Circular Quay in Sydney. We have since added two more in Australia – the Stamford Plaza Adelaide and Stamford Plaza Brisbane. I urge all of you to register as members – it is free – and make full use of the facilities and benefits on offer, including access to Singapore newspapers and magazines such as The Straits Times, and 8 Days.

## CONCLUSION

6. We live in a highly globalised, competitive and inter-connected world where talent is valued and sought after. In Singapore, we spare no effort in our outreach efforts to bring in talent, naturalise them and integrate them into our social milieu. In the same way, Singaporeans who are known for their educational achievements, diligence, and reliability have many options and indeed are also highly sought after, whether by top universities or companies. We can see it here in Australia. We have so many Singaporeans here in Australia, both students and professionals. Keeping our overseas Singaporeans engaged and connected to Singapore is therefore an important item on the Singapore Government's agenda. Wherever you are, we want you continue to

<sup>1</sup> 4 in Australia, 3 in China, 1 in London.

<sup>2</sup> Millennium & Copthorne has agreed to 3 in the US and 1 in Bangkok; Fortuna has agreed to 1 in Hanoi; GIC is working on the details of 1 in Tokyo; Lee Kim Tah has agreed to 1 in Xiamen; and the Straits Trading Group recently agreed to consider making all their hotels OS Clubs.

keep in touch with your family and friends in Singapore, and stay abreast of developments at home. The OSU will continue to work hard to connect with and engage you.

7. I wish you all an enjoyable evening.
8. Thank you.