



## REACH MEDIA RELEASE

### Budget 2018 Poll: Half of Singaporeans polled supported Budget 2018 measures

Singaporeans were supportive of Budget 2018's measures, especially initiatives to assist individuals and families in building a caring and cohesive society. However, many were also concerned with the announcement on the impending GST hike.

2 These were amongst the findings of REACH's Budget 2018 Feedback and Engagement Exercise<sup>1</sup>, conducted from 19 February to 4 March 2018, to gauge Singaporeans' reactions to Budget 2018. Over the two-week exercise, REACH engaged more than 4,800 individuals online, over the phone, and on the ground.

3 **53% of respondents polled during REACH's face-to-face engagements** were most concerned about the impending GST increase. Many, especially those in the middle-income group, voiced their concerns about the impact on the cost of living. **1 in 2 (49%) respondents from the telephone poll** agreed that it was reasonable for the Government to raise taxes to meet longer term expenditure in areas such as healthcare, infrastructure and security.

4 Additionally, REACH's telephone poll engaged 1,211<sup>2</sup> randomly selected Singapore citizens aged 20 and above, and showed that half of Singaporeans polled (**51%**) were supportive of the initiatives announced in Budget 2018.

5 On specific measures, the telephone poll reflected that:

- **8 in 10 Singaporeans (83%)** supported the enhancements to the Proximity Housing Grant to encourage families to live with or near each other.
- **8 in 10 Singaporeans (80%)** agreed that the increase in annual Edusave contributions from the Government, and higher annual amounts for pre-university students would provide significant financial support for lower- and middle-income households.

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<sup>1</sup> REACH organised 15 engagement sessions to gather Budget-related sentiments. These included six Listening Points (LPs), two Public Dialogues (English and Malay), three radio talkshows (English and Mandarin), one Facebook Q&A, and three WhatsApp chats (English, Mandarin and Malay), on top of REACH's traditional platforms.

<sup>2</sup> Where the sample was not representative of the citizen population by gender, age or race, it was weighted accordingly to ensure representativeness. The estimated margin of error is 2.8% at a 95% confidence level.



- **56% of Singaporeans** agreed that measures such as Utilities-Save (U-Save) rebate, and the extension of Service & Conservancy Charges rebate, would help households better cope with expenses.

6 Approximately 1,600 Singaporeans were also engaged at the six Listening Points (LPs)<sup>3</sup> held at different locations ranging from the Central Business District, Institutes of Higher Learnings (IHLs) and within the heartlands. Among the findings from the LPs, a significant majority of those **(85%)** who shared their views at REACH's Listening Points indicated strong support for the one-off SG Bonus (a one-off cash payment of up to \$300 for all Singaporeans aged 21 years and above in 2018).

7 REACH Chairman Mr Sam Tan, who is also Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Ministry of Manpower, said, "The results of the poll show that **Singaporeans largely welcomed the social measures in Budget 2018, in particular the initiatives to support families and individuals in building a caring society.**"

8 Mr Tan added, "Singaporeans shared that the Budget 2018 initiatives could help build a more inclusive society and ensure that no one would be left behind. I am very encouraged to see so many Singaporeans join us at our Budget 2018 feedback and engagement sessions. We had good discussions on issues close to the hearts of many Singaporeans. Our Budget is a strategic and integrated plan, with the Government taking a longer-term view. I hope that we can all work hand-in-hand, as we look forward to building a stronger Singapore – one that we can all be proud of."

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#### About REACH

REACH is the Government's lead agency for engaging and connecting with citizens. It was launched in October 2006 when the Feedback Unit was restructured to move beyond gathering public feedback, signifying its renewed commitment to encourage and promote an active citizenry through citizen participation and involvement. REACH is a department of the Ministry of Communications and Information.

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<sup>3</sup> REACH held a total of six LPs across various venues. The venues are: One Raffles Place (21 Feb), National University of Singapore (23 Feb), River Hongbao Pets Fiesta (24 Feb), Nanyang Technological University (28 Feb), Blk 472 Tampines Street 44 (3 Mar), and Teck Whye Market Square (4 Mar).