

Chapter 19

Recreation, Sport and the Arts

Hong Kong is well known for its hard-working people, but it is not an all-work-no-play city. People spend time in a wide variety of recreational, sport and cultural activities, ranging from 'tai chi' to yoga, football to rugby, and international arts festivals to home-grown performances. Hong Kong offers many opportunities for people to unwind.

Recreation, sport and the arts provide an opportunity for people in Hong Kong to improve their quality of life. The Government helps to nurture an environment in which creative freedom, a pluralist approach to the development of the arts, sporting excellence and recreation can thrive.

Government policies on matters concerning sport, recreation, culture and heritage are coordinated by the Home Affairs Bureau. Organisations that help to draw up these policies include the Hong Kong Sports Commission, the Hong Kong Sports Institute, the former Culture and Heritage Commission, the Hong Kong Arts Development Council and the Antiquities Advisory Board.

The Hong Kong Sports Institute Limited was set up as a delivery agent to help develop sports in Hong Kong with special emphasis on training athletes for high-performance sports. In January 2005, the Government established the Sports Commission to advise on all matters related to sports development. The commission oversees the Elite Sports Committee, the Major Sports Events Committee and the Community Sports Committee which give advice on different aspects of sporting activities. The new advisory structure is a milestone for sports development in Hong Kong.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD), an executive arm of the Home Affairs Bureau, provides leisure and cultural services to the community, preserves its cultural heritage, beautifies its physical environment, and fosters synergy among sports, cultural and community organisations.

The department has continued to play a role in enhancing Hong Kong's image as Asia's world city, developing the performing arts, cultivating creativity and sustaining lifelong interest in the arts.

At the community level, the LCSD coordinates the provision of quality recreational and sports facilities and supports and organises training programmes and activities to promote community sports, identify sporting talent and raise sporting standards.

The LCSD also works closely with the District Councils, the National Sports Associations (NSAs) under the auspices of the Sports Federation and Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China, District Sports Associations and schools to promote the concept of 'Sport for All' and to encourage people of all ages and from all walks of life to participate in sports and recreational activities.

The LCSD implements the Government's greening policy by carrying out an extensive programme involving the planting of trees in parks, playgrounds and roadsides. In addition, various educational and community greening activities are organised to strengthen public awareness of the importance of environmentally friendly living.

During the year, the LCSD organised various cultural and leisure programmes and opened indoor sports facilities and public swimming pools to the public free of charge to celebrate the 10th Anniversary of the Establishment of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR). The LCSD, has organised several large-scale exhibitions, some of which featured world acclaimed exhibits. It also organised cultural performances, ranging from music, dance to opera, as well as sporting events, all of which were well received by the public.

The Arts

It is the Government's policy to provide an environment that is conducive to freedom of expression and artistic creation and one that encourages free participation in all aspects of cultural life. The policy comprises four major elements: respect for creative freedom and expression; provision of opportunities for participation; encouragement for diversified and balanced development and provision of the necessary environment and conditions for the arts and culture to grow in Hong Kong.

Committees

Four committees were established in 2004 to advise the Secretary for Home Affairs on policies and strategies for the development of arts and culture. These are the Committee on Performing Arts, the Committee on Museums, the Committee on Libraries and the Advisory Committee on Cantonese Opera. The performing arts, museums and libraries committees base their plans for the development of cultural facilities and services on the Culture and Heritage Commission policy recommendations.

Apart from fostering community support and partnership with different sectors, the committees also seek to enhance public interest and understanding in the performing, visual and literary arts.

The Committee on Performing Arts submitted its first recommendation report to the Government in June 2006. All of its recommendations were accepted in principle. In 2007, the Government implemented the committee's recommendation to put all the major professional performing arts companies under one roof, the Home Affairs Bureau, and at the same time set up a Funding Committee for the Performing Arts to advise the bureau on funding for these companies. The Leisure and Cultural Services Department also planned for the launch of a venue partnership scheme in 2008-09 at the department's venues on the recommendation of the committee. The Committee on Museums and the Committee on Libraries also submitted their recommendation reports in May 2007.

The Advisory Committee on Cantonese Opera advises the Secretary for Home Affairs on the promotion, preservation, study and development of Cantonese opera in Hong Kong.

Hong Kong Arts Development Council

The Hong Kong Arts Development Council (HKADC) was established by ordinance in 1995 to plan, promote and support the broad development of the arts which include performing, literary, visual, film and media arts, arts education, arts criticism and arts administration in Hong Kong.

Arts funding is one of the HKADC's key responsibilities. After the funding responsibilities for the major performing arts groups were transferred to the Home Affairs Bureau on April 1, 2007, the HKADC focused its funding policy on the development of the arts. In addition to the existing one-year grant, devolved grant and project grant schemes, the HKADC introduced two new grant schemes, namely Grant for Emerging Artists and Multi-Project Grant, to encourage fledgling arts practitioners and small-to-medium sized arts groups to pursue multi-facet and professional development.

The HKADC also stepped up collaboration with different media organisations to promote the arts through their networks. A review and criticism column on visual arts was introduced in two Chinese newspapers for an eight-month period during the year. HKADC also co-produced a 10-episode television series called *Arts Unlimited III* with Radio Television Hong Kong to examine the interweaving of urban planning, cultural and arts activities into the fabric of society.

The HKADC also worked with the district associations to make use of district and other non-government resources to promote the arts. The HKADC joined hands with the Hong Kong Chaoren Shamshuipo Clans Association Limited, Leisure and Cultural Services Department and Dragon Centre Management Limited in February and March 2007 to organise an event, called 'Arts for All: Dragon Centre Arts Festival' in the Dragon Centre. The HKADC continued its cooperation with the Hong Kong Trade Development Council to organise the 'Reading Write-up Competition for Students', 'Critics Recommendations' and 'Literary Seminar' during the Hong Kong Book Fair 2007 in summer.

The HKADC took part in two cultural fairs during the year. These were: the '3rd China (Shenzhen) International Cultural Industries Fair' and the '52nd International Art Exhibition: La Biennale di Venezia,' the latter held under the banner of 'Hong Kong, China'.

Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts

Established by ordinance in 1984 with an autonomous governing council, the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts offers professional training in dance, drama, music, film and television, theatre and entertainment arts, and Chinese traditional theatre.

During the year, the academy launched the Master of Fine Arts (Drama) in addition to the Master of Fine Arts (Dance) and the Master of Music programmes which started the year before. These three postgraduate programmes attracted a total of 37 students. The Performing Arts Education Centre, formally established in September 2007, has been strengthened to help the academy achieve its outreach goals and to engage in performing arts education.

As part of the academy's internationalisation strategy, the Juilliard School of New York was invited to Hong Kong by the academy to conduct international master classes and concerts in the summer. The Central Conservatory of Music and the Shanghai Conservatory of Music, both collaborative partners of the academy, also participated in the classes and concerts. In December, the academy played host to the third European League of Institutes of the Arts (ELIA) Leadership Symposium, a meeting of key decision-makers on current debates in cultural management and leadership in arts education.

In 2007, the academy's Extension and Continuing Education for Life (EXCEL) programme enrolled nearly 7 220 participants in 375 arts courses.

Hong Kong Arts Centre

Established in 1974, the Hong Kong Arts Centre nurtures creativity, arts and culture by providing contemporary arts programmes and education in Hong Kong.

The centre serves as a hub, provided with all the essentials and backing for the development of the arts and creativity. The 19-storey centre houses galleries, theatres, cinema, studios, classrooms and offices all under one roof. It is one of few places in Hong Kong that can provide up to about 4 600 square metres of floor space for holding cultural and artistic events.

The Hong Kong Art School is the centre's educational arm. It can award sub-degrees, and runs courses in arts education, fine arts, and applied and media arts for which higher diplomas, bachelor's degrees and master's degrees are awarded.

The Arts Centre collaborated with different arts groups to hold a series of shows in public places. These included the '13th ifva' which received wide support from young talents, the 'Comix Home Base Finale Exhibition' which toured Singapore and

Russia, 'My Soil, My Land — Ceramics Works Exhibition' and 'Bridging Arts: Public Art Design Competition'.

The Fringe Club

The Fringe Club is housed in what used to be a cold storage warehouse built in 1890, now designated as a historical building. The building underwent many major renovations after the Fringe Club moved in, in 1983, and made it a vibrant place for contemporary arts shows and related activities. In 2001, the building won the Government's Heritage Award for innovative adaptive use of a historical building.

The Fringe Club has two studio theatres, three exhibition areas (including a photography gallery), a pottery workshop and showroom, a rehearsal studio, a restaurant, two bars, a roof garden and offices. It runs a diverse programme of theatre, dance, music and exhibitions. It is committed to an open access policy and to the nurturing of budding artists by providing venue, publicity support, as well as opportunities to go on overseas tours. In 2007, the club was used as the base for six arts festivals. From time to time, the Fringe Club produces its own theatrical performances, art exhibitions and site-specific works with a Hong Kong heritage theme. During the past two decades, more than 500 arts groups from Asia, Australia, Europe, North and South America have used the premises for cultural exchange activities.

In 2007, the Fringe Club presented the annual City Festival which featured Hong Kong artists. The show toured Singapore to reciprocate City Festival 2006 which highlighted the island state. The cultural exchanges are part of an agreement embodied in a Memorandum of Understanding on Cultural Cooperation between the governments of Singapore and Hong Kong.

The Jockey Club Creative Arts Centre

In 2005, the Hong Kong Baptist University took the lead in setting up a strategic partnership with the Hong Kong Arts Development Council and the Hong Kong Arts Centre, and sought a substantial donation from the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust to convert the decommissioned ex-Shek Kip Mei Factory Estate into a venue for creative arts and arts groups, called the Jockey Club Creative Arts Centre. In 2007, the Government entrusted the university with the task of carrying out conversion works which are expected to be completed in early 2008.

Apart from providing 100 studio units to be rented to individual artists or arts groups, the centre will also provide accommodation for a small number of institutional arts tenants. The centre will have a 150-seat black box theatre and three galleries for public hire. The centre is run on a non-profit-making and self-financing basis.

Performing Arts Groups

Chung Ying Theatre

Established in 1979, the Chung Ying Theatre Company is a non-profit-making leading professional theatre company in Hong Kong. The company is dedicated to producing high quality theatrical productions to pursue the goals of promoting theatrical arts, exploring cultural exchanges and enriching cultural life.

In 2007, the company introduced the English play *Our Bad Magnet*, which was translated into Chinese, an international bestseller for years *Tuesdays with Morrie*, an adaptation from a local memoir, *For You are with me*, and a French classical masterpiece, *Cyrano de Bergerac*. Through a wide range of outreach and professional training programmes for schools and local organisations throughout the territory, the company strives to connect people through stage performances and drama education.

City Contemporary Dance Company

The City Contemporary Dance Company (CCDC) was established in 1979. It is a professional modern dance company that nurtures talent to create dance in the context of modern China. In 2007, the company produced four original productions — *C'est la Vie*, *C'est L'amour*, *Awakening*, *Warrior Lanling* and *HerStory*. The company was invited to perform in Guangzhou, Beijing, Washington, DC and San Francisco. The CCDC Dance Centre also offers a great variety of dance courses to the public and develops new audiences through its outreach programmes.

Hong Kong Ballet

Under the leadership of the new board chairman and the artistic director, Hong Kong Ballet built up an even stronger audience base during the year. The company produced three new productions in 2007: Dutch renowned choreographer Rudi van Dantzig's *Romeo and Juliet* (premièred in March), Ronald Hynd's *The Merry Widow* (debut on Hong Kong stage in May), and a mixed bill programme, *Momentum*, which featured three distinctive one-act ballets in November and was highlighted by a sparkling performance by the New York City Ballet Principal Dancer Sofiane Sylve and her dancing partner Tamas Solymosi who made their debut in Hong Kong with a *pas de deux* from *Le Corsaire* Act I. The company revived three full-length productions, namely *Swan Lake*, *Cinderella* and *The Nutcracker*.

The company's Education and Outreach Department also strives to make the art of ballet accessible to the general public via various activities.

Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra

Founded in 1977, the Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra is the city's sole professional symphonic Chinese orchestra. Under the leadership of its current Artistic Director Yan Huichang, its 85 professional artists have been zealously promoting the development of Chinese music. One prominent characteristic of the art of the orchestra is its root in classical Chinese music and fusion with western music. During the year, the orchestra presented the Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra's 30th Anniversary Concert — *From Ancient to Modern, As East Meets West*, and the Fourth

International Symposium on Chinese Music, which was documented in a special feature by China Central Television.

In 2007, apart from the 130 performances given locally, the orchestra made touring performances in Vancouver, Toronto, Auckland, Moscow and St Petersburg. The orchestra continued its efforts in promoting art education in Hong Kong through the Hong Kong Children Chinese Orchestra, the Hong Kong Junior Chinese Orchestra, instrumental classes and various music education projects in collaboration with tertiary education institutions.

Hong Kong Dance Company

Established in 1981 with the aim of promoting Chinese dance, the Hong Kong Dance Company was formally incorporated in April 2001 as a charitable and non-profit-making institution. Since its inception, the company has staged over 100 productions, many of which are highly popular, winning critical acclaim.

During 2007, the company staged 31 productions, attracting a combined audience of over 30 000. The productions included *The Border Town*, *Red Poppies*, *The Smiling*, *Proud Wanderer*, *Qingming Riverside* and *Angel Falls*. The company also held eight performances in Shanghai, Wuhan, Hangzhou, Nanjing and Beijing to foster cultural exchange.

Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra

The 90 full-time musicians of the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra, under the leadership of Maestro Edo de Waart, built on the success of the three previous years which saw a significant increase in paid attendance and a higher participation rate in its education and outreach activities. In addition to the main-stage concerts in Hong Kong, the orchestra also gave performances at two prestigious music festivals in China — the Shanghai Spring International Music Festival and the Beijing Music Festival. In September, Maestro Edo de Waart conducted a complete cycle of the Beethoven Piano Concertos featuring five outstanding young Chinese pianists. In November, the orchestra performed a free open-air concert, playing to an audience of more than 16 000 people. Throughout the year, the orchestra also collaborated with the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, Opera Hong Kong, Hong Kong Ballet, the Hong Kong Arts Festival and the International Society for Contemporary Music.

Hong Kong Repertory Theatre

The Hong Kong Repertory Theatre celebrated its 30th anniversary in 2007. Highlights of the year included local performances and the Beijing tour of *Secret Love in Peach Blossom Land*, a highlight programme commissioned to celebrate the 10th Anniversary of the Establishment of the HKSAR Government, and the revival of the company's signature production *Secret of Resurrection*. To celebrate the Centennial of Chinese Drama, the company contributed an original play *Dust and Dawn* to the 6th Chinese Drama Festival, and revisited the quintessential Cao Yu's works through the revival of three Cao Yu's masterpieces.

The company continued its efforts in drama education as well as audience building. The company was also commissioned by the Independent Commission

Against Corruption to produce a play to promote an anti-bribery message to secondary school students.

Hong Kong Sinfonietta

Established in 1990, the Hong Kong Sinfonietta prides itself on the predominantly local makeup of its musicians. Under the music directorship of the renowned Hong Kong conductor Yip Wing-sie, the orchestra tries to make orchestral music accessible to everybody through its versatile programming, which ranges from classical concerts to cutting-edge fusion with other creative art forms. In 2007, the orchestra gave over 70 performances, including the Asian première of *Peter & the Wolf — the Film*, and a re-interpretation of Igor Stravinsky's *A Soldier's Story*, with its *début* being made at the Shanghai Spring International Music Festival.

Theatre Ensemble

Established in 1993 under the artistic direction of the co-founders and associate artistic directors Jim Chim and Olivia Yan, Theatre Ensemble has endeavoured to create physical theatre works that are creative and humorous.

In addition to the resident programme, *PIP Let's Play*, the company organised various art educational activities including Stage Reading Chamber, Art Tour and Weekend Theatre, which are free admission programmes to promote art appreciation.

The company's major productions in 2007 included premières of *My Life as a TV* and *Of Wills and Willpower*, a re-run of *Man of la Tiger* (7th run) and *L'empereur du Chant* (3rd run), children theatre productions of *The Secret Garden of Red Hoodlet*, *Villain Village* and *Chubby Chubby Sheep Sheep*, and *The Game*. The last production was held in Shanghai at the invitation of the Shanghai Theatre Academy.

Zuni Icosahedron

Zuni Icosahedron is a multimedia experimental theatre group founded in 1982. It has since been making new creative attempts in the various aspects of theatre. It has also actively participated in the areas of arts education, arts criticism, arts policy research and international cultural exchange.

In 2007, Zuni presented five new productions including social theatre *East Wing West Wing 5: 2097 Back to the Ching Chiu* and *All You Want to Complain about Hong Kong TV*; multimedia architectural music theatre *The Life and Times of Louis I. Kahn 2007*; life insight theatre *Hua-yen Sutra*, and commissioned Kunqu opera *Tang Xianzu's Dream on Dreams* (Nanjing Preview).

Visual Arts Groups

1a space

1a space is an independent and non-profit-making visual arts organisation founded by a group of Hong Kong arts workers in 1998. It is an open platform to cultivate and nurture local artistic talents with the aim of promoting the critical dissemination of contemporary visual arts practices and affiliated art forms.

In 2007, highlights of 1a space's programmes included the show 'Talkover/Handover — Dialogues on Hong Kong Art 10 Years After 1997' with 23 Hong Kong artists who have been active since 1997 in an exchange residency exhibition with Japan 'Strangers', as well as exhibitions featuring international artists from France, Britain and the United States.

Artist Commune

Since its establishment in July 1997, Artist Commune as a non-profit arts group has committed itself to the development of community art. It set up its first workshop in Cheung Fat Industrial Building in Shek Tong Tsui from where it moved to Oil Street Artist Village in North Point and to 'Slaughter House' in Cheung Sha Wan, finally settling down in 'Cattle Depot Artist Village' in To Kwa Wan where it has been since 2001.

In 2007, 13 visual arts activities were presented by Artist Commune. Some of the exhibitions were held in different parts of Hong Kong, providing more opportunities for people to enjoy local contemporary arts.

Asia Art Archive

Founded in 2000, the Asia Art Archive (AAA), a Hong Kong-registered charity, is the first public research centre of its kind dedicated to documenting and making the recent history of visual arts from the region accessible to the public. Through the AAA's website and archive references, over 22 000 items can be viewed by the public. In addition, workshops, symposia, talks and publications are organised and produced by the AAA to promote free flow of ideas. With researchers stationed in Bangkok, Beijing, Hong Kong, Mumbai, Seoul, Singapore, Taipei and Tokyo, the AAA acts as an important conduit through which people in the contemporary Asian arts field may get in touch with each other. In 2007, the AAA opened its new centre of about 370 square metres to the public.

Hong Kong Society for Education in Art

Established in 1982, the Hong Kong Society for Education in Art promotes the development of visual arts education in schools and in the community. During the year, the society initiated and organised the Creative Student Award Scheme to nurture students' creativity and the Walkable Art • Art Parade — Creative Teaching Training Course to encourage teachers to explore diversified and integrated arts curriculum, enhance students' experience and expand their horizons on arts. The society also published the only professional arts education journal in Hong Kong, *Hong Kong Art Education*.

Para/Site Art Space

In 2007, Para/Site Art Space, another visual arts organisation supported by the Hong Kong Arts Development Council, continued to organise thematic exhibitions to foster contemporary art in Hong Kong. Para/Site initiated the debut of 'October Contemporary' to present exhibitions and activities promoting contemporary art in Hong Kong. The 'Pearl River City' touring exhibition series showcased the artworks

from Pearl River Delta in Contemporary Art Centre in Vilnius. The exhibition is going on in Kunstvereins in Hamburg and Munich.

The Hong Kong Jockey Club Music and Dance Fund

The Hong Kong Jockey Club Music and Dance Fund was set up in 1980 with a donation of \$10 million from the Hong Kong Jockey Club for the promotion and development of music and dance. It is a non-statutory trust fund, administered by a board of trustees. In 1994, the Jockey Club injected a further \$22 million into the fund to meet increasing demand for support.

The fund awards scholarships to enable young people to pursue an integrated programme of post-diploma/post-graduate studies or professional training in music or dance at leading institutions or undertake less formal studies, projects or creative work outside Hong Kong.

During the year, the fund awarded three scholarships worth about \$1.42 million.

Music Office

The main aims of the Music Office are to promote general music education in Hong Kong, especially among young people, develop public interest in music and to foster sharing of music among local young musicians and their counterparts across the world. The Music Office runs 18 youth orchestras, bands and choirs with 1 400 members. In 2007, it organised an instrumental music training scheme for 4 700 trainees, short-term music interest courses for 2 000 participants, and 390 music activities to entertain a total of 175 000 people. Other major events included a music camp, youth music 'interflows', and music exchange programmes for local, Mainland and overseas young musicians.

Cultural Venues

Hong Kong Cultural Centre

Since its inauguration in 1989, the Hong Kong Cultural Centre has established itself as Hong Kong's premier performing arts venue, attracting leading artists from around the world. It has three main performing venues: Concert Hall, with a seating capacity of 2 019, Grand Theatre, seating capacity of 1 734, and Studio Theatre which seats 303 to 496 people. In 2007, more than 850 000 people attended 895 performances at these venues.

Hong Kong City Hall

The Hong Kong City Hall, the first cultural venue of its kind built in Hong Kong in 1962, commands a special place in Hong Kong's cultural development. It is a major multi-purpose complex comprising the Concert Hall, Theatre, Recital Hall, Exhibition Hall and Exhibition Gallery. A total of 651 events were held there during the year, attracting over 415 000 people.

Regional and District Civic Centres

The LCSD runs 11 regional and district civic centres: the Sheung Wan Civic Centre and Sai Wan Ho Civic Centre on Hong Kong Island; the Ngau Chi Wan Civic Centre and Ko Shan Theatre in Kowloon; and the Sha Tin Town Hall, Tsuen Wan Town Hall, Tuen Mun Town Hall, Kwai Tsing Theatre, Yuen Long Theatre, North District Town Hall and Tai Po Civic Centre in the New Territories.

In 2007, the Programme Partnership Scheme was continued at Yuen Long Theatre, North District Town Hall, Tsuen Wan Town Hall, Sheung Wan Civic Centre and Ngau Chi Wan Civic Centre. Under this scheme, facilities and resources were provided to selected arts groups to organise audience-building programmes and create new works.

Indoor Stadia

The Hong Kong Coliseum and the Queen Elizabeth Stadium are two of the largest multi-purpose indoor stadia in Hong Kong. The 12 500-seat coliseum is a leading venue for pop concerts, musicals, entertainment spectacles, international sporting events, cultural programmes and large-scale celebrations. The 3 600-seat stadium is suitable for holding sports events, cultural and entertainment performances, school ceremonies, conferences and variety shows.

In 2007, 176 performances were staged in the coliseum and 259 in the stadium attracting over 1 765 000 and 418 000 people respectively.

West Kowloon Cultural District

Following the discontinuation of the Invitation for Proposals process in February 2006, the Government established in April 2006 the Consultative Committee on the Core Arts and Cultural Facilities of the West Kowloon Cultural District and its three advisory groups to re-examine the need for the core arts and cultural facilities to be provided in the West Kowloon Cultural District (WKCD) and the financial implications for developing and operating those facilities. After deliberating for 15 months in close and intensive consultation with the local arts community and related parties, the consultative committee recommended developing 15 performing arts venues and at least 3 hectares of piazza areas, as well as a cultural institution with museum functions (temporarily called the M+) focusing on 20th to 21st century visual culture, and an exhibition centre with focus on arts and culture and creative industry. It also recommended to develop the district as a low-density development with ample open space, embracing a vibrant harbourfront for public enjoyment and closely connected with the neighbourhood community. To realise the WKCD's vision, the consultative committee also recommended that the Government adopt timely measures to enhance the development of cultural software and humanware in Hong Kong.

A three-month Public Engagement (PE) Exercise was carried out from mid-September to mid-December in 2007 to explain the consultative committee's recommendations to the public and to gauge public views on the WKCD project. The WKCD project is among 10 major infrastructure projects proposed by the Chief Executive in his 2007 Policy Address. The results of the PE exercise indicated strong

public support for the committee's recommendations and called for early implementation of the WKCD project.

The Government has accepted the recommendations and will introduce draft legislation into the Legislative Council in February 2008 to set up a statutory body, to be called the WKCD Authority, to take the project forward. If the legislation is enacted in 2008, the Government will seek Legislative Council's approval for an upfront endowment shortly afterwards to cover the capital costs of the WKCD facilities. The management of the retail, dining and entertainment facilities will be vested with the WKCD Authority such that it can make use of the rental income to cover the operating deficit of the arts, cultural and communal facilities, so as to ensure that the WKCD project can operate on a financially sustainable basis.

URBTIX

URBTIX (Urban Ticketing System) commenced operation in 1984 and has become the most popular computerised ticketing system in Hong Kong. URBTIX offers patrons a range of convenient and reliable ticketing services through its wide network of 35 outlets as well as its convenient Internet and telephone booking services. In 2007, over \$790 million was paid through URBTIX for some 5.22 million tickets for over 9 900 performances.

Cultural Presentations

LCSD Cultural Presentations

The Cultural Presentations Section of the LCSD provides quality cultural programmes on a year-round basis. In 2007, a total of 997 performances were presented, featuring local and visiting artists in a variety of cultural programmes that appealed to audiences of all ages. More than 452 000 people attended these performances.

Under the direction of the Celebrations Coordination Office, the LCSD organised a grand variety show at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre on June 30 as part of the territory-wide celebrations held to mark the 10th Anniversary of the Establishment of Hong Kong as a Special Administrative Region of China. The show, which featured prominent local and Mainland performing arts groups as well as a strong cast of television and movie stars, pop singers, top athletes and other performers, was broadcast simultaneously on the Mainland, in Hong Kong and around the world.

Other major events held to celebrate the 10th anniversary included the *Dragon Jamboree*, which featured a beating of drums by over 10 000 young people from the Mainland, Macao, Taiwan and Hong Kong, establishing a Guinness Record, the choral spectacular *Long March Suite* featuring a 400-plus chorus from the Zhan You Art Troupe of Beijing Military Area Command and Hong Kong Association of Choral Societies, the China Philharmonic Orchestra, led by the renowned conductor Yu Long and joined by famous Chinese pianist Yin Chengzong and three talented young musicians from Hong Kong: Colleen Lee, Chuanyun Li and Trey Lee in two concerts, the National Ballet of China, a pop-rock concert at Tamar, and the newly

commissioned Cantonese opera programme *The Theatrical Legacy of the Tang Dynasty* and a Greater Pearl River Delta cultural exchange programme: *A Showcase of Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao Cantonese Opera Masters* under *The Great Reunion* Cantonese Opera Series.

The LCSD is keen to work with local cultural organisations. It lent support to the Hong Kong Composers' Guild by playing host to the ISCM-ACL World Music Days 2007 in Hong Kong, an event in which over 200 composers and musicologists from more than 60 countries and regions took part.

The event provided an opportunity for showcasing the works of a number of Hong Kong composers, and major performing arts groups including the Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra, Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra and the Hong Kong Sinfonietta. Other musical highlights of the year included the production of Verdi's opera *Aida* by Opera Hong Kong which involved both local and visiting artists. Other local art groups which performed during the year included the City Chamber Orchestra of Hong Kong, the Wuji Plucked-string Ensemble, and the Windpipe Chinese Ensemble. Hong Kong was also treated to performances by the London Symphony Orchestra under the baton of Daniel Harding, the Encore Series, Jazz Up Series and A Cappella Series which featured renowned performers and virtuosi such as Sir James Galway (flute), Maria Joao Pires (piano), Carol Kidd (jazz vocal) and the Jacques Loussier Trio.

The vitality and creativity of Hong Kong artists were very apparent in the shows presented by local dance companies which included DanceArt HK, Y-Space, Manna Dance and *Dancing Blue* by Mui Cheuk-yin and Lee Chun-chow. Visiting groups which performed in Hong Kong during the year included Cloud Gate Dance Theatre of Taiwan, Moscow City Ballet, Slovak National Folklore Ballet, and Zhengzhou Song and Dance Theatre.

Local theatre companies were always in the forefront of Hong Kong's performing arts scene. The LCSD worked with the Hong Kong Federation of Drama Societies, Actors' Family, On and On Theatre Workshop, 7A Class Drama Group as well as a Playwright Scheme II guided by the Prospects Theatre featuring works by local playwrights. Two renowned theatre productions *Teahouse* by the Beijing People's Art Theatre and *Proof* by the Greenray Theatre from Taiwan were presented in support of the 6th Chinese Drama Festival in January. Alexander Pushkin's masterpiece *Boris Godunov* produced by the Chekhov International Theatre Festival from Russia offered a completely new experience to theatre-goers.

The Cantonese Opera Day held on the last Sunday of November reflected Hong Kong young people's interest in this traditional art form. Other genres of Chinese opera highlighted during the year included An Operatic Legacy — 'Four Generations of Kunqu Artists' Showcase Series, Shanghai Shaoxing Opera Group and Three Stylistic Schools of Peking Opera.

The LCSD also facilitates the holding of major local film events by providing the organisers with free venues and ticketing services. These events included the annual

Hong Kong International Film Festival and Hong Kong Film Awards Presentation Ceremony.

The department continued to work with the consulates-general and foreign cultural institutions in Hong Kong to promote cultural exchanges by sponsoring cultural events such as the Mexican September and Le French May.

Entertainment Programmes

During the year, a total of 648 carnivals and entertainment programmes were organised by the LCSD. More than 835 000 people attended these events.

Outdoor extravaganzas included the Lunar New Year Lantern Carnival, the New Year's Eve Countdown Carnival, and the Mid-Autumn Lantern Carnival, which featured over 150 ethnic artists from the Mainland in the spectacular Chinese Ethnic Arts Parade, as well as the Youth Band Marathon. To enhance cultural exchange between the local and Asian communities in Hong Kong, the LCSD continued to organise such events as the Concert in the Park and the Asian Ethnic Cultural Performances. The former was presented in collaboration with the Consulate-General of the Philippines, while the latter, which featured Japanese cultural performances this year was jointly presented with the Consulate-General of Japan.

Arts Education and Audience-building Projects

During the year, a total of 771 arts education and audience-building activities were organised by the LCSD to help Hong Kong people, particularly schoolchildren, better appreciate the performing arts through organised visits to cultural venues and outreach arts activities to schools and the community.

Major Cultural Events

Hong Kong Arts Festival

Held annually in February and March, the Hong Kong Arts Festival is one of the most important international festivals in Asia. It is also recognised around the world as a major event. The 2007 Festival attracted over 105 000 people to its 98 performances, the highest number in the festival's 35-year history. The festival's highlights included the Welsh National Opera's *La bohème*, Moscow Philharmonic Orchestra, Leipzig Ballet with the Gewandhaus Orchestra and the Chorus and Soloists of the Leipzig Opera — *The Great Mass*, Sylvie Guillem in Akram Khan's *Sacred Monsters*, *Tango Buenos Aires* and *My Life as a Dancer — The evolution*, The Actor's Gang's *1984*, Watermill Theatre and Old Vic Productions by Propeller of *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Twelfth Night* and *Lost Village*, Yohangza Theatre Company's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, as well as local dramas Shu Ning Presentation Unit's *And Then There's You*, and All Theatre Company's *Yu Yu Mi Mi — A Love Story*.

International Arts Carnival

The six-week International Arts Carnival presented by the LCSD, held in July and August, was an event for the entire family. In addition to an array of performing arts programmes, the festival offered an opportunity for school children to enjoy pre-festival performances and take part in workshops, exhibitions, a graphic design

competition and other activities. Some 134 400 people attended the festival's 443 shows, which featured 42 local and 12 overseas performing groups.

Mediterranean Arts Festival

Riding on the success of the Latin Passion Festival in 2005, the second edition of the World Cultures Festival Series held in Hong Kong chose the Mediterranean as its theme. The opening programme featured the scrumptious 17th-century Italian carnivals, *The Italian Feast* performed by Balthasar Neumann Choir and Ensemble. Other critically acclaimed performances included the *Commedia dell'Arte* classic *Arlecchino, Servant of Two Masters* by Piccolo Teatro di Milano, the ancient Greek tragedy *Aeschylus' Prometheus Bound* by the National Theatre of Greece, and *Gala Flamenca Dance — Yesterday, Today and Always*. A total of 29 visiting and 18 local arts groups performed in 92 events during the four-week festival which ran from October 19 to November 18, attracting more than 75 000 people to its performances.

Hong Kong International Film Festival

Presented by the Hong Kong International Film Festival Society Limited, the 31st Hong Kong International Film Festival offered a wide range of programmes. Awards presented during the event included the Asian Digital Competition, the Humanitarian Awards for Documentaries, the FIPRESCI Prize, the SIGNIS Award and the Fresh Wave Short Film Competition Award. More than 250 films of different categories from over 40 countries were shown during the 23-day festival. Fringe activities included talks, seminars and exhibitions.

Heritage

Lord Wilson Heritage Trust

The Lord Wilson Heritage Trust was established in 1992 to promote the preservation and conversation of Hong Kong's heritage. During the year, the trust granted around \$2 million to support 15 heritage-related activities and research projects.

Museums

Hong Kong Museum of Art

In 2007, the Hong Kong Museum of Art staged 12 exhibitions — six special and six permanent — showing art objects and antiques from Hong Kong, the Mainland and overseas. The major events included three blockbuster exhibitions staged specially to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the HKSAR.

The exhibition 'A Pioneer of Modern Chinese Painting: The Art of Lin Fengmian' was the curtain-raiser of the celebration activities. It was followed immediately by a magnificent display of Chinese paintings and calligraphy never seen outside China before, entitled 'The Pride of China: Masterpieces of Chinese Painting and Calligraphy of the Jin, Tang, Song and Yuan Dynasties from the Palace Museum'. The most notable exhibit in the collection was an amazing handscroll, entitled 'Along the River during the Qingming Festival' which aroused exceptional interest and attracted

a huge number of visitors of all nationalities to the museum to see this rare gem of historical Chinese art. Another crowd-puller was the 'Treasures of the World's Cultures from the British Museum'. Some 270 artefacts from Europe, Asia, the Oceania, the Americas and Africa, all depicting different facets of civilisation, were exhibited at the event, courtesy of the British Museum. More than 419 000 people visited the three exhibitions.

Other thematic exhibitions held during the year included 'Chinglish — Hong Kong Art Exhibition', 'Made in Hong Kong — Contemporary Art Exhibition', 'An Inheritance of Virtuosity: Donated Chinese Paintings of Ho Chat-yuen', 'The Chater Legacy — A Selection of the Chater Collection', 'Collecting and Inheriting: A Selection of Paintings, Calligraphy of the Ming and Qing Dynasties from the Xubaizhai Collection' and 'Early 20th Century Guangdong Painting and Gems of Chinese Ceramics from the Hong Kong Museum of Art'. More than 574 000 people visited the exhibitions.

The museum also organised a wide range of educational activities. 'The Pride of China' International Academic Lecture Series, comprising 21 lectures, given by renowned scholars and curators from around the world, were well attended by academics and members of the public. The Hong Kong Museum of Art also held a number of events to celebrate its 45th anniversary. These included a photo display, a 'Meet the Curators' open forum, and a new 'Outdoor Sculpture Mobile Tour', all designed to enhance the public's knowledge of the museum.

Flagstaff House Museum of Tea Ware

The Flagstaff House Museum of Tea Ware collection features various kinds of tea ware and related vessels from the collection of the late Dr K S Lo as well as rare Chinese ceramics and seals donated by the K S Lo Foundation. Three special and two permanent exhibitions were held in 2007. They were the 'Poetry and Ceramic Art: Collection of the Hong Kong Museum of Art' and the 'K S Lo Collection of the Flagstaff House Museum of Tea Ware' which featured refined ceramic tea vessels dating from the Tang dynasty to the 20th century and introduced tea poetry of different eras; the '2007 Tea Ware by Hong Kong Potters' which featured outstanding works by 69 local potters selected from a tea ware competition and the 'Japanese Tea Ceremony Utensils Exhibition' which featured Japanese tea utensils that originated from, or inspired by the Chinese tea culture as well as vessels commonly used at Japanese tea ceremonies. More than 176 000 people visited the museum during the year.

Hong Kong Museum of History

In addition to the permanent exhibition, entitled 'The Hong Kong Story', the Hong Kong Museum of History held a number of thematic exhibitions during the year. Some of these were held in collaboration with museums and cultural institutions on the Mainland. These included exhibitions called 'Ancient Chinese Civilisation — Treasures of the Xia, Shang and Zhou Dynasties from Henan Province', 'Major Archaeological Discoveries of China in Recent Years' and 'The Development of Banks in Shanghai and Hong Kong'. These joint presentations facilitated academic

and cultural interflow between Hong Kong and the Mainland. The museum also continued collaborating with government departments, non-profit-making institutions and artists to present exhibitions, that included 'Play: Hong Kong Theatre — Romance with China', 'Fifty Years of Cultural and Educational Development in Hong Kong' and 'Queen's College • Hong Kong • China: History and Memories of 145 Years'. Over 595 000 people visited the museum during the year.

The Hong Kong Museum of History also manages five branch museums: The Hong Kong Museum of Coastal Defence, Dr Sun Yat-sen Museum, Lei Cheng Uk Han Tomb Museum, Law Uk Folk Museum and the new Fireboat Alexander Grantham Exhibition Gallery.

The Hong Kong Museum of Coastal Defence was converted from the old Lei Yue Mun Fort in Shau Kei Wan. In addition to its permanent exhibition, '600 Years of Hong Kong's Coastal Defence', the museum staged three thematic shows during the year: 'Archery Traditions of Asia', 'Fujian Arsenal: Cradle of Modern Chinese Navy' and 'Cultural Relics of the Eight Banners of the Manchu'. Some 151 000 people visited the museum during the year.

The Dr Sun Yat-sen Museum, in Kom Tong Hall, a historic building, holds exhibits relating to Dr Sun's life and career. They attracted more than 160 000 visitors to the museum during the year.

Opened on September 29, the Fireboat Alexander Grantham Exhibition Gallery was set up to preserve the vessel as a relic and to enhance the public's knowledge about Hong Kong's past sea rescue operations. The new branch museum at Quarry Bay Park attracted more than 114 000 visitors within just four months of its opening.

The other two branch museums, the Lei Cheng Uk Han Tomb Museum in Sham Shui Po and the Law Uk Folk Museum in Chai Wan, attracted some 41 000 and 20 000 visitors respectively.

Hong Kong Heritage Museum

To celebrate the 10th anniversary of the HKSAR and to enrich Hong Kong people's cultural life, a series of exhibitions was held in the Hong Kong Heritage Museum during the year. These included 'Splendour and Mystery of Ancient Shu — Cultural Relics from Sanxingdui and Jinsha' which was presented jointly with the Sichuan Provincial Cultural Relics Bureau. It showcased more than 120 archaeological treasures of great significance found at archaeological sites in Sanxingdui, Jinsha and other places. The other exhibitions were: 'Cameras Inside-out' which featured over 100 cameras and works of local photographers, showing how photographic technology evolved over the years and how photographic art in Hong Kong developed in tandem; Hong Kong Design Series 5 'Fashion Attitude — Hong Kong Fashion Design' presented the works of nine outstanding Hong Kong fashion designers, and revealed the creative concepts and innovations of local fashion design. The 'Beyond the Surface — Hong Kong International Poster Triennial 2007' exhibition participated by 737 designers from 46 countries/regions provided an excellent opportunity for promoting exchange and involvement at an international level. Seminars and competitions were held as part of the exhibition. Hong Kong was also

treated to an exhibition about Cantonese music. The event, called 'Riding a Melodic Tide — The Development of Cantopop in Hong Kong' traced the development of Cantonese popular music over the past few decades and its influence on today's music. They attracted more than 470 000 visitors to the museum during the year.

Special cultural events were also held for the young and old and for ordinary folk from different walks of life.

The Hong Kong Heritage Museum manages three branch museums — the Sam Tung Uk Museum, Hong Kong Railway Museum and Sheung Yiu Folk Museum. The Sam Tung Uk Museum in Tsuen Wan was originally a Hakka walled village built in 1786. It was declared a monument in 1981 and later converted into a museum. The Railway Museum in Tai Po consists of the old Tai Po Market Railway Station building, two historic locomotives and various coaches. The station building was built in 1913 in a Chinese style and was declared a monument in 1984. The Sheung Yiu Folk Museum in the Sai Kung Country Park is located in a Hakka village, built in the late 19th century, which comprises eight domestic units, pig pens, an open courtyard and an entrance gate-tower. The village and a nearby lime kiln were gazetted as monuments in 1981.

A total of 490 000 people visited the Sam Tung Uk Museum, Hong Kong Railway Museum and Sheung Yiu Folk Museum in 2007.

Hong Kong Science Museum

The Hong Kong Science Museum organised an exhibition entitled 'Soaring Dinosaurs — Chinese Dinosaurs and Prehistoric Life', as part of the celebrations held to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the HKSAR. The exhibition featured about 200 exotic fossils of dinosaurs and other ancient animals as well as plants unearthed in China. The fossils offered clues to the evolution of dinosaurs and the origin of mammals, birds and flowering plants. Over 284 000 people visited the exhibition.

Other major special exhibitions held during the year included 'Mission Earthling', an exhibition of various body systems of man seen through the eyes of visiting aliens and 'Hybrid Drive Vehicle Technology' which drew attention to environmental issues such as air pollution and global warming, and the latest technology developed to make vehicles more environmentally friendly.

The museum staged several new exhibitions during the year. 'Smart Ambience Therapy', a new event sponsored by the City University of Hong Kong, is a pioneering application of interactive media and virtual reality technology in art therapy. 'The World of Mirrors', set up as a permanent gallery, opened in September with exhibits illustrating the interesting reflective properties of mirrors. New exhibits acquired in 2007 also included 25 neurosurgical instruments donated by the Tuen Mun Hospital.

The museum's Science News Corner staged two thematic exhibitions: 'Discoveries on Reproduction, Development and Growth: From Gamete to Adult' and 'Cochlear Implants — Offering a Hearing World for the Hearing-impaired'. The display was organised jointly with The University of Hong Kong and The Chinese

University of Hong Kong to introduce current scientific research methods to local universities.

On May 12 and 13, over 30 museums and heritage institutions from Beijing, Hong Kong, Macao and Guangdong Province joined hands to present the 'International Museum Day 2007, Hong Kong'. As event coordinator, the museum staged a series of public displays at the Hong Kong Cultural Centre, which were viewed by more than 28 000 people.

Five renowned scholars from the Mainland and Hong Kong spoke at an event entitled 'Distinguished Chinese Scientists Lecture Series 2007', organised jointly by the China Association for Science and Technology, Beijing-Hong Kong Academic Exchange Centre, the China Association (Hong Kong) for Science and Society and the museum. The topics included green chemistry, visual science, giant pandas, nuclear fusion and nanotechnology.

During the year, the museum worked with the British Council, academic institutions, professional bodies and government departments on a number of special programmes and projects which were carried out under titles such as 'Science Alive', 'Fun Science Competition', 'Primary Science Project', 'Hong Kong Student Science Project Competition', 'Robotic Olympiads', and 'Engineering a Green Future'.

Hong Kong Space Museum

The museum, using multi-media and special effects, produced two new sky shows about astronomy and space science which ran the whole year.

The Space Museum also staged a special exhibition, entitled 'Fly Me to the Moon', recounting the launching of China's first lunar satellite Chang'e 1.

More than 732 000 people visited the museum's exhibitions or attended its events in 2007.

Hong Kong Film Archive

The Hong Kong Film Archive's major functions are to acquire, preserve, catalogue and document Hong Kong films and related materials. The building houses a cinema, an exhibition hall, a resource centre and four temperature-controlled collection storerooms. It has already acquired more than 7 470 films and 844 000 items of related materials, mainly through donations and deposits. Major acquisitions in 2007 included over 700 titles of Hong Kong films and 3 000 related materials from overseas theatres and 224 Shaw Studio films donated by the Celestial Pictures Ltd. More than 159 000 people visited the archive in 2007.

Art Promotion Office

The LCSD's Art Promotion Office promotes local visual arts through a wide range of activities that focus on public and community art. The office deems it important to undertake projects with different organisations in order to get more people interested in the arts.

An exhibition called 'Public Art Scheme 1999-2006' was held in May to showcase the scheme's accomplishments since 1999. Five roving exhibitions held

under the Artists in the Neighbourhood Scheme III were staged around Hong Kong during the year.

Hong Kong Visual Arts Centre

The Art Promotion Office also manages the Hong Kong Visual Arts Centre which has nine art studios, a lecture theatre, an exhibition hall and a multi-purpose room. The centre focuses on training in the visual arts, promoting visual arts and providing facilities for hire to professionals. The 6th Art Specialist Course, which includes two disciplines — ink painting and Chinese calligraphy, was organised for people who wish to pursue structured professional art training. The centre also organised a series of Artist in Residence programmes and invited winners of the Hong Kong Art Biennial to take part. The organisers of the Hong Kong Graphic Art Fiesta 2007 joined forces with their counterparts in the Hong Kong Open Printshop to hold two exhibitions and a series of educational activities to encourage international artistic exchanges and to promote contemporary printmaking and creativity.

Central Conservation Section

The Central Conservation Section's job is to look after and preserve the relics in public museums for present and future generations to view and appreciate. It has facilities for maintaining and treating more than 563 cultural objects, including paintings, documents, prints, textiles, metals, ceramics, organic materials and archaeological finds.

The section completed in August its works for preserving the historic 511-tonne Fireboat Alexander Grantham which was lifted out of the sea and taken to an exhibition site built for it at Quarry Bay Park. Hundreds of items associated with the fireboat are also on display in the gallery which was formally opened on September 29.

The section also made the arrangements for numerous valuable objects, borrowed from different museums, to be displayed at the exhibitions organised by the LCSD to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the HKSAR. Among the items were Chinese paintings and calligraphy from Palace Museum and world treasures from the British Museum as well as cultural relics from Sanxingdui and Jinsha, and archaeological finds from different museums of the Mainland.

As part of its educational and extension activities, the section organised 38 workshops, guided tours, thematic talks and seminars, which attracted a total of 811 participants. To win greater community support for preserving Hong Kong's cultural property, the section formed a volunteer conservation team which contributed 354 service hours to various conservation projects.

The section continued to operate a web-based list of publications on conservation of historical and cultural objects for people to read about them.

Public Libraries

The LCSD operates the Hong Kong Public Libraries (HKPL) network which comprises 66 static libraries and 10 mobile libraries. It also manages the Books

Registration Office. The public libraries system provides free library and information services to meet community needs for knowledge, information, research and recreation and to support lifelong and continuous education. It promotes reading and literary arts and offers library extension activities to people of all ages.

In all, Hong Kong's public libraries have 10.57 million books and 1.54 million multimedia materials. It has 3.56 million registered borrowers who borrowed more than 58.4 million books and other library materials during the year.

Hong Kong Central Library

The Hong Kong Central Library is a major information and cultural centre housed in a 12-storey building with a total floor area of 33 800 square metres. It has a stock of 2.29 million books and other items and provides a wide range of library facilities. The facilities include a multimedia information system, a central reference library with six subject departments, an arts resource centre, a Hong Kong literature room, a map library, a language learning centre, a young adult library and a toy library.

There are also facilities for hire. These include a 1 500 square-metre exhibition gallery, a 290-seat lecture theatre, two activity rooms, a music practice room and eight rooms for holding discussions. It received its 30-millionth visitor in January 2007.

In addition to its regular cultural activities and talks, the library organises a wide range of cultural programmes for large audiences, such as the lecture series — 'Celebrating 120 Years of Medical Education: Explore the World of Medicine Public Lecture Series' and 'Public Lectures on History and Business in China'. Other talks held during the year were entitled 'The Choice Between Life and Death', 'Cosmopolitan Hong Kong', 'The Development of Hong Kong — Past and Future' and 'Talks on China and Hong Kong' relating to the 10th Anniversary of the Establishment of the HKSAR.

Improvements to Library Services

The Hong Kong Public Libraries works continuously to improve the service to the public by increasing the stock of books, enhancing the reference and information services, information technology and promoting reading habits.

In December, the small library in Shun Lee Estate was moved to larger and more comfortable premises at the Shun Lee Tsuen Sports Centre.

An Education Resource Centre opened in May, providing books and reference materials of interest to teachers, researchers and members of the public. It has a stock of 24 000 books and journals. There are also computers at the centre.

A community libraries partnership scheme, called Libraries@neighbourhood, launched in late 2005, is becoming increasingly popular. Under the scheme, public libraries collaborate with non-profit-making organisations to provide reading materials to people in their communities. At year-end, there were 54 such libraries set up across Hong Kong.

The public libraries continued to work with the Education Bureau to promote a 'Library Cards for all School Children' scheme designed to encourage primary school students to use the library services. Regular meetings were held with school librarians to foster mutual understanding and to maximise the use of library resources. Course materials from the Open University of Hong Kong are available in 16 public libraries to help people pursue self-learning.

Reference and Information Services

Reference and information services are provided at the Hong Kong Central Library and the five major libraries — located at the City Hall, Kowloon, Sha Tin, Tsuen Wan and Tuen Mun Public Libraries. The Central Library also holds the permanent collection of books deposited under the Books Registration Ordinance as well as the depository collections of nine international organisations. Specialised reference services are provided at the Arts Resources Centre, the Hong Kong Literature Room and the Map Library of the Hong Kong Central Library. In addition, the City Hall Public Library offers specialised reference services through its Business and Industry Library, Creativity and Innovation Resource Centre and the Basic Law Library.

Web-based reference services form an integral part of the reference and information services. The Hong Kong Central Library provides an Internet Reference Enquiry Service in collaboration with the Sun Yat-Sen Library of Guangdong Province, the Shenzhen Library, and the Macao Central Library, enabling readers to contact these cooperating libraries directly for information about their respective regions. A wide range of electronic resources, including online database, electronic books, web-resource guide and topical resources guides are posted on the library website for the public to use.

Information Technology Initiatives and Digital Library Initiatives

The Library Automation System used by Hong Kong's public libraries is one of the largest computerised systems of its kind in the world. It provides 24-hour internet library services for online catalogue searching and reservation and renewal of library materials. In 2007, more than 17.36 million online renewal transactions were processed through the Internet and Telephone Renewal Services. The HKPL is planning to upgrade the system in the coming years. It is also considering using Radio Frequency Identification technology to see whether it can deliver library services to the public more effectively. The HKPL continued to expand the application of information technology to provide more convenient and efficient services to the public. The Hong Kong Public Libraries Homepage (www.hkpl.gov.hk) is among the most visited websites in Hong Kong, reflecting the growing popularity of online public library services. The HKPL is planning to provide public wireless internet service in 2008 to further improve access to the Internet.

In 2007, over 536 000 readers applied to use their smart ID cards as library cards. Software was installed in 205 computers in 2007 enabling people to use e-Cert compatible smart card readers, a move to promote wider use of information technology and electronic services by the public.

During the year, Internet Express Terminals were set up in nine libraries on a trial basis. The service will be expanded to more libraries next year. To further promote self-service by end-users, five additional self-charging terminals were installed in branch libraries.

The Multimedia Information System (MMIS) offers the public instant access to a wide variety of digital documents as well as audio and video programmes on demand. It provides a powerful one-stop search facility enabling library users to explore multimedia archives via the Internet at home or through some 600 workstations in 27 public libraries. Continuous enhancements have enabled users to enjoy a more effective multi-media information service. The MMIS has been honoured with a number of awards granted by institutions in Hong Kong and abroad for its intelligent use of advanced technology in running an effective information service.

Outreach Programmes and Promotion of Reading and Literary Arts

Outreach programmes form an integral part of the library services. In 2007, the HKPL continued to organise a balanced mix of activities for people of all ages. Regular programmes like storytelling sessions, book exhibitions, and community talks were held throughout the year. A total of 18 522 library outreach programmes were carried out in 2007. A variety of reading programmes and reading-related activities were organised to promote reading and sustain an interest in reading. These included a programme called 'Summer Reading Month' designed for children and their families.

Teens' Reading Clubs were formed at 31 public libraries during the year and Family Reading Clubs were set up in Hong Kong's four major libraries. Creative competitions held under the title 'Hong Kong — My Home' were organised to celebrate '4.23 World Book Day' and the 10th Anniversary of the Establishment of the HKSAR.

Several special programmes and competitions were held to promote creative writing and appreciation of literature. These included the 9th Hong Kong Biennial Awards for Chinese Literature which was organised in conjunction with the Hong Kong Arts Development Council to encourage Hong Kong writers to seek perfection and local publishers to publish quality books. The libraries joined forces during the year to organise a Chinese Poetry Writing Competition and a competition on story writing in Chinese for students. They also partnered with other organisations to hold territory-wide reading sessions for ordinary folk.

Cultural Exchange

During the year, Hong Kong's public libraries continued to cooperate and strengthen ties with their counterparts elsewhere using the Internet to keep in touch and share library news and matters of mutual interest. HKPL and the Shenzhen Library held writing competitions to celebrate '4.23 World Book Day'. Shenzhen's winning works were displayed alongside Hong Kong's winning pieces at the Central Library, while Hong Kong winners' works were exhibited in Shenzhen.

Books Registration Office

The Books Registration Office helps to preserve Hong Kong's literary heritage by registering local publications and monitoring the use of the International Standard Book Number (ISBN) System. It publishes 'A Catalogue of Books Printed in Hong Kong' in the Government Gazette on a quarterly basis, which can be accessed through the Internet. In 2007, the office registered 14 136 books and 13 751 periodicals, and 687 new publisher prefixes.

Sport and Recreation

More and more Hong Kong people are taking up sports and using public recreational facilities nowadays. The LCSD develops and manages these facilities which include sports grounds, playgrounds, sports centres, holiday camps, water sports centres, swimming pools and beaches. It also organises training courses, sporting competitions and other activities for people of all ages and abilities, and encourages passive recreation by providing parks and landscaped open spaces for people to enjoy.

In addition, the LCSD administers subventions provided to 25 camps and sea activity centres run by 12 non-governmental organisations. Some 821 000 people participated in activities organised by these camps and sea activity centres during the year.

The LCSD is also the authority responsible for issuing and renewing licences for places of amusement. During the year, the LCSD processed 76 applications for billiards halls, eight for public bowling alleys and seven for skating rinks.

Hong Kong Sports Institute Limited

The Hong Kong Sports Institute Limited was established on October 1, 2004 to provide an environment in which sports talent can be identified, nurtured and developed. Other than sports facilities, the support given to athletes includes elite coaching and training, sports science, sports medicine, education, applied research and sports information. Thirteen sports are covered by the Elite Training Programme at the institute — athletics, badminton, cycling, fencing, rowing, squash, swimming, table tennis, tennis, tenpin bowling, triathlon, windsurfing and wushu.

The institute also supports outstanding athletes of other sports under the Individual Athletes Support Scheme and the Disabled Sports Elite Training Programme. During the year, the institute focused on the preparation of athletes for two multi-sports games (6th National City Games and 2nd Asian Indoor Games) and planning for the redevelopment of the institute after the staging of the 2008 Olympic Equestrian Events.

Sporting Achievements

Hong Kong athletes have been outstanding in different international and regional sports events. In 2007, they won a total of 204 gold, 167 silver and 206

bronze medals¹. In particular, at the 2nd Asian Indoor Games held in Macao, Hong Kong athletes garnered 15 gold, 9 silver and 12 bronze medals, making Hong Kong the third biggest medal winner among the 45 participating countries/regions. At the 7th National Games for the Disabled, Hong Kong athletes scooped 7 gold, 8 silver and 5 bronze medals, while at the 2007 Special Olympics World Summer Games held in Shanghai, Hong Kong's mentally disabled athletes established a record by winning 67 gold, 50 silver and 37 bronze medals.

Sports Federation and Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China

The Amateur Sports Federation and Olympic Committee (SF&OC) of Hong Kong was founded in 1950 and recognised as a National Olympic Committee (NOC) in 1951. It changed its name to 'Sports Federation and Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China' on March 8, 1999. The federation is a member of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), the Olympic Council of Asia and the Association of National Olympic Committees and has been responsible for organising Hong Kong's participation in all major multi-sports games such as the Olympic Games, Asian Games, Asian Indoor Games and East Asian Games. With a membership of 74 National Sports Associations (NSAs) and sports organisations, it represents the collective voice of the Hong Kong sports community.

Members of the federation are NSAs, which are in turn affiliated to their international federations (IFs) and Asian federations (AFs). They are empowered to coordinate and conduct a wide range of activities related to their sports, from organising sports and recreational programmes for beginners to training elite athletes. They also organise and sanction participations in local and overseas competitions and tournaments, and train coaches and referees. NSAs implement and enforce local and international rules and regulations, and represent Hong Kong in meetings of the IFs and the AFs.

The federation has coordinated a four-month Festival of Sport for half a century. More than 70 of the festival's sporting activities were organised by over 60 NSAs to promote sport for all. It also organises extensive educational programmes for sports leaders, administrators, coaches and technical officials free of charge, notably through the Hong Kong Olympic Academy which offers free sports management and sport science courses and programmes.

With the support of sponsors, the federation organises the annual Hong Kong Sports Stars Awards, the 'Oscars' of local sport, to recognise the achievements of top athletes. The presentation of Bank of China Hong Kong Sports Stars Awards 2006 was held in conjunction with the federation's annual spring dinner in March 2007. Cycling star Wong Kam Po was awarded the most coveted Bank of China (Hong Kong) Best of Best Hong Kong Sports Star Award.

¹ The number of medals is drawn from the records of Hong Kong Sports Institute, Sport Federation and Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China, Hong Kong Paralympic Committee & Sports Association for the Physically Disabled and Hong Kong Sports Association for the Mentally Handicapped in 2007.

Hong Kong sports has entered a new era in 2007 after being designated co-host city of the 2008 Olympiad Equestrian Events by the International Olympic Committee at the 117th IOC Session held in Singapore on 8 July 2005. The successful staging of the 'Good Luck Beijing — HKSAR 10th Anniversary Cup' in August as a test event plus the positive comments made by world sports experts who witnessed the test run established Hong Kong's preparedness for the equestrian events of the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games.

Hong Kong's image in the sports world was further enhanced by its successful holding of the 23rd East Asian Games Association Council meeting in June which was attended by delegates from nine East Asian National Olympic Committees at a time when preparations by Hong Kong for hosting the 5th East Asian Games in 2009 was forging ahead in top gear.

Paralympic Sports Associations

The Hong Kong Paralympic Committee and Sports Association for the Physically Disabled (HKPC&SAPD) is a member of the National Paralympic Committee of Hong Kong, China. It is the only sports body recognised by the International Paralympic Committee for selecting the Hong Kong team for the Paralympic Games and the World and Regional Games and Championships. The HKPC&SAPD plays an active part in organising regional functions and in creating close working relations between Hong Kong and neighbouring countries and territories to upgrade the standard of sports for the disabled in Hong Kong and Asia.

The year has been a busy and memorable one for the HKPC & SAPD which also celebrated their 35th anniversary. To commemorate this important milestone which coincided with the HKSAR's 10th anniversary, the HKPC & SAPD held the 'Hong Kong Table Tennis Open 2007' in July with great success. Some 130 athletes from 17 countries and territories took part in the contest, many of whom were world stars.

Hong Kong's athletes trained hard during the year and took part in competitions around the world to win a spot in the upcoming 2008 Beijing Paralympics — the first ever paralympics to be held on Chinese soil.

HKPC&SAPD athletes did notably well in the international sporting arena in 2007, winning a total of 99 medals: 38 gold, 31 silver and 30 bronze.

The Hong Kong Sports Association for the Mentally Handicapped develops, promotes and organises sporting activities for people with intellectual disability in order to fully develop their potential in sports, and to cultivate in them positive attitudes in sportsmanship as well as to facilitate their integration into the community. The association provides sports training and competitions for more than 40 000 intellectually disabled people, and through the years has been steadily developing a training programme to cater to all levels of ability.

Athletes took part in numerous international competitions during the year and made the most of these opportunities to sharpen their skills. Highlights included the 5th INAS-FID Swimming World Championships in Belgium, where Hong Kong won 5 gold, 8 silver and 4 bronze medals; the tour of Brazil where the Hong Kong team

won 3 bronze medals in the 6th INAS-FID Athletics World Championships; the 5th INAS-FID Table Tennis World Championships in Japan, where Hong Kong won 3 gold, 1 silver and 3 bronze medals.

Hong Kong athletes also established the best record in the 2007 Special Olympics World Summer Games in China. A total of 181 medals, with 75 gold, 59 silver and 47 bronze were won by the intellectually disabled athletes during the year.

The Hong Kong Jockey Club

Founded in 1884, The Hong Kong Jockey Club has become one of the world's largest and most respected racing organisations. It is Hong Kong's only authorised operator of horse racing, managing racecourses at Happy Valley and Sha Tin as well as three public riding schools. The club also operates the Mark Six lottery and offers betting on overseas football matches.

The club is Hong Kong's largest single taxpayer, contributing \$12.64 billion to the public purse in the 2006-07, or about 8.2 per cent of all taxes collected during the year. It is also one of the city's largest employers, with over 24 000 full- and part-time staff.

In addition, the club is a major community benefactor, operating under a unique, not-for-profit business model, with its surpluses giving to charity. In 2006-07 it donated \$1.05 billion to some 107 local charity and community projects through the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust.

The club works closely with the Government to promote responsible gambling policies and to tackle illegal betting. A package of reforms to the horse race betting duty structure, endorsed by the Legislative Council in 2006, has given the club more flexibility to respond to changing market conditions and regain revenue from illegal bookmakers. These reforms helped the club to increase turnover by 6.6 per cent in 2006-07, correcting a 10-year decline trend.

As well as addressing current and longer-term community needs through its donations, the club is committed to corporate social responsibility in its own operations. In November, it announced an innovative proposal to establish a new telebet centre-cum-volunteers and training centre at Tin Shui Wai in response to growing public concern about employment and social problems there, and the Government's call for the business community to work together to set up social enterprises.

This initiative will not only create 2 500 new jobs in the district, but also enable new recruits to receive training in customer service skills and benefit from the club's Corporate Wellness Programme, which helps employees lead a healthy and balanced life. In addition, the club will set up a base there for its CARE@hkjc employee volunteer team to encourage new staff to take up volunteer work. In this way, it is hoped that residents will form new community networks and become self-sustaining.

The club's experience in running equestrian events and its world-class facilities, especially in the areas of equine healthcare and import and export protocols, played

an important part in securing approval for the equestrian events of the Beijing 2008 Olympics to be held in Hong Kong. The club has built all the major venues for the Olympic equestrian events at its own cost, further underlining its commitment to the community's welfare. It will also make its equine hospital and laboratory facilities available during the Olympics and Paralympics.

Completed in record time of less than two years, the equestrian venues were put to the test in August 2007 during the 'Good Luck Beijing — HKSAR 10th Anniversary Cup' eventing competition, and received wide acclaim from visiting international experts. In recognition of its support, the club was named 'Outstanding Contributor, Beijing 2008 Olympic Games Equestrian Events' by the Beijing Organising Committee.

Hong Kong continued to strengthen its reputation in the horse racing world in 2007, with five locally-trained horses winning races at International Group One level. Vengeance Of Rain's victory in March at the Dubai Sheema Classic, the world's joint richest turf race, took the horse's career earnings to more than \$70 million, setting a Hong Kong record.

The Cathay Pacific Hong Kong International Races at Sha Tin Racecourse in December saw some 24 top thoroughbreds from all over the world compete in four International Group One events on a single day for a total purse of \$62 million, a spectacular day of sport which was broadcast to millions of racing fans around the world. Two of the trophies went to Hong Kong-trained horses, with Sacred Kingdom winning the Hong Kong Sprint and Good Ba Ba taking the Mile.

Recreational and Sports Programmes

The LCSD ran some 33 500 recreational and sports programmes for about 1.8 million participants of all ages and abilities during the year at a total cost of \$107 million.

District Sports Teams Training Scheme

In order to generate greater community interest in sports and to foster a stronger sense of belonging among residents, the LCSD, in collaboration with the respective NSAs, formed basketball, football, handball and volleyball teams in 18 districts. About 11 600 young people took part in more than 260 events organised in 2007.

'Healthy Exercise for All' Campaign

The LCSD and the Department of Health continued to co-organise the 'Healthy Exercise for All' campaign. A variety of promotional activities including a series of roving exhibitions at shopping malls, schools, camps, youth and elderly centres, and a 16-week radio programme on Radio Television Hong Kong were organised to drive home the message that people of all ages should do daily exercise to stay healthy. Fitness programmes were drawn up for different target groups. The campaign also included hiking, walking, dancing and rope-skipping programmes. During the year, about 72 000 people took part in some 1 380 programmes of this kind.

To take advantage of the excitement being generated by the forthcoming Beijing 2008 Olympic Games, the 'Beijing-Qingdao-Hong Kong 2008 Olympic Games Co-host Cities Sports Exchange Programme' was organised in October 2007. Popular exercises carried out by the three Olympic co-host cities were introduced to the general public to create a strong Olympic sentiment in Hong Kong and to encourage the public to adopt a healthy lifestyle through regular physical exercise.

Territory-wide Events

The Corporate Games, designed specially for working people, saw some 8 000 people from 273 industrial and commercial organisations take part in 14 events organised under the programme in 2007. The Masters Games, for people aged 35 and above, saw some 4 600 contestants participate in 10 competitions.

Young Athletes Training Scheme

In 2007, the LCSD commissioned 21 NSAs to provide intermediate level training to teenagers to become athletes under the Young Athletes Training Scheme. Some 27 600 young people joined the programme. The ones that showed potential were recommended for further training.

School Sports Programme

The School Sports Programme was drawn up to provide more opportunities for primary, secondary and special school students to participate in sports. To raise the standard of sports in schools, progressive training is provided for students with potential. The scheme comprises seven subsidiary programmes: the Sport Education Programme, Easy Sport Programme, Outreach Coaching Programme, Sport Captain Programme, Joint School Sports Training Programme, Badges Award Scheme and sportACT Award Scheme which were designed specially to encourage students to take part regularly in sporting activities. In 2007, more than 7 200 sporting events were organised for over 541 000 students.

Community Sports Club Project

The Community Sports Club (CSC) Project is organised by the LCSD in collaboration with the NSAs. In 2007, the LCSD provided support to about 310 CSCs to organise 1 800 sports training activities for 40 000 participants. Seminars and management development programmes were organised for some 600 sports volunteers to help them run community sports clubs.

Through the CSC Enhancement Programme, the CSCs were encouraged to make use of LCSD venues during non-peak hours to organise activities for local people. A total of 200 sports training classes were held for 2 900 participants under the CSC Enhancement Programme. The CSCs were also encouraged to organise more inter-club competitions to raise the standard of sports at the community level.

10th Anniversary Celebration Events

To celebrate the 10th Anniversary of the Establishment of the HKSAR, the LCSD opened up its fee-charging indoor sports facilities and public swimming pools on

July 1 and 2 for free use by members of the public. Some 290 000 people used the indoor sports facilities and swimming pools during those two days.

The Hong Kong Games made its debut in 2007 to celebrate the HKSAR's 10th anniversary. It will be held biennially in future to promote a strong sporting culture in Hong Kong. It was the first ever territory-wide major multi-sports games held with the 18 District Councils participating. The Games have not only encouraged people to take part in sporting activities, they also strengthened their sense of belonging to the districts. They also facilitated communication and promoted friendship among the 18 districts. A total of 1 287 athletes participated in four sporting competitions: athletics, badminton, basketball and table tennis, and over 100 000 took part in the games' promotional activities during April and May.

The International DanceSport Extravaganza was another major event subvented by the LCSD to celebrate the HKSAR's 10th anniversary. This event featured a series of dancesport competitions and demonstrations by different age groups and was the first of its kind to be held in Hong Kong. The two-day event's highlight was a world class 'International DanceSport Competition' with top international dancesport couples from Europe, America and Asian countries/regions competing for the championship trophy. Over 4 000 contestants, performers and members of the public participated in the event which attracted over 10 000 spectators. In addition, a group of 10-year-old athletes performed a dance at the event. Some 540 couples took part in a dance session, 'Largest Dance by Couples', to break the Guinness World Records for the titled event.

A mega *Tai Chi* show was held at the former Kai Tak Airport to give exponents of the martial art exercise an opportunity to exchange know-how about the exercise and to celebrate the HKSAR's 10th anniversary. More than 20 000 *tai chi* exponents and *tai chi* masters from the Mainland took part in the show, setting a new Hong Kong record.

Other major sports programmes, held with the support of the commercial sector, took place between June and August to celebrate the 10th Anniversary of the Establishment of the HKSAR. These events included the HKSAR 10th Anniversary Reunification Cup (football), the 2007 International Dragon Boat Races, Gymnastics Extravaganza, Euro-Asia Snooker Master Challenge 2007 and 2007 FIVB World Grand Prix — Hong Kong. More than 110 000 people turned up to watch the events which was given wide media coverage.

Sports Subvention Scheme

The LCSD is responsible for providing subvention to the NSAs and other sporting organisations for the promotion and development of sports. The subvention covers office and personnel expenses and spending on programmes by the NSAs.

During the year, 58 NSAs and 27 sporting organisations were provided with funds amounting to about \$178 million by the LCSD. Over 10 000 programmes for different sports were organised by the NSAs and other organisations, attracting over 692 000 participants. Among the most popular programmes were the Youth Football

Scheme, Youth Wushu Promotion Scheme and Hong Kong (Boys and Girls) Basketball Training Scheme.

In 2007, the NSAs were given subsidies under the scheme to stage international events in Hong Kong. These included the Tennis Champions Challenge, 2007 Hong Kong ITU Triathlon Asian Cup, Hong Kong International Judo Tournament, FINA Marathon Swimming World Cup — Hong Kong, Hong Kong Open Windsurfing Championships, Hong Kong International Bowls Classic 2007, 16th Super Kung Sheung Cup International Basketball Invitation Championships, 12th Asian Gold Cup Taekwondo Tournament, and Tour of the South China Sea (Cycling).

2008 Olympic and Paralympic Equestrian Events

The Equestrian Committee (Hong Kong) of Beijing Organising Committee for the Games of the XXIX Olympiad (Equestrian Committee) was established in October 2005 following the announcement that the 2008 Olympic and Paralympic Equestrian Events will be held in Hong Kong. The Chief Executive is the patron and the Chief Secretary for Administration, the president of the Equestrian Committee. A steering committee, supported by six coordinating committees, was also set up to better coordinate the work of different bureaux, departments and non-government agencies in connection with the equestrian events. The executive arm of the Equestrian Committee — the Equestrian Events (Hong Kong) of the Games of the XXIX Olympiad Company Limited (Equestrian Company) — registered under the Companies Ordinance, was formed in February 2006 to carry out the day-to-day work of organising the equestrian events. In addition, a trust fund — the 2008 Beijing Olympic Equestrian Events Hong Kong Fund — was set up to raise money for the education, culture and community involvement activities held to promote Olympism and the events.

The organising work for the 2008 Olympic and Paralympic equestrian events is in full swing and going well. A trial run, the ‘Good Luck Beijing — HKSAR 10th Anniversary Cup’, was held from 11 to 13 August to test the facilities in place for holding the equestrian events. Sixteen riders and horses from 7 countries and 20 local riders and horses took part in a three-day individual eventing competition held as part of the trial run. The organisers received high praise from the International Olympic Committee (IOC), the International Equestrian Federation (FEI), the Beijing Organising Committee for the Games of XXIX Olympiad (BOCOG) and the participating teams.

The Government is conducting a series of programmes to arouse public interest in the Olympic Games and the equestrian events, cultivate the Olympic atmosphere in the city, and to promote Olympism within the community. In addition, the Government is considering ways to commemorate the equestrian events and to promote the Olympic legacy.

The Government and the Hong Kong Tourism Board are also stepping up their overseas efforts to brand Hong Kong as the Olympic co-host city.

'M' Mark Support Package

The 'M' Mark Support Package was launched in November 2004 by the Sports Commission's Major Sports Events Committee to seek greater support from the commercial sector and the community for the NSAs to develop more sustainable major international sports events. In addition to logistic support from the Government, some 'M' Mark events also receive funds from the Arts and Sports Development Fund. In 2007, 10 events were given 'M' Mark status and/or support packages.

2009 East Asian Games

Hong Kong will host the 5th East Asian Games (EAG) in 2009. A planning committee has been set up to plan and prepare for the event, enlist community support for it, develop publicity and marketing strategies, and advise on the venues and facilities for the event.

A Hong Kong 2009 East Asian Games Gallery and a website were set up to display exhibits to promote the EAG and to disseminate information on the work being done for the event.

To prepare for the 2009 EAG, the LCSD will improve the provision of sporting facilities and bring a number of existing venues up to international standards. The improvements are expected to be completed before mid-2009. The 2009 East Asian Games (Hong Kong) Limited, the executive arm of the 5th EAG Planning Committee, will draw up and roll out programmes to create greater public awareness of the event.

The 6th Inter-City Games of the People's Republic of China

The 6th Inter-City Games of the People's Republic of China was held in Wuhan in October. A total of 107 Hong Kong athletes took part in 15 events. Hong Kong won one gold medal in the men's BMX and advanced to the quarter-finals in 10 events. These included swimming, cycling, tennis, judo, table tennis and athletics events. Hong Kong swimmers also broke two Hong Kong swimming records.

2007 Bun Carnival

Tens of thousands of local and overseas visitors again converged on Cheung Chau Island to watch the popular annual Bun Carnival which was held from May 12 to 25. The carnival was given extensive coverage by the local and international news media. More than 6 000 people took part in the competitions and other activities, the highlight of which was the Bun Scrambling Competition.

Recreational and Sports Venues

Hong Kong Stadium

The Hong Kong Stadium is Hong Kong's largest sports venue with seating for 40 000 people. It is used mainly for football and international rugby matches, and

large-scale religious events and variety shows. More than 684 000 people attended 53 events at the venue in 2007.

Water Sports Centres and Holiday Camps

The LCSD manages five water sports centres — Chong Hing, Tai Mei Tuk, Jockey Club Wong Shek, St Stephen's Beach and Stanley Main Beach. It also runs four holiday camps, namely the Lady MacLehose Holiday Village, Sai Kung Outdoor Recreation Centre, Tso Kung Tam Outdoor Recreation Centre, and Lei Yue Mun Park and Holiday Village. During the year, 105 000 people participated in water sports events held at the water sports centres and 556 000 people visited and stayed at the holiday camps.

Other Sports and Recreational Venues

The LCSD manages 88 sports centres, 37 swimming pool complexes, 271 tennis courts, 305 squash courts, 24 sports grounds, four golf driving ranges and two public riding schools.

A total of seven new recreation and sports projects were completed in 2007. They are the Siu Sai Wan Road Garden, a local open space at Tseung Kwan O, Phase 2 of Hin Tin Swimming Pool in Sha Tin, Phase 2 of Cherry Street Park in Tai Kok Tsui, and a sports centre, basketball courts and a local open space in Tin Shui Wai. Works on 25 other projects in different parts of Hong Kong are under way.

Beaches and Swimming Pools

Swimming is one of Hong Kong's most popular summer pastimes. The LCSD manages 41 beaches — 12 on Hong Kong Island and 29 in the New Territories, and 37 public swimming pool complexes. In 2007, 11 million visits were made to the beaches and 9.2 million visits were made to public swimming pools by members of the public.

Shark prevention nets have been installed for the safety of swimmers. Lifeguard services are provided during the swimming season. At the four most popular beaches, Clear Water Bay Second Beach, Golden Beach, Silverstrand Beach and Deep Water Bay Beach, lifeguards are on duty during the winter as well.

Parks Managed by LCSD

The LCSD manages about 1 400 parks and gardens of different sizes, including 22 major parks.

Hong Kong Zoological and Botanical Gardens

The Hong Kong Zoological and Botanical Gardens, the oldest public gardens in Hong Kong, occupy a total area of 5.6 hectares, overlooking Central. The gardens were built between 1861 and 1871. Albany Road runs through the eastern garden, home to an extensive collection of birds, while the western garden, opened in 1871, is home to mammal and reptile exhibits. The botanical section is largely in the eastern garden.

Despite the urban surroundings, the gardens provide a viable conservation centre for endangered species. Sixteen endangered species of mammals, birds and reptiles lived there in 2007. The bird collection is one of the most comprehensive in Asia. It comprises about 400 birds of 140 species. Fifteen of the 140 species have had offspring there. The mammal collection consists of 70 animals of 21 species, mainly primates. More than 900 species of trees, shrubs, creepers and foliage plants thrive in the gardens. The medicinal plant collection established in 1987 and a greenhouse built in 1993 have generated particular public interest in the 500 or more species of herbs, orchids, ferns and indoor plants there.

Hong Kong Park

Opened in 1991, Hong Kong Park is on the site of the former military barracks in Central and occupies an area of about eight hectares. The park, which blends modern design into the natural landscape, features flowing water as its central motif and has artificial waterfalls, streams and ponds.

Major facilities in the park include an aviary, conservatory, a vantage point for viewing the city, an Olympic Square, squash centre, sports centre, children's playground and restaurant. The aviary is designed to look like a tropical rainforest in which about 600 birds of 90 different species are kept, including three hornbills and five pelicans that are a major attraction for visitors. Some bird species, namely the crowned pigeon and catbird, were credited with successful brood-rearing this year. The conservatory has three sections, including the 'Display Plant House', 'Dry Plant House' and 'Humid Plant House'. Adjustable environmental control equipment is installed in these houses to simulate different climatic conditions for plants from the arid regions and tropical environment. There is always something new as well as attractive plants to see there. The 'Elephant-yam', a rare plant species blooming for the first time in Hong Kong Park, produced a corpse-like smell during the flowering period, attracting public interest. In June and July, an aquatic plant show was held in the park's display plant house and lake, exhibiting more than 100 species of aquatic plants. The show attracted about 140 000 visitors. A Wollemi Pine, one of the world's oldest and rarest plants dating back to the time of the dinosaurs, was planted at the park in September under the Valuable Tree Donation Project.

The Hong Kong 2009 East Asian Games Gallery, on the second floor of the sports centre, which has been opened to the public since October 2005 features different colour zones. The exhibits in the gallery tell the story of the Olympic movement from its beginning in ancient Greece, with special emphasis on Hong Kong's participation and achievements in sports. Other exhibits include Olympic torches and medals from past games. A special section has been dedicated to the forthcoming 2009 EAG in Hong Kong. Exhibits there include models of the Hong Kong Coliseum, Hong Kong Stadium, Queen Elizabeth Stadium, Stanley Main Beach Water Sports Centre and Siu Sai Wan Sports Ground which will be some of the venues for staging the 2009 EAG competitions.

Outward Bound Hong Kong

Outward Bound Hong Kong is a registered charity established in 1970. It is a member of Outward Bound International, the world leader and originator of outdoor experiential education, operating in about 50 schools in more than 30 countries.

Outward Bound's mission is 'to help people discover and develop their potential to care for themselves, others and the world around them through challenging experiences in unfamiliar settings'. Outward Bound provides training for people from all walks of life. The training is designed to foster confidence, responsibility, leadership, teamwork, creative thinking, problem-solving skills and social responsibility. The organisation uses experiential education on its training programme enabling participants to gain insights and skills that can be applied to work and real-life situations. More than 6 000 people join the courses every year.

The three training bases — at Sai Kung Tai Mong Tsai headquarters, Wong Wan Chau island base and the new ocean-going vessel *Spirit of Outward Bound Hong Kong* — can accommodate up to 180 students. Training facilities such as sailing boats, kayaks, ropes course, rock wall and a jetty are regularly checked and maintained up to international standards to ensure training safety.

Public courses are organised in Hong Kong as well as outside Hong Kong — in Taiwan, Japan, Sabah, the Philippines, Nepal and along the Silk Road on the Mainland — to cater to people of different ages and needs. There are two courses, subsidised by the Government's Continuing Education Fund, which are designed to strengthen employees' capabilities and their working relationships with colleagues. The courses help participants become more confident and capable in dealing with challenges at work.

In cooperation with schools, colleges, universities and various charitable organisations, Outward Bound continues to deliver school courses for students, teachers, social workers and many others. The courses help individuals to become caring and competent leaders who can make valuable contributions to society.

There organisation also conducts tailor-made courses for corporations and government departments in Hong Kong and on the Mainland.

Adventure Ship

Adventure-Ship is a registered charity that maintains the 34.5-metre sailing junk, *Jockey Club Huan*, and provides adventure-based nautical programmes for young Hong Kong people. Adventure-Ship is a member of the Hong Kong Council of Social Service and is funded mainly by the Community Chest and the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust.

Jockey Club Huan, which went into service in April 2006, can accommodate 60 people. The hull of this three-masted traditional-rig sailing junk is made of aluminum. In addition to modern navigation aids, the training vessel is equipped with a full range of amenities. Various barrier-free access and training facilities have also been installed particularly for trainees with disabilities.

Each year, more than 8 000 young people benefit from the training programmes. The journey within Hong Kong waters usually lasts for one to three days. Challenge through 'disciplined entertainment' is the main theme of the exercise. Once on board, participants are regarded as members of the ship's crew and they take part in the onboard activities. Under the guidance of experienced instructors, they are trained to face new challenges and participate in activities that build self-confidence and team spirit. The programmes have been carefully drawn up to fit the different aptitudes and backgrounds of trainees and to prepare them to face different weather conditions.

Hong Kong Youth Hostels Association

The Hong Kong Youth Hostels Association (HKYHA) is a non-profit-making organisation providing quality and economical hostel accommodation in Hong Kong and overseas. Its primary aim is to encourage healthy outdoor activities for young people and to promote travel, cultural and international youth exchange programmes. Hong Kong's Chief Executive, Mr Donald Tsang, is the association's patron. Established in 1973, the HKYHA has rich experience in running, planning and marketing hostels. The association is affiliated with the International Youth Hostel Federation which has over four million members around the world.

The HKYHA is currently operating seven youth hostels in Hong Kong, and has over 20 000 life members and 8 000 individual and corporate members. In April 2007, the association organised the Ngong Ping Charity Walk at the scenic North Lantau Island Country Park. It attracted over 1 000 participants and raised much needed funds for hostel improvement, environmental protection and conservation projects.

Country and Marine Park

Some 38 per cent of Hong Kong's total land area has been designated as country parks and special areas for the purpose of nature conservation, outdoor recreation and nature education. The 23 country parks and 17 special areas provide extensive hiking trails, barbecue, picnic and camp sites and visitors centres which attracted over 12 million visitors in 2007.

There are four marine parks and one marine reserve for the conservation of marine life. In these marine parks, visitors may enjoy and learn about the beauty and diversity of marine life in Hong Kong. The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department manages the country parks, special areas, marine parks and marine reserve.

Hong Kong Wetland Park

The 61-hectare Hong Kong Wetland Park is a special area designated under the Country Parks Ordinance. Located at the northern part of Tin Shui Wai, and the southern tip of the Mai Po Inner Deep Bay Ramsar Site, it is a project for promoting wetland conservation, education and tourism in Hong Kong.

The park, opened to the public in May 2006, gives visitors the opportunity to appreciate the wetlands of Hong Kong in an open and natural setting. In 2007, the park attracted over 700 000 visitors and provided conservation education programmes to over 240 000 students and visitors.

Green Promotion/Initiatives

Green Hong Kong Campaign

Various community and educational activities were organised in 2007 to enhance public awareness of the importance of 'greening' the environment. These activities were carried out under different programmes such as the Green Volunteer Scheme, Community Planting Day, Greening Hong Kong Activities Subsidy Scheme, theme flower show and promotional talks. More than 770 schools and kindergartens took part in the Greening School Subsidy Scheme formed to promote environmentally friendly initiatives. The scheme provided an opportunity for students to try their hand at gardening under the guidance of their teachers and LCSD staff. A total of 350 000 students from over 1 050 schools participated in the 'One Person, One Flower' programme. Scarlet Sage seedlings were given to students to plant at home or in their schools.

The LCSD's Community Garden Programme was carried out in all of the scheme's 18 districts. The scheme provides for one community garden to be built in each district. Forty-one gardening courses were conducted during the year, attended by 7 800 participants. A total of 27 tree planting activities were organised by the districts, attracting an attendance of over 12 000.

Hong Kong Flower Show

The Hong Kong Flower Show is a major event, organised by the LCSD to promote horticulture and an awareness of the need for a green environment. Every year, it provides an opportunity for hundreds of thousands of Hong Kong people and horticulture lovers from around the world to enjoy the beauty and diversity of flowers and to share their experiences in flower cultivation. Participants in the show are from Hong Kong, Mainland and overseas horticultural associations, floral art clubs, green groups, district councils, schools and the general public.

A range of educational and recreational activities was also organised on the sidelines of the show. More than 185 horticultural organisations from 20 countries took part in the 2007 show in March at Victoria Park, attracting more than 520 000 visitors.

Horticulture and Landscape Services and Projects

The LCSD is responsible for the planting of ornamental trees and shrubs in public gardens and roadside amenity areas around Hong Kong, and for looking after the trees. It also looks after the city's public parks, gardens, sports grounds, football pitches and children's playgrounds, amenity plots and the landscape plants on the sides of highways and public roads. During the year, the department planted 10 000 trees and 3.3 million shrubs and seasonal flowers and carried out landscape

improvement projects for 43 hectares of park land and roadside amenity areas, including footbridges.

Beautification of Footbridges

To improve the greenery in the urban areas and the environment around footbridges, the LCSD has embarked on a programme for placing flower pots on the sides of footbridges.

Summer Youth Programme

The Summer Youth Programme (SYP) is a large-scale community building programme which provides a wide range of activities for children and young people aged between six and 25 to enjoy during the summer holidays. The slogan for 2007 was 'Unite in Harmony, Rejoice in Reunion' to reflect the spirit of the territory-wide celebrations held to commemorate the 10th Anniversary of the Establishment of Hong Kong as a Special Administrative Region of China. The wide range of cultural and arts, sports and all-round development activities and exhibitions was designed to bring young people of different nationalities and cultures together to participate in them and to establish bonding which can contribute to making Hong Kong a harmonious society.

In 2007, around 12 000 SYP activities were organised in which more than 1.5 million young people took part. The total cost of these activities and events was over \$40 million of which \$15 million was donated by the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust and the remainder covered by subvention from the Government and District Councils, private donations and participants' fees.

Websites

Home Affairs Bureau: www.hab.gov.hk

Leisure and Cultural Services Department: www.lcsd.gov.hk

Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department: www.afcd.gov.hk