

**Welcome remarks  
by Professor Lee Pey Woan, Dean of SMU Yong Pung How School of Law  
at the launch of the Singapore Tax Academy Research Initiative  
held on 11 August 2025**

Chief Executive Officer of the Tax Academy of Singapore, Deputy Commissioner Dennis Lui,

STARI Visiting Professor Michael Dirkis,

Chief Tax Policy Officer, Mr Andy Seah,

Assistant Commissioner Angela Ang,

IRAS Chief Legal Officer, Ms Quek Hui Ling,

Distinguished guests,

Colleagues and friends:

1. Good morning. It is my great pleasure to welcome you to the Launch of the Singapore Tax Academy Research Initiative (STARI) and its Inaugural Annual Conference. This Initiative is a partnership between the Singapore Management University Yong Pung How School of Law and the Tax Academy of Singapore. We are extremely grateful to the Tax Academy for bringing so much to this partnership as we work together to develop Singapore's tax profession.
2. Taxation is a key commercial consideration for businesses and a crucial part of nation building. At the Yong Pung How School of Law, we focus on cutting-edge tax law research in the areas of international taxation and digital taxation. A course on Private Wealth Taxation is currently offered on our LLM programme and we are set to offer an introductory undergraduate course on Taxation Law from the next academic year.
3. With global tax changes having significant implications for Singapore, there is a clear need for us to have thought leadership on international tax developments. Our law school is committed to strengthening Singapore's position in international taxation through cutting-edge research and developing Singapore's tax profession. On this point, we are absolutely aligned with the Tax Academy of Singapore, and are confident that we will be able to achieve so much more together.
4. Given that STARI is a new initiative, we are extremely grateful for the votes of confidence from numerous esteemed tax professors who have expressed their willingness to work with us. Our Academic Expert Panel comprises some of the most eminent tax professors from institutions

around the world, including Oxford, Sydney, Melbourne, New South Wales and New York University, just to name a few.

5. We hope to see many of the international members of the Academic Expert Panel here in Singapore over the next three years to share their thought leadership with the Singapore tax profession. Today, we are greatly honoured to start with a keynote lecture from our inaugural STARI Visiting Professor Michael Dirkis from the University of Sydney.
6. In addition, STARI is honoured and excited that leading professors from the National University of Singapore and Singapore University of Social Sciences have also agreed to join the Academic Expert Panel. Today, we have with us professors who have shaped generations of tax students: Professors Stephen Phua, Darren Koh and Simon Poh. Precisely because academic talents in taxation is scarce, we must all work together, united by our commitment to developing research and education in this field.
7. STARI's Technical Expert Panel comprises a select group of the best industry and practice leaders from across the Singapore tax profession. Under the leadership of the Chair of the Panel, Deputy Commissioner Dennis Lui, we believe that the Panel's advice will keep STARI's research relevant and useful to the profession.
8. Present in this room today are many of the most senior and respected figures of the tax profession. I take this opportunity to thank all of you for your support, and we hope that you will generously share with us your wisdom and advice, which we will need for STARI to succeed in its mission.
9. It remains for me to say a very special thank you to Dennis, whose leadership has been absolutely instrumental in putting this Initiative together. We are honoured to have you as a partner and are most grateful to your excellent team, led by Eunice, for all their help and support.
10. I look forward to our continued partnership, and also to your Opening Address right after this. Finally, I would like to thank and congratulate my colleague, the extremely talented and dynamic Assistant Professor Vincent Ooi, for conceiving and bringing this exciting initiative to life.
11. Thank you, and I wish you all a very enjoyable morning ahead. Dennis, please.

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