

SPEECH BY MS SIM ANN, SENIOR MINISTER OF STATE FOR TRADE & INDUSTRY AT DESIGN BUSINESS CHAMBER SINGAPORE'S GALA DINNER & AWARDS NIGHT 2017, THURSDAY, 16 MARCH 2017, 6.30PM, STAMFORD BALLROOM (THE SWISSOTEL FAIRMONT)

Mr Tai Lee Siang, President of Design Business Chamber Singapore (DBCS),

Executive Committee Members of DBCS,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good evening,

1. It is my pleasure to join you for the Design Business Chamber Singapore (DBCS) Gala Dinner & Awards Night 2017. We are gathered here this evening to recognise some of the most talented designers and outstanding designs in Singapore.

Importance of design to Singapore

2. Singapore has come a long way in building up our capabilities and global reputation in design. From 2004 to 2015, the design sector's contribution to Singapore's GDP doubled from \$1.1 billion to \$2.2 billion. At the same time, we have seen more businesses and government agencies innovating through design. The diverse mix of award winners we have this evening bears testimony to the importance of design in a broad range of industries, and the extent it has been embraced by companies both large and small. In December 2015, Singapore was also designated a **UNESCO Creative City of Design**, which is a strong affirmation of our national efforts to promote design over the years.
3. As we position Singapore for the future, good design is important to the creation of an innovation-driven economy and ensuring that Singapore remains a loveable city. Last year, Dr Yaacob Ibrahim, Minister for Communications and Information, launched the **Design 2025 Masterplan** with the aim of developing strategies that will bring Singapore closer to becoming a global city for design. Under this effort, the design industry, businesses, academia and government agencies came together to develop a set of recommendations, including **expanding the role of design in businesses and government** and **developing the Singapore Design brand**. These

are important efforts which stakeholders from the industry, educational institutions and government agencies will need to work closely on over the next few years.

DBCS' important role in the ecosystem

4. I would like to take this opportunity to commend the DBCS for your contributions to the local design ecosystem. In particular, your efforts in promoting the **Singapore Design Awards (SDA)** and the **Singapore Good Design Mark (SG Mark)** have been pivotal in raising the profile of Singapore as a centre for design, and in recognising our best design talents.
5. The SDA was first conceived in 1988 and unveiled by then-Prime Minister Mr Lee Kuan Yew at the first Singapore International Design Forum. Since the award's inception, the DBCS, or the Designers Association Singapore as it was previously known, has been one of the key driving forces behind the SDA. This year, the SDA will be awarded to 7 design practices and 9 student teams which have demonstrated the highest standards in their designs.
6. The SG Mark was launched by the DBCS with the support of DSG in 2013. It seeks to acknowledge companies and individuals who have incorporated good design into their products and services. At the same time, the SG Mark has been highlighting to the wider public the value of good design. This year, I am very happy to see a wide range of companies being recognised for their good designs – for products and services ranging from architecture and interior design, to healthcare products, to consumer products, to mobile apps and to even robots.
7. I would like to congratulate the winners of the SDA and the SG Mark for your achievements, and I hope that you will go on to inspire your peers and other members of the design community to push the boundaries in creativity and innovation.

Forming partnerships

8. In addition to your efforts in promoting the SDA and SG Mark, the DBCS has also played an important role in bringing together and providing leadership to the design industry in Singapore. This is an increasingly important role which many of our Trade Associations and Chambers (TACs), including DBCS, will need to play as we transform our industries.
9. To support our TACs' efforts to roll out industry-wide projects and

strengthen capabilities in their respective industries, SPRING and IE Singapore have been working with various TACs through the **Local Enterprise and Association Development (LEAD)** and **LEAD+ programmes** to provide funding support. At this year's Budget, the LEAD programme was expanded to reach more TACs. Through this programme, we want to support more TACs in improving their internal systems and processes, and work with them to kick-start industry upgrading projects.

10. In line with these efforts, I would like to invite the DBCS to work more closely with our government agencies, including SPRING, IE Singapore and DSG, to continue strengthening the capabilities in our design sector. For instance, DSG is working closely with the design industry and professional associations to better understand the challenges, opportunities and needs of the various design-related sub-sectors such as architecture and product design, so as to map out a three-year plan for the sub-sectors. Based on these plans, DSG will then provide more customised support to help grow these sub-sectors. At the same time, DBCS can take the opportunity to work with other TACs to strengthen other sectors through better design. This would be in line with the Design 2025 Masterplan's recommendation to expand the role of design in businesses.

Conclusion

11. The award winners, companies and educational institutions gathered here have set a high bar in innovation and design. I hope that your examples will inspire more individuals and companies to hone their design capabilities and anchor design as a signature deep skill in Singapore.

12. To this end, I would like to extend my congratulations to all the award winners. To everyone present tonight, enjoy the evening ahead. Thank you.