

LIBRARY DETAILS

CENTRAL PUBLIC LIBRARY

FAST FACTS

- Opening Date: 12 Nov 2005
Re-opening Date: 12 Jan 2024
- Floor Area: 4,131m²
- Collection Size: 200,000
- Target Community: Residents around Kolam Ayer, Whampoa, Jalan Besar, Kampong Glam, Kreta Ayer-Kim Seng; students from nearby schools; office workers close to the Central Business District; tourists and visitors to the Bras Basah Bugis (BBB) arts and heritage district

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- **Children's Biodiversity Library by S.E.A. Aquarium**

The refreshed children's section is the first marine biodiversity-themed learning space for children in a public library in Singapore. Created in partnership with Resorts World Sentosa (RWS), it focuses on educating children about Sustainability and Biodiversity through experiential learning. It features a floor-to-ceiling column with coral-like structures, a marine specimens showcase, digital content from the S.E.A. Aquarium, and The Submarine (a room exclusively for children's programmes). There are also gamification kiosks where children can colour a virtual avatar and earn points for various actions such as participating in programmes. In line with sustainability, the Children's Biodiversity Library by S.E.A. Aquarium repurposed old shelves from the adult's section of old Central Public Library as children's shelves.

- A new regular programme at the children's library is Magnificent Mangroves!. Parents and children will have the opportunity to repot the mangrove saplings in the Courtyard, which will be transplanted to Sentosa's mangroves.

- **Green Spaces**

Central Public Library features the intentional inclusion of green spaces blurring the lines between the indoors and outdoors. The Memories Corner and Courtyard were previously closed to the public. The Green Heart is a newly added indoor green wall with plants that create a soothing, naturalistic environment within the library. Outdoors, the Courtyard has been transformed into a secluded green sanctuary housing

mangrove saplings. Meanwhile, the Memories Corner features *The Library of Memory* by renowned artist Brian Gothong Tan, a multimedia showcase of the old National Library at Stamford Road projected onto the wall made from 5,000 red bricks retained from the building. Four life-size bronze sculptures of children in various reading poses, created by Chong Fah Cheong, illustrate the idea of being lost in a world of books.

- **Singapore Alcove (SG Alcove)**

The SG Alcove is a space that celebrates All Things Singapore, allowing patrons to explore the Singapore Collection — which houses both adults' and children's titles — while enjoying specially curated exhibits on Singapore content, letting visitors discover Singapore Stories using resources from the National Library and the National Archives. It anchors the Central Public Library's focus on Singapore culture, heritage and literature, reflecting its location in the Bras Basah Bugis arts and heritage district. The first exhibition, *Lepak Landscapes: Life and Leisure in Singapore*, explores stories on recreational practices in Singapore over time as told through digital storybooks, artefact displays and interactive elements. From Apr 2024, the Alcove will include the immersive digital exhibition *Book Havens* in the Immersive Room as well as AR interactive touchpoints throughout the library.

Central Public Library hosts a series of literary programmes such as:

- *A Bridge to the Classics*: Public lectures that introduce and demystify beloved works of literature by contextualising the classics and connecting them to our lives today.
- *Singapore Alcove*: A collection of programmes focusing on Singapore heritage and literature. Some programmes are available in Chinese, Malay, and Tamil.

The library is also home to the following book clubs:

- Book Lovers Club: This bimonthly book club focusses on relationships and inspirational stories that can be applied to both our professional and private lives.
- Insightful Pages / 新页读书会 (previously 3G Book Club / 第三代读书会): A Chinese book club that meets once a month to discuss local and international Chinese works.
- Kathaikalam / கதைக்களம் (Tamil Reading Club): The Association of Singapore Tamil Writers meets monthly to encourage students, youths and the public to engage with local literary offerings and nurture their creative writing skills. It is conducted in Tamil.
- Singapore Literature Book Club: A monthly book club that discusses books by both well-known and emerging Singaporean authors touching on topics close to home.

COLLECTION HIGHLIGHTS

- Singapore Collection: A focal collection at Central Public Library, both adults' and children's fiction and non-fiction titles are integrated into the exhibition at the Singapore Alcove, allowing patrons to see Singapore through the eyes of literature at the exhibition.

- International Collection: The International Collection showcases around 2,000 titles received by NLB from international partners, made available to the public for lending. Titles are in the four official languages of Singapore as well as foreign languages.
- Children's Collection: The library has around 90,600 children's fiction and non-fiction titles.

LIBRARY HISTORY

Formerly located at the old National Library at Stamford Road which closed its doors in 2004, the Central Public Library is currently located in the basement of the National Library Building at Victoria Street. It was officially opened on 12 Nov 2005 by then-President of Singapore, Mr S R Nathan. During this time, it housed the world's first green children's library, My Tree House. The library closed again in May 2022 for its first full revamp since its relocation and was officially reopened on 12 Jan 2024 by Minister for Communications and Information, Mrs Josephine Teo.

As part of efforts to preserve some memories of the former National Library, 5,000 red bricks from the old building were brought over to construct a wall in Memories Corner, Central Public Library's outdoor space previously known as the Bamboo Garden. The space now features *The Library of Memory*, a multimedia showcase that pays homage to the history of the nostalgic library.

INTERESTING FACTS

- Central Public Library is the only fully underground public library in Singapore.
- Central Public Library is designed and developed with green principles in mind, having energy-efficient and sustainable elements.
- The library features Singapore-themed murals created by local artists, including adaptations of *In Our Time* by Lee Xin Li at the entrance and *Court of No Worries* and *Flight of Fancy* by Ah Guo opposite the Memories Corner, as well as commissioned murals from NAFA students.
- The library is in Singapore's arts and heritage district, the Bras Basah Bugis (BBB) precinct. This puts it in proximity to design schools, the shopping belt of Bugis and City Hall, the belt of museums, as well as the commercial and cultural hub within the Central Business District and other nearby tourist areas such as Little India and Fort Canning. As such, the library has a strong arts and heritage focus, and serves a wide variety of local and international visitors.
- Central Public Library has been visited by many famous personalities such as the former US First Lady Laura Bush, the current US First Lady Jill Biden, His Imperial Majesty, The Emperor of Japan Akihito and the Empress Michiko, the current King of Bhutan, and Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.