

## Media Release

*For Immediate Release*

### ORBA Chairman Clinches Inaugural Place Champion Award

**Singapore, 24 February 2014** – Mrs May Sng, Chairman of Orchard Road Business Association (ORBA), has been conferred the inaugural **Place Champion Award** for her leadership in the place management of Orchard Road, Singapore’s iconic shopping street.

Initiated and presented by the Place Management Coordinating Forum (PMCF), an interagency group composed of the National Arts Council, National Heritage Board, Singapore Tourism Board (STB) and Urban Redevelopment Authority, the Award was conferred on Mrs Sng by Senior Minister of State for National Development, Mr Lee Yi Shyan, at the Place Management Seminar this morning.

The Award honours the significant contribution by individuals from the private sector towards Singapore’s place management scene, and recognises Mrs Sng for her efforts in enlivening Orchard Road and driving footfall and spending to the precinct since she became Chairperson of ORBA in 2006.

As Mrs Sng recalls: “We realised that for Orchard Road to become an iconic international shopping street, an orchestrated and precinct-wide effort was required. It would be an uphill journey but we knew this to be the only way we could remain competitive amid the strong global competition.”

Mr Lionel Yeo, Chief Executive of STB, said: “Mrs Sng and her ORBA team have been instrumental in galvanising the Orchard Road stakeholders to enhance the precinct’s vibrancy and attractiveness. They exemplify the significant role that place managers have in championing growth for their precincts. We are heartened that Mrs Sng is being recognised with the inaugural Place Champion Award. We will continue to work hand in hand with ORBA to build on the positive momentum in ensuring Orchard Road remains a distinctive, must-visit lifestyle destination.”

#### Place Management in Singapore

Orchard Road’s transformation did not take place overnight. “The concept of Place Management was almost non-existent in Singapore when ORBA was formed in 1998, with the encouragement of STB. There were only a few private businesses on board then, and my company was one of the founding members. We were a small but nimble team, and recognised that ORBA would serve as a platform to rally the many stakeholders on Orchard Road with varying interests, to work towards the common goals that would benefit the precinct. We passionately believed that through managing the precinct well, businesses on the street will stand to gain,” said Mrs Sng.

In 2009, the terms ‘precinct management’ and ‘business improvement districts’ were introduced to ORBA through STB. These official terms provided ORBA with a formal framework and allowed the Association to institutionalise the work that it has been doing.

A key milestone which supported the introduction of the Place Management Concept in Singapore was the twinning of Orchard Road with Ginza Street in Japan and Avenue des Champs-Élysées in Paris, both of which were agreements to establish closer cooperation in tourism promotion between Orchard Road and these iconic shopping streets. These partnerships gave ORBA its early lessons in Place Management and helped shape the positioning of Orchard Road.

### **ORBA's Achievements under Mrs Sng's Leadership**

Since Mrs Sng took the helm in 2006, she has devoted a large part of her personal time in developing the Association. Mrs Sng expanded ORBA's role from a part-time secretariat to a dedicated team of four full-time staff, and grew ORBA's membership from about 40, to a community of more than 120 members today.

To be acquainted with place management models in other countries, representatives from ORBA and STB also went on study trips to Chicago, New York City, London, Melbourne and Sydney. Working closely with the ORBA Exco and management team, Mrs Sng has placed Singapore on the world map with the creation of several signature events on Orchard Road such as **Fashion Steps Out (FSO)**, **Rev-Up @ Orchard** and **Christmas on A Great Street**, adding vibrancy and drawing throngs of shoppers to the precinct.

To enhance the shopping experience on Orchard Road, ORBA worked with the precinct's stakeholders to launch the **@Orchard Mobile App** in 2013. Through this App, visitors receive the latest news and shopping updates on Orchard Road. The App also contains a wayfinding feature, which helps visitors navigate around the shopping strip and its vibrant underground link ways.

Mrs Sng's belief in looking after the people who work on Orchard Road also resulted in the formation of the **ORBA Privilege Card** programme, where businesses in the precinct offer special shopping and dining privileges to employees of ORBA member organisations.

All these efforts have clearly paid off for this *Great Street*, which has bagged several international accolades. Orchard Road was recently recognised as the world's top shopping destination by the Australian Associated Press and was ranked No. 1 in the International Presence Survey 2011/12 of "The Most Beautiful Avenues of the World".

### **Recognising the Roles of Place Managers in Singapore**

To Mrs Sng, the Award is a validation of the accomplishments of ORBA in the place management sector. "All these years, I have been faced with the question of sustainability of the Association; ORBA has thrived on a combination of sponsorships from the private sector and grants from the government. Ultimately, however, we must have our own sustainable revenue stream. This Award comes as a form of encouragement for the team and I hope that it will bring about greater awareness of the roles place managers play and more importantly, the crucial need for it," Mrs Sng explained.

On her thoughts on winning the Award, Mrs May Sng said: "I am humbled that our efforts in managing Orchard Road have not gone unnoticed and I thank the PMCF for this recognition. I would also like to share the credit of this Award with the Exco and our extremely committed management team at ORBA, a cohesive group that shares my belief and passion about our precinct. This Award will, no doubt, further empower ORBA in our place management endeavours."

### **About Orchard Road Business Association**

Since 1998, Orchard Road Business Association (ORBA) has represented the interests and welfare of businesses along Orchard Road. Through the creation of activities, business development, promotion and marketing, ORBA preserves, promotes, improves and facilitates businesses on Orchard Road.

ORBA also organises memorable events for visitors and tourists to Orchard Road, such as Christmas on *A Great Street*, Fashion Steps Out and Rev-Up @ Orchard. Christmas on *A Great Street*, classed as one of Frommer's World's Best Holiday Lights in 2010; Lonely Planet's Top 10 Christmas Markets of the World in 2011; and IDA Achievements – Merit Award Winner 2012, is an annual signature event that heralds the start of the festive season here in Singapore, which many look forward to as an unforgettable experience.

Membership in ORBA is open to Orchard Road stakeholders, as well as non-stakeholders who have an affiliation to lifestyle business along Orchard Road. There are about 120 members in the Association, including the owners and management of shopping malls, departmental stores, leading retailers, hotels and restaurants. In 2013, the association launched the ORBA Privilege Card, the first precinct-centric employee's privilege initiative in Singapore that aims to benefit members' employees and boost the profiles of Orchard Road businesses.

ORBA operates under the auspices of Singapore Tourism Board (STB) with its administration entrusted to an Executive Committee (EXCO) comprising some of Orchard Road's key stakeholders. The EXCO is headed by Mrs May Sng, Executive Vice-President, Retail Property Management, SPH Ltd (Executive Director of Paragon) as Chairman.

For more information, please visit [www.orchardroad.org](http://www.orchardroad.org) or [www.facebook.com/orchardroad.sg](http://www.facebook.com/orchardroad.sg).

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