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10<sup>th</sup> September 2018 - For Immediate Release

## Ipsos Study Finds Most Singaporeans Supportive of Section 377A of Singapore Penal Code

**One in three Singaporeans say they are more accepting of same-sex relationships than they were five years ago, but 55% of all Singaporeans still support Section 377A of the Singapore Penal Code.**

July 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2018 marked the 10<sup>th</sup> year of Pink Dot SG, a not-for-profit movement organised to raise awareness of, and support for, the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) community in Singapore<sup>1</sup>. Since the inception of the movement in 2009, interest in and discussion regarding LGBTQ issues in Singapore has gradually increased over time.

To understand the current social attitudes towards same-sex relationships, Ipsos Public Affairs ran a nationally representative online survey in July - August 2018, among 750 Singaporean Citizens and Permanent Residents.

### Support for Section 377A of the Penal Code

One key topic within many of discussions regarding LGBTQ issues is Section 377A of the Penal Code of Singapore. Section 377A reads: *“any male person who, in public or private, commits, or abets the commission of, or procures or attempts to procure the commission by any male person of, any act of gross indecency with another male person, shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to two years.”*<sup>2</sup>

When asked the extent to which they supported or opposed Section 377A of the Penal Code, more than half of all Singaporeans (55%) indicated that they supported, while 12% indicated that they opposed.

Levels of support varied according to gender, with males significantly more likely to have ‘strongly’ supported Section 377A (30%) than females (23%). Sentiment also differed by respondents’ age. While Generation Zs (15-24 years) were significantly more likely to have opposed the Section (30%), most of our Baby Boomers (55-65 years) were significantly more likely to have supported the Section (63%).

### Same-sex relationships

Respondents were also asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the statement *‘I believe that Singaporeans should be able to participate in same-sex relationships’*. 28% agreed with the statement, while 38% did not. The results showed a predictable pattern with more of the younger Singaporeans (aged 15 – 24) agreeing with this statement (56%); and those aged 55-65 were significantly more likely to have disagreed (52%).



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## Changing Attitudes

The findings of the study further indicate that attitudes towards this issue have changed - and are likely to continue to change - albeit at a slow pace. When asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the statement *'I am more accepting of same-sex relationships than I was five years ago'*, one third (33%) of Singaporeans agreed, while 35% disagreed.

Still, not all of the respondents who agreed that they were more accepting of same-sex relationships than they were five years ago, are of the opinion that *'Singaporeans should be able to participate in same-sex relationships'*. There were 31% of these respondents who neither agreed nor disagreed, and 7% disagreed to this statement.

For most of these respondents who agreed that they are more accepting of same-sex relationships than they were five years ago, their change in mind-set was due to perceptions of: shifts in Singapore's social norms with respect to this issue; increased conversation on social media; and more direct exposure to same-sex relationships.

**Robert McPhedran, Associate Research Director of Ipsos Public Affairs in Singapore comments,** "This research indicates that the normative values of Singaporeans with respect to LGBTQ issues are gradually shifting. As has occurred in other countries globally, increased dialogue regarding same-sex relationships has contributed to higher acceptance among Singaporeans. This is particularly the case for the younger generation. Nonetheless, as PM Lee has previously noted, a social consensus remains far from being reached."

– END –

## Technical note/About the Study:

- The survey was conducted online between 30 July 2018 and 2 August 2018, among a nationally representative sample of n=750 Singaporean Citizens and Permanent Residents aged 15 – 65 years old.
- The data has been weighted by age, gender and ethnicity to reflect the population distribution.
- References:
  - <sup>1</sup>Pink Dot SG (2018). *About Pink Dot SG*; accessed 25/8/2018 at <https://pinkdot.sg/about-pink-dot-sg/>
  - <sup>2</sup>National Library Board (2010). *Penal Code section 377A*; accessed 23/8/2018 at [http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP\\_1639\\_2010-01-31.html](http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP_1639_2010-01-31.html)
- For a detailed report and other queries on the study, please write to [tammy.ho@ipsos.com](mailto:tammy.ho@ipsos.com).

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