



NHB's Don't Play Play Exhibition Celebrates the Board Games That Shaped Singapore

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Organised by



**EXHIBITION ON DISPLAY
FROM 14 JUNE TO 30 JUNE**

COOL Play PL

**ONE PUNGGOL
CELEBRATION SQUARE**

EXHIBITION LAUNCH!

13 JUNE - 11 AM TO 5 PM

14 JUNE - 11 AM TO 4 PM



MEET LOCAL GAME DESIGNERS

**JOIN OUR EVENTS
ON BOTH WEEKENDS
TO CELEBRATE THE
LAUNCH OF OUR
NEW EXHIBITION!**

COMMUNITY TAKEOVER!

20 - 21 JUNE

11 AM TO 3 PM



Don't Play Play The Games That Shape Us. Credits to the National Heritage Board.

Do you remember the clatter of mahjong tiles on a Saturday night, or the thrill of landing on Orchard Road in Monopoly? For many Singaporeans, board games are more than just a way to pass time they are woven into the very fabric of growing up here. The National Heritage Board (NHB) is celebrating that shared experience with a new travelling exhibition, *Don't Play Play The Games That Shape Us*, now on at One Punggol until 30 June 2026.

Five Themes, One Big Playground

The exhibition takes visitors on a journey through five themed panels, each exploring how board games have connected communities and shaped identities across generations.

Why We Are All Gamers opens the story by tracing how games from around the world travelled across time and cultures to find a home in Singapore. The act of sitting across a board from someone whether a neighbour, a relative, or a stranger has always been a way of building community on this island.

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Sylvia Lee (lady in blue) playing her weekly game of Mahjong with her friends, April 2026. Courtesy of National Heritage Board.

All Aboard! How Games Arrived in Singapore traces the roots of classics like Congkak, Xiangqi (Chinese Chess), Weiqi, Carrom, and Dum (Checkers) through an interactive quiz. It is a reminder that every game carries a story of migration and adaptation that mirrors Singapore's own history.

The Games We Grew Up With is where the nostalgia really hits. Mahjong, Monopoly, Snakes and Ladders, Scrabble â?? these are names that will light up faces across every generation.



Family and relatives of Mr Yusof Ishak (first president of Singapore) playing a game of Monopoly, c.1960s. Yusof Ishak Collection, courtesy of National Archives of Singapore.

Where Singapore Plays Through The Years charts how the spaces for play have evolved from void deck chess games and community centre tournaments to the thriving tabletop scenes of today.

Homegrown Games celebrates the local board games industry that has flourished since Singapore-Go in 1984. Games like Kopi King and The Singaporean Dream show how our stories and quirks have been transformed into play and there is plenty of audience hungry for more.

Community Weekends: Don't Miss These

Beyond the displays, *Don't Play Play* comes alive with programming across two weekends. Weekend 1 (13-14 June) saw craft booths by local artist collective PLAY! and gaming tables run by tabletop community #LaiPlayLeow, where visitors could try 15 locally designed games.

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PLAY! Craft Booths. Courtesy of PLAY!

Weekend 2 â?? the **Community Takeover on 20â??21 June, 11AM to 2PM** â?? is still to come and is not to be missed. Punggolâ??s Damai Board Games Community, the Singapore Scrabble Association, and the Singapore Weiqi Association will all be hosting booths. Weiqi fans can even challenge a robot to a game. Yes, a robot.



Damai Board Games Community. Courtesy of Punggol Damai Board Games Community.



Seniors gathered at Kreta Ayer pavilion on a weekday to play and watch games of Dum, April 2026. Courtesy of National Heritage Board.

Plan Your Visit

Don't Play Play - The Games That Shape Us runs until 30 June 2026 at One Punggol, Level 1, Celebration Square Zone 2. Admission is free and open to all. Whether you are introducing your kids to the games you grew up with, or reliving those childhood memories yourself, this one is worth making the trip up north for.

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