

Speech by SCED at Design Thinking Launch Reception (English only)

Following is the speech by the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mr Edward Yau, at the Design Thinking Launch Reception today (October 6):

Eric (Chairman of the Hong Kong Design Centre, Professor Eric Yim), Mr Kelley (Partner of IDEO, Mr Tom Kelley), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good afternoon and a very warm welcome to all of you. I am very excited to join you today at the Design Thinking Launch Reception. In particular, I would like to express my gratitude to Mr Tom Kelley who flew all the way from Palo Alto to Hong Kong to support the launch event and share his insight with us.

As we all know, Mr Kelley is a design thinking guru and author of international best-sellers on the subject of innovation. I have heard wonderful feedback from participants of the roundtable discussion this morning who have benefitted richly from Mr Kelley's talk on the innovation imperative and how organisations can build a culture of innovation. For those who have missed his sharing this morning – we will have another chance to hear from Mr Kelley on "the value of design thinking on business, society and personal development" after the launch ceremony.

Launching this series of design thinking events here at No. 7 Mallory Street is also of particular significance. As one of Urban Renewal Authority's Heritage Preservation and Revitalisation projects, No. 7 Mallory Street is indeed a cluster of ten pre-war Grade 2 historic buildings with preserved original structures such as balconies, a tiled pitched roof, timber French doors and an internal timber staircase.

Given its rich history and prominent location at the city centre, the Government is working closely with Hong Kong Design Centre (HKDC) to utilise this place in an innovative manner for promotion of design and design thinking. To turn design, a sometimes elusive idea to the general public, into something relatable and tangible, we understand the importance of enhancing the community's understanding and appreciation of good design and design thinking. I believe the launch event today at No. 7 Mallory Street is a good place to start.

The Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, is about to deliver her second Policy Address in a few days' time. Some may recall in her last (2017) Policy Address, Mrs Lam spoke at length on design thinking and creativity, and partnering with the HKDC to promote them as tools for problem-solving both within and outside Government. It aligns well with the people-centric governance philosophy of the current-term Government.

Within the Administration, we have had a good start in just a year. In December 2017, we piloted an "Inner Circle Briefing on Design Thinking" workshop to senior officers of the Government. The Civil Service Training and Development Institute, together with the Efficiency Office and the HKDC have so far organised nine design thinking workshops or seminars for over 300 civil servants of different ranks, including directorates and middle management. Some of those courses will be included as on-going training programmes to be conducted regularly.

We have been seeking to apply design thinking concepts in various Government initiatives, such as the design of Hong Kong's exhibition area in the "China International Import Expo 2018" to be held in Shanghai in November. Other upcoming projects applying design thinking include our new intelligent sports and recreation services booking and information system, by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department and the electronic identity (e-ID) which will be provided for free for all Hong Kong residents, allowing them to use a single digital identity and authentication to conduct government and commercial transactions online. Some public organisations such as the Ocean Park have also applied design thinking in improving provision of services.

Looking ahead, the Government is also drawing up internal guidelines to encourage bureaux and departments to apply design thinking in the Government procurement process.

We firmly believe that the nurturing of creativity and design thinking should begin at an early age and should take place both within and outside our education system. This year, we have sponsored various industry players to carry out meaningful projects to promote design thinking among our young people through CreateSmart Initiative of Create Hong Kong. For example, earlier this summer, PMQ organised the first "PMQ WOW Summer Camp" and a summer fair to introduce the idea of design thinking to young students and the public. On top of that, a new project "deTour YOUTH" offers education and mentorship opportunities to young kids and teens from September to December 2018. I am pleased to say that more are in the pipeline for 2019.

While promoting design thinking is a priority area of the Government, we also need support from members of the design fraternity, and participation of the wider community. To this end, I would like to thank the HKDC, our close and strategic partner, for all its effort in promoting design and other relevant creative sectors.

Last but not least, may I wish the upcoming events on design thinking every success and a most rewarding one to each and every participant. Thank you very much.