

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **SFIC Institute Opens First Carpentry Training Centre in Yishun**

*Local Furniture Industry Welcomes Inaugural Batch of Creative Craftsmen*

**Singapore, 11 Nov 2014** – The SFIC Institute and the National Trades Union Congress' e2i (Employment and Employability Institute) together officially announce the opening of a new carpentry campus today. The facility, which was approved by the Polytechnic of Western Australia (PWA) in May 2014, is designed to train and develop a pool of skilled local creative craftsmen for the Singapore furniture industry and is launched with support from the Singapore Furniture Industries Council (SFIC), Singapore Workforce Development Agency and SPRING Singapore. Located in Yishun, the training centre consists of two fully air-conditioned classrooms and a workshop equipped with an array of woodworking machinery and tools.

The Yishun campus is central to the Creative Craftsman Apprenticeship Programme that was introduced in February this year. At the campus, trainees undergo a six-month structured course on carpentry that aims to improve the skillset and fill the major shortage gap of carpenters in Singapore. Upon successful completion of the programme, participants will receive SFIC Institute's Apprentice Certificate in Creative Craftsmanship, WDA's WSQ Certified Operations Specialist, and PWA's Record of Result and Certificate of Participation.

"Majority of the carpenters in Singapore are foreigners, and many practising masters are nearing retirement age," said Mr Neo Sia Meng, Chairman of SFIC Institute. "Singapore currently faces a shortage of skilled local carpenters and the situation has become more challenging because of the absence of proper training facilities or curriculum in Singapore for such a craft. By providing a conducive learning environment and comprehensive education at the SFIC Institute Yishun Campus, we hope to introduce more young Singaporeans to the art of furniture craftsmanship, thus injecting fresh ideas and perspectives into the local furniture industry."

Mr Gilbert Tan, Chief Executive Officer of e2i, commented, "In response to the needs of the furniture industry and workers, SFIC Institute and e2i started the creative craftsmen apprenticeship programme and we are heartened to see the first batch of craftsmen matched with better skills and employers. With the opening of Singapore's first carpentry training centre, companies can look forward to more training programmes and a dedicated campus to upgrade the skillsets of their workers. More of our local furniture

workers can now benefit from structured training with well-equipped facilities to master their crafts and progress in their career.”

Since its introduction early this year, the programme has garnered strong support from local companies, and keen interest from job seekers. To date, a total of 18 craftsmen of ages ranging from 24 to 66, have completed their training and have since embarked on a career as Creative Craftsmen with their new employers.

“The structured approach of e2i and the training provided by SFIC Institute provided the trainees with the basic skill-set to inherit the wealth of experience accumulated by their co-workers who were skilled tradesmen in the industry, enabling another generation of craftsmen to pick up the mantle,” shared Mr Eugene Pang, Manager for Corporate Affairs at Facility Link Pte Ltd, and one of the participating employers.

The SFIC Institute Yishun Campus expects to have a total of 180 Singaporeans trained under the programme over the next one and a half years.

To provide Singaporeans with an insight of the furniture industry, SFIC Institute and e2i will introduce and co-host a 1-day Creative Craftsmen Industry Preview (CCIP) for local job seekers to pick up interviewing tips and information on the Creative Craftsman Apprenticeship Programme, at the same time learn about the industry and tour the campus for hands-on woodcraft experience. The first CCIP is targeted to start in January 2015. Interested local job seekers can call 6496 9458 to sign up with SFIC Institute.

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### **About SFIC Institute**

SFIC Institute, a subsidiary of the Singapore Furniture Industries Council (SFIC), was formed as a training and development initiative for the furniture industry in 2004. Privatised in October 2010, SFIC Institute ensures that the furniture industry's long-term viability and sustainability goals are met through a holistic range of offerings comprising product design and development, retail, human resources, sales and marketing production technology, customised programmes and consultancy services, logistics, and green initiatives. SFIC Institute partners various governmental agencies such as the Singapore Workforce Development Agency (WDA), SPRING Singapore and NTUC's e2i for funding support and to ensure that the Institute offers valuable, relevant programmes and initiatives to clients. For more information, please visit [www.sficinstitute.com](http://www.sficinstitute.com).

### **About Singapore Furniture Industries Council (SFIC)**

Singapore Furniture Industries Council was established in 1981 as the official representative body of Singapore's furniture industry. It currently represents 95% of established furniture manufacturers in Singapore, of whom 65% have subsidiary manufacturing plants in the region including China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam. Its primary role is to promote the interests of its members and the Singapore furniture industry. Many of its initiatives aim to facilitate members' exposure to the world market, develop local talent and encourage entrepreneurship.

Through SFIC Institute, its training and education arm, the SFIC offers development courses to ensure its graduates remain competitive and relevant to the latest industry developments. It also manages the International Furniture Centre and organises SingaPlural, a week-long design celebration, held in conjunction with the annual International Furniture Fair Singapore/ASEAN Furniture Show, The Décor Show and Hospitality 360°.

To ensure the industry's growth and viability, SFIC continues to forge close partnerships with the government and trade-related agencies to harness technology, knowledge and information for effective strategic planning. For more information, please visit [www.singaporefurniture.com](http://www.singaporefurniture.com).

### **About e2i (Employment and Employability Institute)**

As THE leading organisation to create solutions for better employment and employability, e2i exists to create better jobs and better lives for workers. Since 2008, we have helped 300,000 workers through providing better jobs, developing better skills through professional development, and improving productivity for companies. An initiative of the National Trades Union Congress (NTUC), supported by the Workforce Development Agency (WDA), the Singapore Labour Foundation (SLF), and the Singapore National Employers' Federation (SNEF), e2i serves all segments of workers, from rank-and-file to professionals, managers and executives. For more information, please visit [www.e2i.com.sg](http://www.e2i.com.sg).

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## APPENDIX A

### Chinese Names and Terms 中文名称与词汇

Creative Craftsman Apprenticeship Programme	创意工艺师培训计划
SFIC Institute	SFIC 学院
Singapore Furniture Industries Council (SFIC)	新加坡家具工业理事会
e2i (Employment and Employability Institute)	就业与职能培训中心
National Trades Union Congress (NTUC)	全国职工总会(职总)
Place-and-Train programme	先就业再培训计划
Progressive Wage Model	渐进式薪金模式
Mr Lim Swee Say, Secretary-General, NTUC	职总秘书长林瑞生先生
Mr Neo Sia Meng, Chairman, SFIC Institute	SFIC 学院主席梁夏明先生
Mr Gilbert Tan, CEO, e2i	就业与职能培训中心总裁陈财喜

## APPENDIX B

### Profile Stories of Apprentices

#### Profile 1: Better Pay, Better Career

Name: Mr Chen Teck Wah  
Age: 45  
Employer: Design Studio Singapore Pte Ltd  
Last Occupation: Cleaner

Story outline: Teck Wah was a former cleaner earning \$1K a month. When his contract with his former cleaning company of 5 years ended, he was unable to find a job until he saw the Creative Craftsman Apprenticeship Programme in the papers. With a keen interest in carpentry, Teck Wah decided to join the programme and is currently earning \$1,600 a month.



#### Profile 2: From Techy to Creative Craftsman

Name: Mr Tan Kim Guan Titus  
Age: 26  
Employer: Facility Link Pte Ltd  
Last Occupation: IT System Engineer

Story outline: Titus is a young apprentice who has a Diploma in Information Technology from Nanyang Polytechnic. Graduated in Year 2009, he was previously employed as an IT system Engineer. With a strong passion in woodworking and craftsmanship from a young age, he was unable to pursue his interests as there were no carpentry related courses previously.



His wife chanced upon the advertisement for the Creative Craftsmen Programme and urged him to sign up. After the course, he found a job with Facility Link where he is currently a Furniture Creative Craftsmen.

### Profile 3: A Pursue for Passion

Name: Mr Muhammad Iszad Bin Razali

Age: 27

Employer: Arthur Zaaro Design LLP

Last Occupation: Retailer

Story outline: Iszad was previously a crane maintenance technician. He left his previous role and went ahead to dive into his passion of woodcrafts. The Creative Craftsmen Apprenticeship programme provided Iszad a stepping stone to embark on his passion and a platform to join the industry. Iszad shared that the programme equipped him with skills and knowledge to use the necessary tools to be on the job.



In the above picture, he was seen with his co-worker, Dale Herzog from Arizona, USA.