

A GUIDE TO THE BUSKING SCHEME IN SINGAPORE



MANAGED BY THE **NATIONAL ARTS COUNCIL**

ABOUT NATIONAL ARTS COUNCIL

The **National Arts Council** champions the arts in Singapore. By nurturing creative excellence and supporting broad audience engagement, our diverse and distinctive arts inspire our people, connect communities and profile Singapore internationally. We preserve our rich, cultural traditions as we cultivate accomplished artists and vibrant companies for the future.

Our support for the arts is comprehensive – from grants and partnerships to industry facilitation and arts housing. The Council welcomes greater private and corporate giving to and through the arts so that together we can make the arts an integral part of everyone's lives.

For more information on the Council's mission and plans, please visit www.nac.gov.sg



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ABOUT THE BUSKING SCHEME

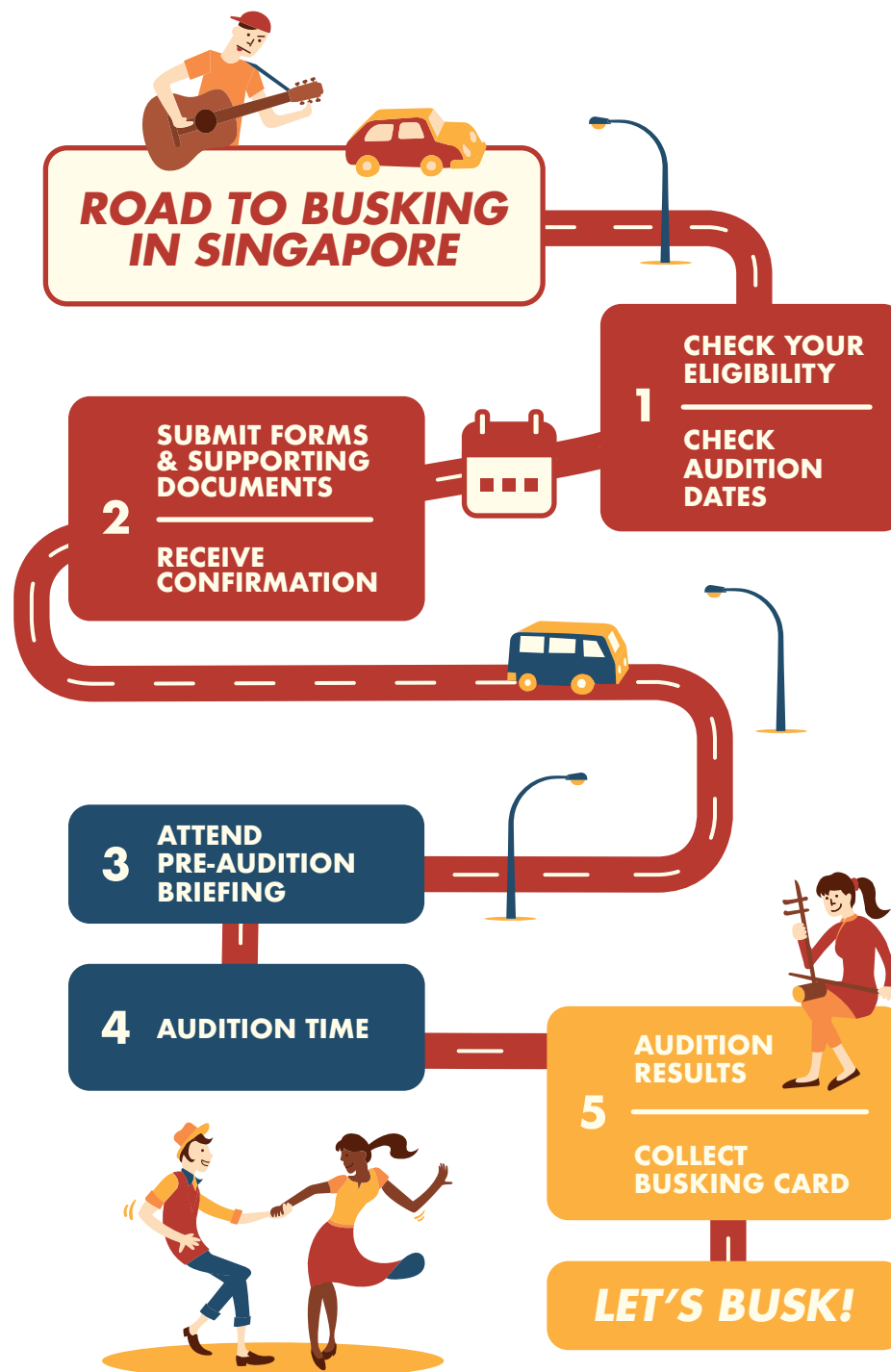
Introduced in 1997, the Busking Scheme in Singapore enlivens city life and energises urban spaces. The Scheme provides opportunities for individuals to share their creative expressions and interact with audience in the public space. It is also part of the National Arts Council's efforts for Singaporeans and visitors to encounter and appreciate our diverse arts and culture offerings. Currently, the Busking Scheme comprises some 80 designated busking locations island-wide.

Buskers in Singapore are required to attend an audition. Those who are successful will obtain a Busking Card (Letter of Endorsement)¹ which enables them to busk at designated busking locations within a validity period.

If you are keen to be part of the daily creative pulse of Singapore's streetscape, this guidebook introduces the Busking Scheme in Singapore and provides you with useful tips on getting started.

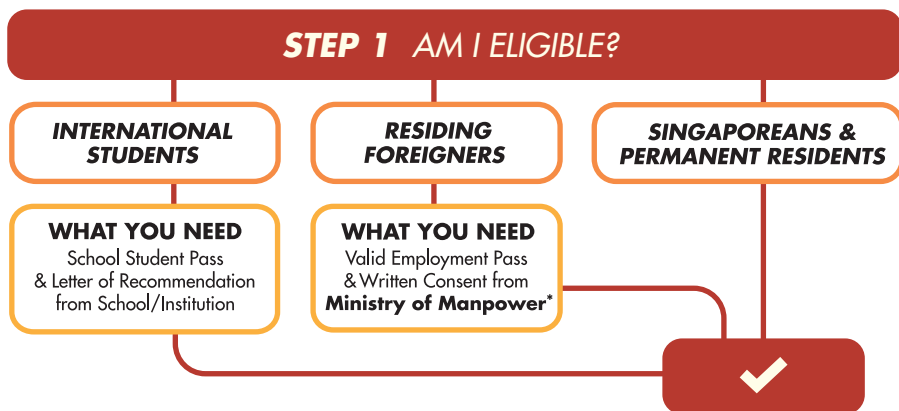
HOW TO JOIN THE BUSKING SCHEME?

As the Singapore arts scene becomes increasingly vibrant², the local busking scene has grown more competitive. Thus, you are encouraged to put in your application early and come well-prepared for the audition.



¹ Busking is allowed in Singapore under the conditions of the *Public Entertainments and Meetings (Exemptions) Order*.

² According to the *2017 Population Survey on the Arts*, 75% of the respondents have agreed that the arts scene in Singapore has become more vibrant in the past 5 years.

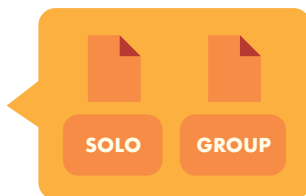


STEP 2 HOW DO I APPLY?

Download your application form at www.nac.gov.sg/Busking

1. Read the Terms and Conditions of Participation (Appendix 1) and Busking Scheme Terms and Conditions (Appendix 2).
2. Email or post your completed application form to us (refer to contact details on the last page of the guidebook).

After submitting your application form, you will be contacted within 10 working days to confirm your application and follow-up details.



Solo and group acts are required to fill in different forms.

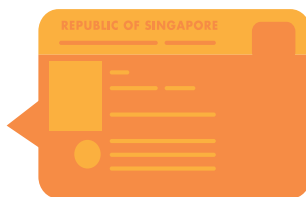
There are no age restrictions to busking. However, you are required to provide a consent letter from your parent/guardian if you are aged 17 years or younger.

STEP 3 PRE-AUDITION BRIEFING

The Pre-Audition Briefing will familiarise you with the Busking Scheme guidelines and give you an idea of what to expect at the Busking Audition.

If you have applied as a busking group with 2 or more members, please have at least 2 members present at the Pre-Audition Briefing.

It is mandatory for all applicants to attend the Pre-Audition Briefing if your last attendance was more than 12 months ago.



Please bring along your NRIC for verification purposes.

*Only foreigners on Employment Passes residing in Singapore may apply for the Busking Scheme. If your audition is successful, written consent from the Ministry of Manpower is required prior to the collection of Busking Card (Letter of Endorsement).

STEP 4 AUDITION TIME!

Come prepared! The Busking Audition is meant to simulate actual busking on the streets. During the audition, you will be given about 5 minutes to demonstrate your busking act(s) and audience engagement abilities.

- For those who plan to busk as a group, ensure everyone shows up for the audition as only those present will have their names included in the Busking Card (Letter of Endorsement).
- Please bring along your NRIC for verification as well as everything you need to showcase your act(s) (e.g. props, instruments, equipment, costumes, materials, etc.).
- Any electrical equipment used to support your busking activities will need to be powered by portable batteries. Please ensure they are fully charged and in working order.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

COMPETENCY AND SKILL IN PERFORMANCE

ENGAGEMENT WITH THE AUDIENCE

EXPRESSIVENESS AND CONFIDENCE

INNOVATION AND ORIGINALITY

Busking acts fall generally into three art form categories—Music, Street Theatre and Visual Arts. Below are some requirements for the audition in each art form category:

MUSICAL <i>Guitar and singing, drumming, singing with keyboard, performance on musical instruments, etc.</i>	MOVEMENT & STREET THEATRE <i>Dance, Acrobatic Acts, Juggling, Mime, Magic, etc.</i>	VISUAL ARTS <i>Drawing, Portraits and Caricatures, Dough-Figurine making, etc.</i>
<p>Prepare a rich and wide repertoire of songs.</p> <p>—</p> <p>Preferably include different genres and/or tempos.</p> <p>—</p> <p>Familiarise yourself with the operation of your equipment (such as musical instruments, amplifiers, etc.).</p> <p>—</p> <p>Solo singing acts must have live music accompaniment (with the exception of acapella groups).</p>	<p>Come in full costume and/or make-up.</p> <p>—</p> <p>Ensure that all props are prepared for the act.</p> <p>—</p> <p>Acts involving dangerous objects or implements (such as knives, fire, etc.) are not permitted at the indoor audition venue. You will be required to audition using substitute props. Do note that the use of dangerous objects or arms will require additional clearance from enforcement authorities when busking on the streets.*</p>	<p>Demonstrate live drawing, painting or craft-making skills within 5 minutes.</p> <p>—</p> <p>Be quick and accurate.</p> <p>—</p> <p>Display samples of your artworks in a professional manner.</p> <p>—</p> <p>Putting a price-tag on your works is considered hawking and is not permitted under the Busking Scheme.</p>

*For more details on the use of dangerous objects or implements, please refer to: www.police.gov.sg/e-services/apply/licenses-and-permits/arms-and-explosives

STEP 5 LET'S BUSK!

You will be notified of the audition results by the appointed agency within 4 – 5 weeks from the date of the Busking Audition.

Details will be given to successful applicants to collect the Busking Card (Letter of Endorsement).

Busking Cards not collected within 2 months from the date of issue will be voided.

**BUSKING TIPS AND ETIQUETTE**

For many, the idea of busking to a passing crowd of people who are going about their daily activities can be a little daunting. Below are some recommended tips and etiquette to help you make the most of your busking experience:

1. Maintain a positive and professional image as first impressions count. Interact with and engage your audience as this enhances the quality of your busking acts and creates meaningful connections with the audience.
2. Refresh your busking repertoire periodically as busking acts with varied content will showcase your versatility and attract more attention.
3. Vary your busking schedule and limit your time at each allocated busking location so you can reach a wider and more diverse audience.
4. Pack light. It's easier to change locations or find shelter from sudden downpours.
5. Be self-sufficient for your own power supply; only battery-operated amplifiers and equipment are allowed.
6. Befriend fellow buskers and look out for one another. Every busker has a part to play in developing the busking scene.
7. Display your busking card prominently so that the public is aware that you are endorsed under the Busking Scheme.
8. Buskers can accept voluntary tips but the public must not feel obliged to give anything.
9. Be considerate. Noise is often a source of public complaints. Do not set your amplifier at a high volume level. Many busking locations are surrounded by flats, shops, offices or hotels and you should be mindful that people may be busy at work or trying to rest.
10. Pay attention to safety as public spaces can be crowded and busy with human and vehicular traffic.

**PACK LIGHT****BEFRIEND & BE A FRIEND****DISPLAY YOUR CARD****BE SAFE & CONSIDERATE**

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. ELIGIBILITY

- A)** I am a foreigner visiting Singapore on a **Social Visit Pass**. Can I apply for the Busking Scheme?

Only foreigners on Employment Passes residing in Singapore may apply for the Busking Scheme. If your audition is successful, written consent from the Ministry of Manpower is required prior to collection of **Busking Card (Letter of Endorsement)**.

2. APPLICATION PROCESS

- A)** Can I include more than one busking activity in my busking application form?

Yes! Please indicate in your application form if you plan to audition for more than one busking activity.

- B)** How do I check on my application status?

Contact the appointed agency to check on your application status. Contact details can be found on the application form and the last page of this guidebook.

- C)** For busking groups, does every member need to submit an application form?

Nominate a representative from the group to complete and submit the group busking application form with the particulars of all the group members.

- D)** Can I change my designated busking locations after I have collected my Busking Card?

It is possible to do a one-time change of designated busking locations on a case-by-case basis within the validity period of your Busking Card (Letter of Endorsement). You may contact the appointed agency for more details.

3. PRE-AUDITION BRIEFING

- A)** When and where will the Pre-Audition Briefing be held?

Please refer to www.nac.gov.sg/Busking for the latest details.

- B)** What do I need to bring to the Pre-Audition Briefing?

Please bring along your NRIC and any other documents requested by the appointed agency. Instruments, props and equipment are not required for the Pre-Audition Briefing.

- C)** What should I do if I am unable to attend the Pre-Audition Briefing after confirming my attendance?

Please refer to the contact details section to get in touch with us!

- D)** Can my parents or friends accompany me to the Pre-Audition Briefing even if I am the only one applying under the Busking Scheme?

Yes, subject to availability and approval. Please inform the appointed agency when you are notified of your application.

4. AUDITION

- A)** When and where are the Busking Auditions held?

Please refer to www.nac.gov.sg/Busking for the latest details.

- B)** Can I send a video of my previous busking acts instead of auditioning in person?

As busking emphasises live performances, the audition has to be conducted live in person for the panel to assess your performance and ability to engage the audience in real time. This also allows you to explain your act(s) to the panel.

C) Can I sing with pre-recorded music on playback?

As busking emphasises live performances, singing acts (with the exception of acapella groups) have to be accompanied by live music accompaniment and not pre-recorded playback.

D) What happens if one of my group members is unable to make it for the Busking Audition?

Only group members who are present will be endorsed to busk if the audition is successful.

5. BUSKING ON THE STREETS

A) Why do I have to display my Busking Card (Letter of Endorsement)?

In line with the Public Entertainments and Meetings (Exemptions) Order, buskers are required to possess and display a valid Busking Card (Letter of Endorsement) when busking. This is to inform the public and the authorities that you are endorsed to busk under the Busking Scheme.

B) For group acts, do all members need to be present when busking?

Yes, this is to ensure that the quality of your busking act is not compromised. Please note that stand-ins are not allowed.

C) Can individual buskers gather and busk as a group?

If you intend to busk as a group, please submit a group application form to audition and apply for a separate Busking Card (Letter of Endorsement) for your busking group.

D) What is the limit on the sound level generated from busking activities?

Majority of complaints on busking are noise-related. As designated busking locations are at street level and may be surrounded by flats, shops or offices, you are advised to keep the sound level no louder than 65dBA when busking. Remember that a little consideration goes a long way, so please ensure your volume is kept within a reasonable level.

E) There are buskers who insist that I cannot busk at a certain location because they were there first or have been busking regularly at that spot, what should I do?

The Busking Scheme Terms and Conditions state that buskers do not have exclusivity over designated busking locations. We encourage you to work out a mutual understanding with your fellow buskers on sharing the location.

F) If a venue manager gives me "special permission" to busk at their venue, can I do so?

Buskers can busk at designated locations reflected in the Busking Card. If you are given "special permission" to busk at a venue, please contact the National Arts Council (NAC) for verification. The Council works with venue managers or space owners, who are keen to have buskers, to assess the suitability of the locations for busking activities.

G) Why can't I put a price-tag to my works (e.g. balloon sculptures, caricatures, music CDs, etc.)?

Putting a price-tag on your works is considered hawking and is not permitted under the Busking Scheme.

H) Can we raise funds through busking activities for charitable causes?

The Busking Scheme is not for the purpose of fund-raising for a cause and/or organisation. You will need to apply for (1) an Arts Entertainment Licence from the Media Development Authority or a Public Entertainment Licence from the Singapore Police Force and (2) a House-to-House and Street Collections Licence if you are planning to fund-raise.

I) Can I put up signboards to inform the public that I am busking to raise funds for my personal endeavours (e.g. school fees, travels, etc.)?

This is prohibited as the Busking Scheme is not a platform for fund-raising and/or advocating for a cause. Signboards deemed to be soliciting for any gratuity are not allowed.

6. OTHER GENERAL QUESTIONS

A) Is the Busking Scheme a welfare support initiative?

The Busking Scheme is not a welfare support initiative. If you require welfare assistance, please approach your nearest Community Development Council (CDC), Citizens' Consultative Committee (CCC) or a Family Service Centre (FSC) for more information on the types of assistance available. Alternatively, you may also call the ComCare Hotline at 1800-222-0000 to enquire about the assistance programmes available.

B) Can I list NAC as my employer since I am busking full-time?

While the Busking Scheme is managed by NAC, buskers are not employed under the Council and should not list NAC as their employer.

APPENDIX 1: TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION

By submitting the busking application form, the Applicant(s) agrees to the following Terms and Conditions:

General Terms

1. Applicant(s) must report at the Pre-Audition and/or Audition venue(s) no later than his/her scheduled time. Applicant(s) who arrive later than his/her scheduled time for the Pre-Audition and/or Audition may be disqualified.
2. All photography, audio and video recording by the applicant(s) and his/her supporter(s) is not allowed at the Pre-Audition and/or Audition.
3. The National Arts Council (NAC) reserves the right to record all or part of the proceedings of the Audition and related activities for broadcast purposes without payment to the Applicant(s) or the Applicant(s)' consent. NAC retains all rights to the recorded materials.
4. NAC and panel's decision is final and no discussion or correspondence will be entertained.
5. Any Busking Card (Letter of Endorsement) not collected within 2 months from the date of issue will be made void.
6. You will be liable for and shall indemnify and hold NAC harmless from and against all claims, demands, losses, damages, penalties, expenses and liability of any kind.

Eligibility and Application

7. All Applicant(s) aged 17 years old and below must obtain parental/guardian consent.
8. Any Applicant(s) who knowingly submitted inaccurate or misleading information will be disqualified.
9. Applicant(s) must meet the eligibility criteria as stated in the website.
10. Applicant(s) may possess a maximum of 2 Busking Cards (Letter of Endorsement) at any given time. Either as an individual with a group or belonging to 2 groups.
11. Due to limited Audition slots per cycle, applications are processed on a first-come-first-served basis.
12. Incomplete and late applications will not be processed.

Pre-Audition

13. For Applicant(s) applying under the Busking Group with 2 or more members, at least 2 members must be present at the Pre-Audition Briefing.

14. It is mandatory for Applicant(s) to attend the Pre-Audition Briefing if the Applicant(s) last attendance was more than 12 months ago.

Audition

15. Applicant(s) is responsible for the provision of all equipment to support his/her busking act (e.g. costumes, materials, instruments, props, equipment etc.) during the Audition.
16. Any electrical equipment used must only be powered by portable batteries.
17. Applicant(s) must perform live during the Audition.
18. All singing acts must be supported by live music accompaniment, with the exception of group acapella acts.
19. The Audition and busking act must not, in NAC's sole opinion be:
 - a. offensive or obscene in nature;
 - b. derogatory to or defamatory of any third party; or
 - c. disreputable to or prejudice NAC in any way whatsoever, or be construed to:
 - i. advocate or lobby for lifestyles seen as objectionable by the general public;
 - ii. denigrate or debase a person, group or class of individuals on the basis of race or religion, or serve to create conflict or misunderstanding in our multicultural and multi-religious society;
 - iii. undermine the authority or legitimacy of the government and public institutions, or threaten the nation's security or stability; and/or,
 - iv. Have a political or religious agenda or proselytise any particular faith, save in accordance with the law.
20. Applicant(s) must obtain, at the Applicant(s) cost, all necessary licenses, permits and approvals for the use of any materials (dangerous or otherwise), equipment, props, and/or intellectual property during the busking act.
21. In case of any dispute, NAC's decision, or that of the panel acting on NAC's behalf, shall be final and no discussion or correspondence will be entertained.
22. NAC will not be responsible for any loss, damage to property, physical illness, injury or death encountered as part of or otherwise arising from the Audition or busking act, unless caused by our gross negligence.

NAC reserves the right to revise the Terms and Conditions at any time, at its sole discretion.

APPENDIX 2: BUSKING SCHEME TERMS & CONDITIONS

The National Arts Council's (NAC) issuance of the Busking Card (Letter of Endorsement) to you is conditional on your continued compliance with these Terms and Conditions (T&C) that are applicable to NAC's Busking Scheme. If you disagree with or do not wish to be bound by these T&Cs, kindly inform NAC by returning your Busking Card (Letter of Endorsement) to us for cancellation.

General Terms:

1. Your Busking Card (Letter of Endorsement) is personal to you and not transferrable.
2. NAC shall not be responsible for any claims, demands, losses, damages, penalties, expenses and liability of any kind arising from your acts, omissions or negligence.
3. You will be liable for and shall indemnify and hold NAC harmless from and against all claims, demands, losses, damages, penalties, expenses and liability of any kind.
4. Although NAC and Venue Partners have taken steps to ensure that the busking locations provide you a safe environment to showcase your talent, neither NAC nor Venue Partners will be responsible for any loss, damage to property, physical illness, injury or death you encounter while busking or otherwise arising from busking under the Busking Scheme, unless caused by our gross negligence.
5. If you are 17 years of age and below, you must have submitted with NAC valid parental or guardian consent to your participation as a busker that has not been withdrawn, cancelled or terminated.
6. If you are found to have submitted inaccurate or misleading information in your application to NAC, or your busking act substantially differs from your Audition in style and/or substance, your Busking Card (Letter of Endorsement) will be revoked.
7. You shall:
 - a. Clearly display the Busking Card (Letter of Endorsement) issued to you by NAC during all busking acts.
 - b. Provide your Busking Card (Letter of Endorsement) along with other forms of identification documents (e.g. NRIC/passport) for verification by the authorities, personnel of NAC's Venue Partners and NAC's appointed outsourced management agency, as required.
 - c. Only busk at the designated busking locations and times allocated to you.
 - d. Keep a reasonable distance from other buskers for safety reasons and to ensure an enjoyable experience for both the buskers and audience. Buskers do not have exclusivity over busking locations.

- e. Keep the sound level generated from your busking act at a reasonable volume (e.g. 55dBA – 65dBA), no louder than 65dBA.
 - f. Keep to the general busking hours between 10am and 10pm daily, unless otherwise stated.
 - g. Obtain, at your cost, all necessary licenses, permits and approvals for the use of any materials (dangerous or otherwise), equipment, props, and/or intellectual property (including but not limited to copyright and composer's fees) during the busking act.
 - h. Comply with all applicable laws and regulations prevalent in Singapore at all times when busking.
8. You shall not:
- a. Obstruct or cause obstruction to pedestrian or vehicular traffic;
 - b. Actively solicit any gratuity;
 - c. Price any items/merchandise for sale (i.e. hawking);
 - d. Use any sound amplification device, other than those that are battery-operated;
 - e. Make any vulgar or obscene gesture or remark; and
 - f. Display any signboards or advertising collaterals (other than your Busking Card) that are used for the purposes of touting, fundraising or soliciting for any gratuity from the public.
9. Your busking act must not, in NAC's sole opinion be:
- a. Offensive or obscene in nature;
 - b. Derogatory to or defamatory of any third party; or
 - c. Bring disrepute to or prejudice NAC in any way whatsoever, or be construed to:
 - i. Advocate or lobby for lifestyles seen as objectionable by the general public;
 - ii. Denigrate or debase a person, group or class of individuals on the basis of race or religion, or serve to create conflict or misunderstanding in our multicultural and multi-religious society;
 - iii. Undermine the authority or legitimacy of the government and public institutions, or threaten the nation's security or stability; and/or
 - iv. Have a political or religious agenda or proselytise any particular faith, save in accordance with the law.
10. NAC reserves the right to revise these T&Cs at any time, at its sole discretion.

The Council reserves the right to immediately cancel or suspend your Busking Card (Letter of Endorsement) should you breach any of these T&Cs.

CONTACT DETAILS

FOR APPLICATIONS AND
BUSKING-RELATED ENQUIRIES

FOR MORE INFORMATION
ABOUT THE BUSKING SCHEME
www.nac.gov.sg/Busking



