



## REACH MEDIA RELEASE

### Budget 2017 Poll: Strong Support for Families and Measures to Build an Inclusive Society

Singaporeans gave strong support to Budget 2017's initiatives to assist families in housing and children's education as well as Persons with Disabilities (PwDs). However, many disagreed with the announcement to increase water prices.

2 These were amongst the findings of REACH's Post-Budget telephone poll<sup>1</sup> conducted to gauge Singaporeans' reactions to Budget 2017. A total of 1,111 randomly selected Singapore citizens aged 20 and above were polled, and the sample was weighted to be demographically representative of the national population in terms of gender, age and race. The estimated margin of error is 2.9% at a 95% confidence level.

3 Overall, the poll results showed that **52% of Singaporeans** polled were supportive of the initiatives announced in the Budget.

4 On specific measures, the poll reflected that:

- **8 in 10 Singaporeans (80%)** agreed that the enhanced<sup>2</sup> post-Secondary education bursaries would provide significant financial support for lower- and middle-income households.
- **7 in 10 Singaporeans (72%)** agreed that the increase in CPF Housing Grant for couples purchasing their first resale flat would provide significant support for young families.
- **Two-thirds of respondents (66%)** agreed that an increase in the number of infant care places would make Singapore a more conducive place to raise a family.
- **72% of respondents** agreed that the Third Enabling Masterplan<sup>3</sup> would help those with disabilities to integrate better into the workforce and society.

5 There was also support for jobs and skills-related initiatives:

<sup>1</sup> The Computer-Assisted Telephone Interview (CATI) poll on Budget 2017 was conducted from 22 February to 3 March 2017.

<sup>2</sup> The enhanced post-Secondary education bursaries will allow students to receive higher bursary quanta and also increase students' access to bursaries.

<sup>3</sup> The Third Enabling Masterplan guides the initiatives supporting persons with disabilities (PwDs) for the period 2017 – 2021. The Enabling Masterplan is a roadmap for Singapore to build a more inclusive society where PwDs are empowered and enabled to realise their true potential.



- **2 in 3 Singaporeans (66%)** agreed that enhancements to the Adapt & Grow initiative and other training support under SkillsFuture would help create better employment opportunities for Singaporeans.
- **58%** agreed that the extension of the Additional Special Employment Credit would encourage employers to continue hiring older workers.

6 On the increase in water prices to fund the higher costs of water production and to encourage water conservation, the poll showed that **43% of respondents** disagreed, **32%** agreed, and **24%** were neutral.

7 Similarly, at REACH Listening Points<sup>4</sup> (LPs), many Singaporeans had initially shared their unhappiness on the increased water prices. But after various agencies and political office holders had explained the increase, more people at our LPs at the end of February and March said that they supported the increase. They understood the rationale behind the move and accepted that water is vital to our country's survival and that it should be priced properly.

8 Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office and Ministry of Manpower and REACH Chairman, Mr Sam Tan said, "The results of the poll show that **Singaporeans largely welcomed the social measures in Budget 2017, in particular the initiatives to assist families with the costs of raising a family.**"

9 "Similar to the poll results, Singaporeans who gave their feedback on REACH engagement platforms<sup>5</sup> supported the measures to help families. On the enhanced post-Secondary education bursaries, they said it would help lighten the cost of their children's education. Some also felt the increase in CPF Housing Grant would assist young couples who are looking to settle down and start a family. On infant care, Singaporeans gave their feedback that the quality of childcare should not be compromised when much attention is paid on increasing the number of infant care and childcare places. Some also commented that measures to support families would need to work in tandem with other efforts, such as encouraging work-life balance."

10 "I am also heartened that 72% of Singaporeans polled are supportive of the Third Enabling Masterplan to help PwDs integrate better into the workforce and society. On REACH platforms, contributors suggested that the integration process could begin from schools so as to instil a cohesive mind-set. Building an inclusive

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<sup>4</sup> Listening Points are open concept feedback booths where Singaporeans may obtain information, and leave feedback on national policies and issues.

<sup>5</sup> REACH platforms include the REACH Facebook page, Discussion Forum, emails, online feedback forms; while engagement sessions include the Public Forum (23 Feb), Radio Talkshow (24 Feb), REACH Listening Points (24, 25, 26 Feb, 4, 5 and 11 Mar), Facebook 'Live' Chat (27 Feb), PMET Dialogue (2 Mar) and Mandarin Dialogue (3 Mar).



society is a continuous effort, and we should strive towards a society with no pre-conceived notions on issues such as disabilities.”

11 REACH Chairman Sam Tan added, “We have had good engagement sessions with contributors on Budget 2017, which included the increase in water prices. We understand Singaporeans’ concerns. For those who are affected by the rising costs, there are measures to help households through the increase in U-Save rebates. We also hear the suggestions of some Singaporeans to improve communication on the water increase, and to do more public education so that everyone can work collectively to understand the need for water conservation.”

**Issued by REACH  
22 March 2017**

#### About REACH

REACH (reaching everyone for active citizenry @ home) was launched in October 2006 when the Feedback Unit was restructured to move beyond gathering public feedback, to become the lead agency for engaging and connecting with citizens. This signifies its renewed commitment to encourage and promote an active citizenry through citizen participation and involvement. The three key roles of REACH are to: Gather and Gauge Ground Sentiments; Reach Out and Engage Citizens; and Promote Active Citizenry through Citizen Participation and Involvement.



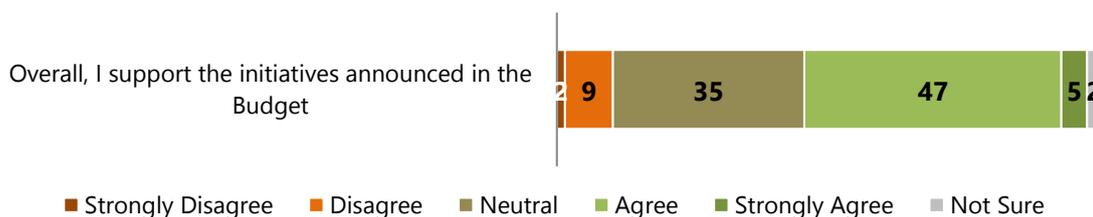
## ANNEX A

### RESULTS OF THE REACH POST BUDGET 2017 POLL<sup>1</sup>

The Computer-Assisted Telephone Interview (CATI) poll on Budget 2017 was conducted from **22 February to 3 March 2017** among **1,111** randomly selected Singapore citizens aged 20 and above. The sample was weighted to be demographically representative of the national population in terms of gender, age and race. The estimated margin of error is 2.9% at a 95% confidence level.

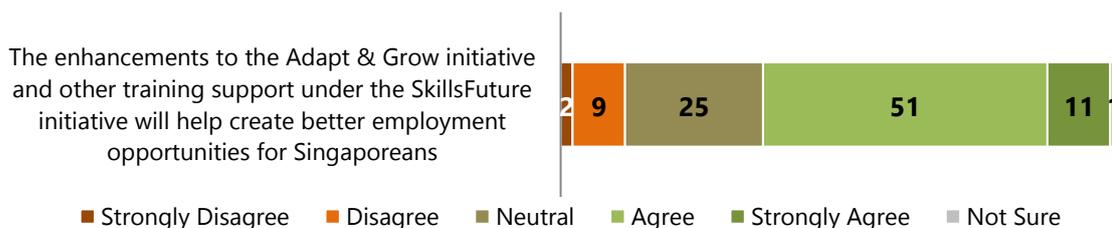
#### Overall

- Overall, 52% were supportive of the initiatives announced in the Budget.

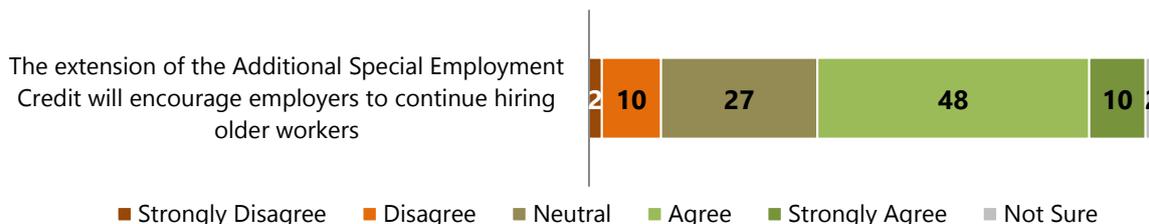


#### Jobs and skills-related initiatives

- 2 in 3 Singaporeans agreed that enhancements to the Adapt & Grow initiative and other training support under SkillsFuture would help create better employment opportunities for Singaporeans.



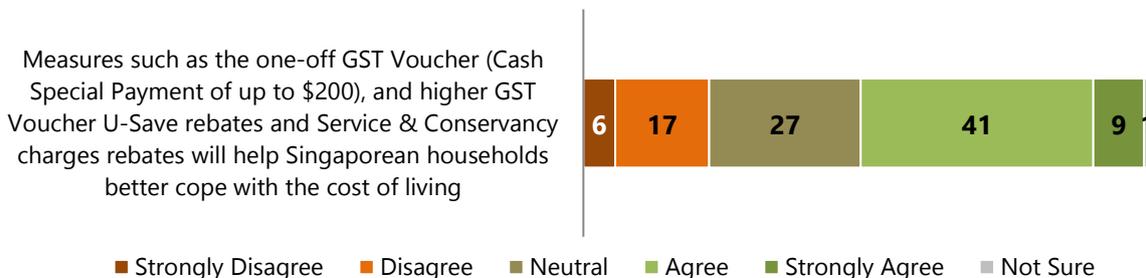
- 58% agreed that the extension of the Additional Special Employment Credit would encourage employers to continue hiring older workers.



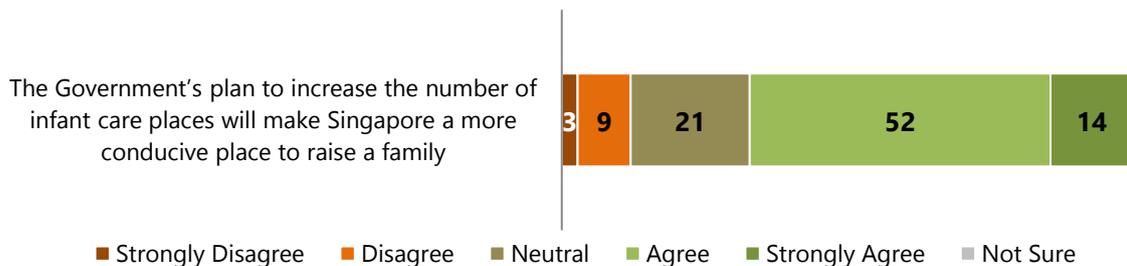


## Assistance for families

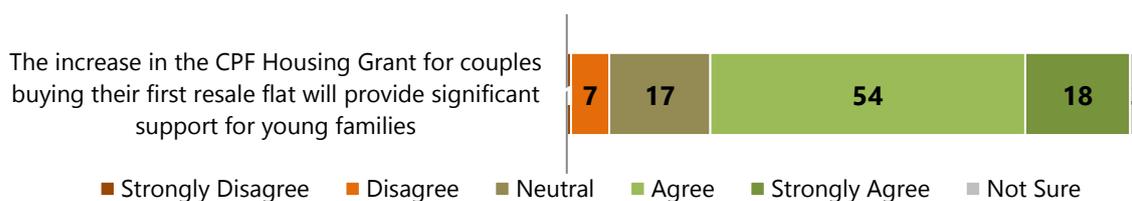
4. 1 in 2 respondents agreed that measures such as the one-off GST Voucher, higher GST Voucher U-Save rebates and Service & Conservancy charges rebates would help households cope better with cost of living.



5. Two-thirds agreed that an increase in the number of infant care places would make Singapore a more conducive place to raise a family.



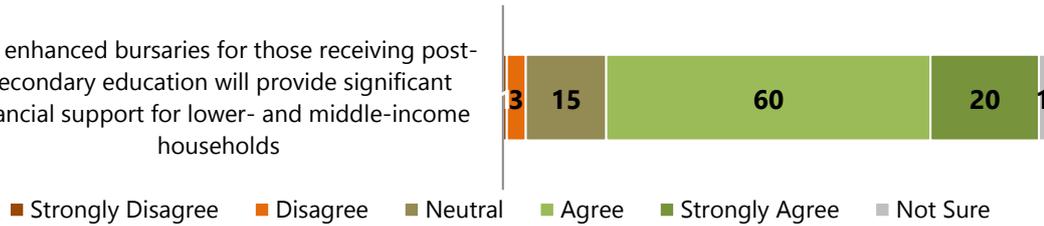
6. Around 7 in 10 (72%) agreed the increase in CPF Housing Grant for couples purchasing their first resale flat would provide significant support for young families.



7. 8 in 10 Singaporeans agreed that enhanced post-Secondary education bursaries would provide significant financial support for lower- and middle-income households.



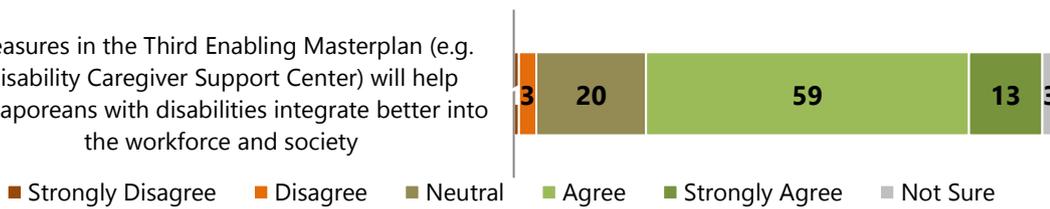
The enhanced bursaries for those receiving post-Secondary education will provide significant financial support for lower- and middle-income households



### Supporting Persons with Disabilities

8. 72% of respondents agreed that the Third Enabling Masterplan would help those with disabilities to integrate better into the workforce and society.

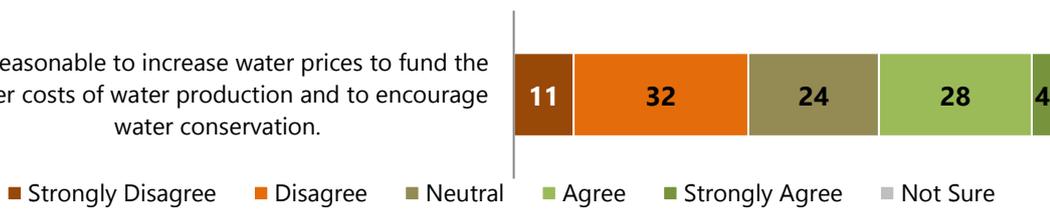
Measures in the Third Enabling Masterplan (e.g. Disability Caregiver Support Center) will help Singaporeans with disabilities integrate better into the workforce and society



### Water Price Increase

9. 43% of respondents disagreed that was reasonable to increase water prices to fund the higher costs of water production and to encourage water conservation.

It is reasonable to increase water prices to fund the higher costs of water production and to encourage water conservation.



<sup>1</sup> Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding off.