

MEDIA RELEASE

SINGAPORE DAY 2008 IN MELBOURNE DRAWS 11,000!

Following the success of the inaugural Singapore Day in New York last year, the Overseas Singaporean Unit (OSU) in the Prime Minister's Office organised the second Singapore Day in Melbourne on 4 October 2008. Some 11,000 Overseas Singaporeans living, studying and working in Australia and New Zealand, together with their families and friends, came together as one community to celebrate all things Singaporean at the Sidney Myer Music Bowl. Mr Wong Kan Seng, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Home Affairs, was the Guest-of-Honour at the event. Also present were Mr Teo Ser Luck, Senior Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministries of Community Development, Youth & Sports, and Transport, senior government officials and corporate partners and supporters of the event.

One of the highlights of the day was a specially-arranged skit involving the infamous Phua Chu Kang family. The cast had the crowd in stitches with their laugh-a-minute skit showcasing concerns and foibles of families with members who have gone overseas. Prominent home-grown artistes such as Dick Lee, Hady Mirza, Robert Fernando and Electrico performed songs and music from Singapore for the audience. Hawkers specially flown in also cooked up a storm for the Overseas Singaporeans to satisfy their longing for authentic local cuisine – char kway teow, laksa, chicken rice and ice kacang probably never tasted so good! In fact, many Overseas Singaporeans felt like they were back in Singapore with names like Newton Circus, Clarke Quay, Learn and Play @ Buona Vista and See the Stars at Fort Canning being used for the various activity points throughout the venue. The overall creative director is Dick Lee.

Singaporeans young and old also had the opportunity to experience the various multi-media displays on-site. These showcased Singapore's key developments in recent years and provided participants with an interactive journey into the Singapore of today and tomorrow. All the SEED (Strategies for Effective Engagement and Development) Classroom sessions were full of eager children aged six to nine years old learning various concepts taught in a fun way by teachers from the Ministry of Education. Getting the latest on national service was another experience for many, who could try out the LAN games, simulators and even food rations meant for full-time national servicemen. Students and professionals looking for jobs, took the opportunity to meet up with potential employers from various sectors staffing the private, people and public sectors.

"Singapore Day has received overwhelming response and support from our Overseas Singaporeans since it started last year. I am glad that many Overseas Singaporeans in Australia and even New Zealand have made the effort to join us here. With globalisation, more Singaporeans are venturing overseas

for professional or personal pursuits. But wherever they are, they will always be part of the larger Singapore family,” said Deputy Prime Minister Wong.

In the evening, 400 invited guests, including Melbourne Deputy Lord Mayor Gary Singer and other Australian officials, attended a gala dinner at the Melbourne Town Hall. They were treated to a specially-created dinner menu by the Singapore Chefs Association. DPM Wong also delivered a speech in which he reiterated the importance of Singaporeans overseas to stay connected with home. He also said that the OSU will continue to try and reach out to more Overseas Singaporeans to facilitate their engagement with Singapore.