

IP
ALERT

Singapore
07 June 2017

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Impending changes to the Singapore Registered Designs Act

The Registered Designs (Amendment) Bill (the “Bill”) was tabled for the first reading on 3rd April 2017 following a review of Singapore’s registered design regime that was conducted by the Ministry of Law and the Intellectual Property Office of Singapore. The Bill was read for the second time on 8th May 2017. The proposed amendments to the Registered Designs Act (“RDA”) were made to take into account of the latest trends in design and technology and to provide stronger protection to designers.

Some of the key amendments to the RDA are as follows:

1. The scope of registrable designs is broadened to include non-physical products and colour. As a result, the following subject matters may be registrable after the amendments come into force:
 - Virtual designs of non-physical products (eg. a light projected keyboard)
 - Colours as a design feature. (eg., a shape of an article together with the colours)
 - Designs of artisanal or handcrafted items (eg. handmade jewellery)
2. Design ownership will vest in the creator by default instead of the commissioning party.
3. The amendments will also broaden the circumstances in which a disclosure will not cause an application to be refused or a registration to be revoked. The grace period for the filing of an application after permitted disclosure will be lengthened to 12 months.
4. Applicants can file multiple designs in a single application subject to the fulfilment of certain conditions.
5. Where an application does not comply with certain formality requirements, the Registrar may invite the applicant to correct the non-compliance by filing a new application (or if it involves multiple designs, more than one application) and retain the filing date of the earlier application.
6. In view of the amendments to allow registration of designs of non-physical products, the Bill provides for consequential amendments to the provisions in the Copyright Act relating to registered designs.

If you would like to learn more, please feel free to contact [Ong Boo Seng](#), [Stanley Lee](#) or the [ZICO IP team](#).

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