



**Winning the Singapore Quality Award (SQA) is a significant milestone for URA. It celebrates URA's 34 years of contribution to Singapore's physical transformation, to becoming one of the world's most liveable cities, with sustained growth and a high quality of life for Singaporeans. The SQA is the most prestigious award in Singapore conferred on world-class organisations with the highest standards of business excellence.**

When URA was set up in 1974, its only task was the urban renewal of the Central Area. With rapid economic growth, the Government recognised that it was more expedient for an agency with the right expertise and resources to plan holistically for the whole city-state and to facilitate its development. In 1989, URA merged with the former Planning Department and expanded its scope to its present-day role as Singapore's national land use planning and conservation authority.

With new challenges come additional roles. URA was also the appointed development agency for Marina Bay in 2004, spearheading development efforts to expand Singapore's financial and business district beyond Shenton Way. As the place manager for the Marina Bay area, URA works with key stakeholders to transform Marina Bay into a premier 24/7 live-work-play environment, as well as a sought-after location for new investments. URA also brought in more iconic sports and lifestyle events to Marina Bay – such as the New Year's Eve Countdown events, co-organised with The Esplanade, and various other sports fixtures such as marathons.



Transforming plans to reality – Waterfront living for Singaporeans

### **Global benchmark**

Over the years, URA has built up good planning practices for mutual sharing and exchange with many interested counterparts from other countries. For example, URA was tasked to lead in the master planning for the Sino-Singapore Tianjin Eco-city.

### **Effective planning process**

What sets URA apart from other planning agencies is its highly integrated planning and facilitation process that helps transform plans to reality, in partnership with the public and private sectors. One of the key tools used to implement URA's plans is the Government Land Sales programme, through which state land is released for sale, typically through a public tender, for future development. This ensures there is sufficient land to support Singapore's economic growth and to achieve other planning objectives.

URA's far-sighted and holistic planning approach, realised through the use of Concept and Master Plans, has ensured that there is enough land set aside to meet all development needs and provide for a high quality of life. Public consultation has become the cornerstone of the planning process, from regular dialogues with industry players to focus group consultations on in-depth issues and e-consultation on specific guidelines.

Beyond the big picture and strategic planning, URA also takes care of the smaller details that matter. Day-to-day administering of the planning guidelines has helped to create quality living environments. URA also develops urban design plans to guide the development of key areas like the Singapore River, Orchard Road and the Marina Bay, creating a distinctive, attractive, pedestrian-friendly city with quality open spaces and a beautiful skyline.



Transforming plans to reality – a vibrant night life for Singaporeans and visitors

### **Passionate people make passionate cities**

Behind the planning are passionate people: past and present URA management and staff who dare to dream and make plans for Singapore's challenging and exciting future.

*"The SQA journey has enabled us to tighten our working processes and close service gaps. We also rediscovered ourselves in the process, realising how each one of us individually and together in teams have contributed to transforming the physical environment of Singapore into a great city to live, work and play in." – URA Senior Planner Mavis Tsoi*

A comprehensive package of healthy lifestyle initiatives and family friendly practices helps to promote work life balance, and winning the Work-Life Excellence Award 2008 bears testament to URA's right formula. URA's unique 360-degree feedback system on the individual officers' practice of URA's values and leadership contributes to the officers' self development and the building of a strong organisational culture.

Innovation is embedded in URA's work processes. Many new ideas are generated in formulating plans for Singapore. This includes the bold idea of positioning the new financial hub and the Gardens by the Bay at Marina Bay as a waterfront city in a garden, to differentiate it from other cities competing for investments. URA also creates value by opening up new business and living options in areas like the Jurong Lake District, Kallang Riverside and Paya Lebar Central.

URA learns constantly from others and seeks new ideas and best practices through benchmarking studies of cities. URA also forms strategic advisory panels with distinguished members and the public to provide valuable inputs on planning, conservation and urban design matters.



Transforming plans to reality – shaping Singapore's physical development

### Looking Ahead

As we move into the new millennium, Singapore faces rapid globalisation and an ever more competitive global environment. Mature cities are rapidly rejuvenating and remaking themselves, while newer cities are aggressively catching up with new developments and good infrastructure. They pose huge competition for talent and investments. Increasingly, having an attractive living environment will provide a city with a competitive advantage in the global competition for talent and investments.

URA will continue to find creative and smart solutions within Singapore's small land area to cater to the development needs of the nation, while still ensuring economic growth and a quality living environment. To provide attractive business and living opportunities, URA will see through the implementation of many important initiatives which were unveiled under the Master Plan 2008, such as the new regional growth centres at Jurong Lake District, Kallang Riverside, Paya Lebar Central and Marina Bay.

"URA's challenge is to continue to distinguish Singapore on the world map, offering a high quality business and living environment, setting new standards, pushing new frontiers and doing all this while fitting in all our needs within our limited land area. We have to be visionary, we have to be quick in sensing the changes around us and adjust quickly, and we have to prepare our organisation so that we are always ready." said URA CEO Mrs Cheong Koon Hean.



URA staff at work and play, from active learning, to having a healthy lifestyle and contributing to the community

