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**Media Release**  
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## Designathon 2017: Co-designing Solutions to Empower the Lives of Persons with Disabilities

**Singapore, 25 February 2017** – Nearly 90 multidisciplinary professionals and students gathered at Designathon 2017, organised by the DesignSingapore Council (Dsg), to co-design solutions for persons with disabilities today. Themed “Inclusive Design”, the Designathon was organised in collaboration with SG Enable and the Infocomm Media Development Authority’s (IMDA) PIXEL Labs. Minister of State for Communications and Information and Health, Mr Chee Hong Tat, presented prizes to the top 10 finalist teams this afternoon.

The teams of participants came from diverse training backgrounds. They included designers, technologists, social service and healthcare providers and students. The participants responded to the design brief to help persons with disabilities – specifically, people with intellectual disability, autism spectrum disorder, sensory disability and physical disability, gain greater independence, enhance social integration and find employment.

“Design is fundamentally about attuning to people’s needs and aspirations. Through understanding the challenges faced and putting themselves in the shoes of the persons with disabilities, the participants were able to create solutions that contribute to making a difference in the lives of persons with disabilities and building a more inclusive community,” said Agnes Kwek, Executive Director of the DesignSingapore Council.

Designathon 2017 took place over two consecutive Saturdays, 18<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> February, and was held at the National Design Centre. The finalist teams had the opportunity to trial their prototypes with voluntary welfare organisations (VWOs) to assess usability, feasibility and fine-tune their design before presenting it to the judges.

SG Enable and IMDA, the supporting partners of Designathon 2017, had provided participants with insights on persons with disabilities, and the technology know-how to design the solutions. To further develop their prototypes after Designathon 2017, participants are encouraged to tap on SG Enable’s Tote Board - Enabling Lives Initiative grant.

“SG Enable is pleased to partner DesignSingapore Council in Designathon 2017. We hope

this creative platform would yield innovative solutions that help persons with disabilities live more independently and enhance the well-being of their caregivers. Good ideas will also be shortlisted for the Tote Board Enabling Lives Initiative grant which should help participants in piloting their projects," said Ms Ku Geok Boon, Chief Executive Officer, SG Enable.

Angeline Poh, Assistant Chief Executive (Content & Innovation), IMDA, said, "IMDA's PIXEL Labs is happy to be a partner of Designathon 2017, which recognises the importance of marrying cutting-edge technology and good design to improve the lives of persons with disabilities. IMDA believes in building a digitally inclusive society, where communities are empowered by possibilities that technology brings. The spirit of innovation and collaboration shown by the teams are examples of what will continue to drive our Smart Nation vision, as they build innovative products and solutions that will address real world challenges."

There were five members on the judging panel. Two of the members, Mr Richard Kuppusamy, Senior Architectural Designer of WOHA Architects, who serves on the Executive Committee of the Handicaps Welfare Association, and Ms Theresa Goh, Singapore Paralympic swimmer, are persons with disabilities. The top three winning teams received cash prizes of \$5,000, \$3,000 and \$1,000 respectively. The list of winning teams and synopsis of their proposed design solutions are found in Annex A.

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#### **About DesignSingapore Council**

The vision of the DesignSingapore Council is for design to differentiate Singapore from global competition. As the national agency for design, the Council's mission is to develop the design

sector, and to help Singapore use design for innovation and growth, as well as to make life better. The DesignSingapore Council is part of the Ministry of Communications and Information.

The DesignSingapore Council also oversees the programming of the National Design Centre (NDC). The NDC supports the Council's efforts to enhance the vibrancy of the design ecosystem as well as catalyse industry collaborations and business opportunities for innovation and growth.

More information about the DesignSingapore Council and the National Design Centre is available at [www.designsingapore.org](http://www.designsingapore.org).

### **About the Infocomm Media Development Authority (IMDA)**

The Infocomm Media Development Authority (IMDA) will develop a vibrant, world-class infocomm media sector that drives the economy, connects people, bonds communities and powers Singapore's Smart Nation vision. IMDA does this by developing talent, strengthening business capabilities, and enhancing Singapore's ICT and media infrastructure. IMDA also regulates the telecommunications and media sectors to safeguard consumer interests while fostering a pro-business environment. IMDA also enhances Singapore's data protection regime through the Personal Data Protection Commission. For more news and information, visit [www.imda.gov.sg](http://www.imda.gov.sg) or follow IMDA on Facebook IMDAsg and Twitter @IMDAsg.

### **About IMDA's PIXEL Labs**

IMDA's PIXEL Labs provide convergence spaces for individuals and companies to work collaboratively in generating ideas, developing new technologies and testing out proof-of-concepts. PIXEL Labs also provide access to prototyping equipment, mentorship by experts and opportunities to showcase innovative products and solutions. With a nurturing environment that aims to inspire with technology, PIXEL Labs seek to ignite a bold passion for innovative thinking and inspirational experimentation in individuals. Currently, there are 3 Labs located at respectively at the National Design Centre, Mapletree Business City and Jurong Regional Library.

### **About SG Enable**

Set up by the Ministry of Social and Family Development in July 2013, SG Enable is an agency dedicated to enabling persons with disabilities and building an inclusive society. It seeks to provide comprehensive support to persons with disabilities across different life stages. For more information, please visit [www.sgenable.sg](http://www.sgenable.sg).

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