



MEDIA RELEASE

SINGAPOREANS FIND RELIEF IN BUDGET MEASURES

Singaporeans generally agreed that the various levels of support in the Budget 2021 measures would help society, businesses and workforce emerge stronger from COVID-19, and build a sustainable future for Singapore. Many also hoped to see greater support from the government for middle-income families. These were amongst the findings from REACH's Budget 2021 feedback and engagement exercise that was held from February to March 2021. Feedback from more than 5,000 citizens were collected from across different REACH platforms¹ during the feedback and engagement period.

Emerging stronger as a society

2. More than seven in 10 of the respondents from the Computer-Assisted Telephone Interview (CATI) poll supported the Budget 2021 announcements and six in 10 felt that the announcements had boosted their confidence in Singapore's future.

3. Majority of respondents agreed that the Household Support Package provided additional support for them and their family members during this period of economic uncertainty. However, many hoped to see greater support from the government for middle-income families with children and/or elderly parents, to help cushion the economic impact of COVID-19 and rising costs of living. In particular, many respondents hoped that more financial assistance could be introduced to help with

¹ These include a Computer-Assisted Telephone Interview (CATI) poll, face-to-face engagements at six physical Listening Points, two Emerging Stronger Conversations (ESCs), three Radio Talk Shows (English and Mandarin), a social media campaign, feedback given via REACH's online feedback channels and collaborations with REACH Supervisory Panel members.

infant care and childcare fees, as well as education fees in general. Other suggestions included extending childcare leave entitlement for working parents with more children.

Emerging stronger as an economy and a workforce

4. With regard to encouraging employers to hire locals, close to eight in 10 respondents from the CATI poll agreed that extending the Jobs Support Scheme by six months would help to support harder-hit sectors such as aviation, tourism and food services.

5. Similarly, many agreed that the government was doing enough to cushion the impact of COVID-19 for workers. Six in 10 respondents from the CATI poll supported the enhanced SGUnited Jobs and Skills Package, which aimed to hire 200,000 locals this year. To enhance employability and remain competitive in the job market, some hoped that more quality training and upskilling programmes as well as enhanced training grants could be introduced to encourage more Singaporeans to attend courses to acquire industry-relevant skills.

6. Most respondents also agreed that the government was doing enough to encourage employers to hire local workers during this period. Seven in 10 respondents from the CATI poll agreed that extending government measures to subsidise wages for new Singaporean hires until September 2021 would encourage firms to employ more local workers.

7. At the same time, a significant number of respondents were concerned that the imposition of the Goods and Services Tax on low-value imported goods from e-commerce websites that would take effect in 2023 – meant to help level the playing field for local businesses – would increase costs of living.

Building a green and sustainable Singapore

8. Seven in 10 respondents from the CATI poll agreed that the Singapore Green Plan would help to secure a green, liveable and sustainable home for generations of Singaporeans. While respondents across different age groups agreed that the government was making good progress in sustainability, some felt that more could be

done on this front. Several youths said that the Singapore Green Plan 2030 resonated with them and felt that sustainability required a multi-faceted approach and should look beyond promoting wider adoption of green transportation such as electric cars. For example, there were calls for more initiatives to reduce the amount of waste generated in Singapore, to promote consumption of local produce and to encourage the use of renewable energy, such as solar panels. A number of respondents also suggested that climate change and sustainability should be included as core subjects in school to inculcate green mindsets and nudge behavior among the young.

9. REACH Chairman Mr Tan Kiat How, who is also Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office and the Ministry of National Development said: "I thank the respondents for actively sharing their feedback and suggestions at REACH's Budget 2021 engagement sessions. I am particularly heartened that there were more youth respondents this year and many of them were joining us for the first time. REACH is committed to engage Singaporeans to better understand their views on issues that are close to their hearts."

Issued by REACH

26 April 2021

About REACH

REACH is the national feedback and engagement unit under the Ministry of Communications and Information. Our mission is to connect Singaporeans to the government through feedback and engagement on national issues. For more information, please visit <https://www.reach.gov.sg>.