

Fleshing out Singapore's bid for Unesco recognition of hawker culture

Charmaine Ng

A 14-member committee has been set up to oversee and guide Singapore's effort to nominate its hawker culture for Unesco's list of intangible cultural heritage.

The committee is co-chaired by National Heritage Board (NHB) chief executive Chang Hwee Nee, National Environment Agency chief executive officer Tan Meng Dui, and Federation of Merchants' Associations president Yeo Hiang Meng, said the three organisations in a joint statement yesterday.

Members of the committee, who are from the public and private sectors, will provide recommendations, feedback and advice on the nomination documents for submission to Unesco in March next year, said the statement.

They will also offer ideas "to strengthen Singaporeans' pride and love for hawker culture" and encourage the community to support the nomination, it added.

Among the members are Mr Jeshar Loi, branding and marketing development director of Ya Kun International; Dr Jack Lee, president of the Singapore Heritage Society;

Ms Denise Tan, director of hospitality at ITE College West; Ms Chua Mui Hoong, Opinion editor, The Straits Times; and Professor Lily Kong, provost at the Singapore Management University.

Mr Loi, 33, the youngest member on the committee, is active in the arts and youth sectors and has championed youth interests, said the joint statement.

He said: "As we strive for greater public participation in the nomination journey, I hope more young Singaporeans will step forward to contribute and gain greater appreciation of our hawker culture."

Dr Lee is an expert in heritage and culture property laws, while Ms Tan is part of the Hawker Centre 3.0 Committee.

The committee will be in tenure until February 2021.

In August, Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong announced during the National Day Rally that Singapore will nominate its hawker culture for inscription into Unesco's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

Since then, more than 30,000 Singaporeans have gone online to pledge their support for the bid.

The NHB will be launching a travelling exhibition, called Our SG Hawker Culture, at places such as hawker centres, shopping malls and libraries to raise public awareness and support for the Unesco nomination.

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