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**OPENING REMARKS BY DR LEE BOON YANG  
MINISTER FOR INFORMATION, COMMUNICATIONS & THE ARTS  
AT THE PRESIDENT'S DESIGN AWARD  
ON TUESDAY, 27 NOVEMBER 2007, 6.00PM  
AT THE ESPLANADE CONCERT HALL**

His Excellency, President S.R. Nathan,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good Evening,

1. Mr President, thank you for honouring us with your presence to present the President's Design Awards 2007. Tonight's event also marks the opening of the Singapore Design Festival 2007, a biennial festival for Singaporeans to explore the power of design, discuss new design paradigms and explore design philosophies from around the world.

**Creative Industries**

2. Design together with arts and media, form the three pillars of our creative industries cluster. This cluster will become a more important contributor to Singapore's growth as we become a more innovation and knowledge driven economy. The value added of the creative industries cluster in Singapore grew by 8% in 2005, reaching a total value added of S\$7.6 billion<sup>1</sup> and contributing 3.9% to Singapore's GDP<sup>2</sup>. From 1995 to 2005, the creative industries cluster was able to grow at an average of over 8% per annum, which is higher than the 5% average growth rate for the whole economy. The cluster had also contributed significantly to

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<sup>1</sup> Nominal VA

<sup>2</sup> Nominal GDP

employment creation in recent years. Today, we see more than 100,000 workers in the creative industries cluster. This shows that the cluster has the potential to make significant contribution to our economy. More importantly, it opens up new opportunities for our entrepreneurs to leverage on their creativity and innovative capacity to build new businesses and value added.

### **Design Sector**

3. The design sector is an important part of our creative industries cluster. Like the rest of the creative industries cluster, it also has much potential for contributing to our overall economic growth. Since 2004, the design sector has been growing at an average rate of about 10% per year, above the overall economic growth rate.

4. We are also seeing increasing appreciation of the power of design in contributing to business success and performance. The 2007 National Design Industry Study conducted by Ernst & Young showed that 44% of businesses acknowledge that design gives them a competitive edge (up from 32% in 2005). In addition, a growing number of businesses that use design services have invested in in-house designers or established design capability to support their business need. This is a very positive development which will add to the momentum of the design sector as well as create even more employment opportunities for our creative talents.

### **Benefits of Design**

5. Design is not just about aesthetics or expensive brands and labels. Every product, no matter how humble and ordinary from telephones to tea-cups, can benefit from creative design. Good design can add elegance and grace to ideas, devices and technologies so as to foster engaging and rewarding experience by users or consumers. Design is increasingly being recognised as having a role in helping us to achieve sustainable development and ensuring environmentally friendly lifestyle. Good design can serve people from all walks of life. Imagine the impact of barrier-free design in our new and upgraded housing estates on the mobility and life of the aged and the disabled. Or imagine the impact when more web-page designers add audio or other means of communication to open up the world-wide web to the visually-impaired citizens. I don't need to remind you of the power of a well-designed advertisement for products and services to encourage you to spend your money.

Nearly everything we use or consume in our daily life, from homes, fashion, electronic goods, toys, public facilities such as bus-stops, post-boxes and the much maligned public toilets can be made better with thoughtful and creative design. In the words of Aaron Betsky, Curator of Architecture, Design and Digital Projects, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, "Design should do the same thing in everyday life that art does when encountered: amaze us, scare us or delight us, but certainly open us to new worlds within our daily existence".

### **President's Design Award**

6. This evening we are delighted to recognise and applaud seven Designers of the Year and seven Designs of the Year by conferring upon them the President's Design Award. These Awards are the highest accolade for designers and design in Singapore. They acknowledge the creativity and innovativeness of our designers and their ability to come up with iconic designs. Their designs have made an impact at home and internationally. They have enhanced Singapore's position as a growing design hub in Asia.

7. The President's Design Awards are important cornerstones of the DesignSingapore Council's effort to promote design awareness and design appreciation among Singaporeans. We also hope that these Awards will motivate and spur our growing design talents to make greater effort in their creative enterprises.

8. I congratulate all recipients of the President's Design Awards 2007. You have indeed contributed immensely to Singapore's design culture. You represent the best of Singapore's creative designers and have made significant contributions to Singapore economically as well as socially. I would also like to thank the nominators for bringing to our attention these excellent designs and the Members of the International Jury Panel for your careful deliberations and critical assessment during the judging process.

9. Thank you.